

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

August 14, 2023

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on August 14, 2023. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:06 am due to technical difficulties. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones and Ed Newsome. Also present were Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, County Attorney Alex Shalishali, County Clerk Jawahn Ware and other staff. The public participated in person via live streaming of the meeting on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the zoning application for Vincente S. Sontay, owner and applicant (23-039) request for Special Approval to construct a Religious Institution (church) at 1416 Nelms Road. The property is zoned R-2 (Single-Family Residential District) and would allow a Religious Institution by Special Approval. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director addressed. The Public Hearing and Action on this item are scheduled for the August 21, 2023 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Gray asked if the church would impact the convenience store that has an alcohol license and Ms. Gray said that she will verify the distance. He also asked if the church was approved, could the existing business or a future owner be grandfathered in [if the distance was too close]. Commissioner Jones shared that the citizens in District 6 are still opposed to a religious institution in the neighborhood. Their positions have not changed since the last request and he stands with their request. Attorney Shalishali said that he would verify the zoning ordinance regarding guidance or legal opinion relative to special approval. Mr. Forgey addressed the difference between special approval and a variance. In this case, he stated that there is not enough factual evidence that prevents this allowable use. Additional comments will be addressed at the public hearing.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to accept the quote replacing the flooring of the main building for Public Works by the lowest responsive and responsible vendor meeting specifications, Custom Interiors (Leesburg, GA) in the amount of \$31,055.65. Three vendors submitted quotes with the highest being \$54,000. Funding is available in SPLOST VII. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey was present.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from Finance to adjust the SPLOST VII Budget that was approved in the June 5, 2023, Regular Meeting. The approved line item for SPVII Government Center was initially \$955,000. The amount for the line item should have been \$305,000. The difference of \$650,000 is requested to add a budget of \$400,000 for the Festival of Springs Fountain and \$250,000 for the replacement chiller in the Judicial Building. Finance Director Martha Hendley addressed. This is a budget adjustment to show the correct appropriations. Ms. Hailey addressed questions regarding the chiller needs and the splash pad

(Festival of Springs Fountain) and other life cycle needs. Mr. Brooks shared the plans to map out our needs to address all our facilities to include the Jail.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from Finance to amend the FY 2024 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Fund. The request is made on behalf of Superior Court Judge Willie Lockette to transfer \$163,000 from the ADR Fund Balance to cover planned expenditures for the Dougherty Judicial ADR Program. The amendment will allocate \$100,000 to the Mediation/Arbitration line item and \$63,000 to the coordinator line item. Finance Director Martha Hendley addressed. It was noted that this is an amendment because the bottom line will be changed. It was shared that this fund balance belongs to the courts and not the Commission.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to appoint Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks to serve as the County Legislative Coordinator (CLC) to the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG). This appointment will replace the former appointee, Michael McCoy. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the nomination for the County voting delegate at the ACCG Legislative Conference Business Session on October 12, 2023 in Jekyll Island. Chairman Heard addressed. Commissioner Gray shared that he is interested in serving.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Brooks to see if there can be a relationship between the Department of Community Affairs and our Disaster Recovery Department to ensure that citizens are being directed to the best entity to complete grant applications. He would also like the SWGRC (Southwest Georgia Regional Commission) to apply for a new CHIP grant. Mr. Brooks and Attorney Shalishali will respond to Commissioner Johnson's question relative to funding for sidewalks. Commissioner Gaines asked for a federal infrastructure update and Mr. Brooks said that he will follow up with Cornerstone. Commissioner Jones recognized the citizens of District 6 that were present in the meeting.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK