

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

October 09, 2023

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on October 09, 2023. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. 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 and representatives of the media participated in person and via live streaming of the meeting on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel.

After the invocation by Chairman Heard, he asked the Commission to review the September 18th Regular Meeting and September 25th Work Session Minutes.

The Chairman recognized Margaret Halbrook, Interim County Extension Coordinator, to update the Commission with the quarterly report. Anna Grace Peebles, County Extension Agent was also present. She provided updates regarding programming and staffing and shared information pertaining to Family and Consumer Services. They provided a token of appreciation to the Board. Commissioner Jones shared key points that the ladies should consider for employment, future sessions, and engagement with students and farmers.

The Chairman recognized Public Works Director Chuck Mathis to provide an update on the Albany State University (ASU) Downtown Connector Trail. Mr. Mathis showed pictures of different trail portions and shared the anticipated completion was set for this month. Commissioner Jones asked Mr. Mathis to address safety concerns, especially lighting. Mr. Mathis shared that our policy is for the trails to be open from dawn to dusk and individuals should not be on the trails after dark. He added that signs were posted for individuals to abide by our regulations. ASU police would monitor specific portions of the trail. Commissioner Edwards asked Mr. Mathis to come back with an update on the status of the fence and gates. Mr. Mathis said it was his understanding that ASU was still proceeding and would confirm. He noted that some of the concerns of the Commission were not in the initial Master Plan, but could be reviewed for consideration. The next connection phase was ASU to Radium Springs. Commissioner Johnson asked that DCP be involved in patrolling the area regularly to monitor the homeless population living in wooded areas. He also asked about safety stations being installed that were currently on campus for individuals to push for emergencies. Mr. Mathis mentioned that he researched solar lightning and these options requested need to be budgeted. Commissioner Jones requested a tour of the trails after a lengthy discussion ensued.

The Chairman recognized Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and County Attorney Alex Shalishali to provide an update on the ordinance for Vegetation Control. Staff is seeking direction on how to proceed. This request is part of the effort to look at our ordinances based upon the direction from the Government Affairs Subcommittee. This specific request was brought

to the attention of Mr. Brooks by Commissioner Edwards due to a specific property where overgrowth still occurs. The current ordinance does not give authority to address the volume of vegetation. Mr. Brooks shared that there needed to be a discussion on the topic and gave a reminder that there is a need to balance requests of property owners. Attorney Shalishali shared that our Board can change how vegetation control is handled via resolution or via ordinance change. Marshall Nathaniel Norman addressed questions posed by Commissioner Edwards. He reminded the Board that objective measures are applied instead of subjective ones so enforcement could be blanketly applied. He cautioned the Board from going into the categories of owner preferences and landscaping. The Marshall stressed the necessity of due process. In regard to the ordinance project, Mr. Brooks shared a recommendation that staff would like to present to the Board regarding utilizing a company versed in updating ordinances. He added that this issue may be the first that the legal firm utilizes for best practices. The Chairman directed that this be part of the first review of the firm.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the zoning application for King Randall, owner and applicant, (23-053) request to rezone a 24.74-acre vacant parcel from R-2 (Single-Family Residential District) to C-8 (Commercial Recreational District). The rezoning would allow for the construction of a multipurpose facility. The property is at 2901 Barnaby Drive. The Planning Commission recommended denial. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director, addressed and clarified that this request was not for boarding but for recreational use. The Public Hearing and Action on this item are scheduled for the October 16, 2023 Regular Meeting.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the zoning application for Orchard Machinery Corporation, applicant and JTMF LLC, owner, (23-064) request to rezone two acres from C-1 (Neighborhood Mixed-Use Business District) to C-3 (Commercial District). The rezoning would allow for the operation of a commercial parts and service business for orchard machinery. The property is at 2824 Gillionville Road. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director, addressed. The company will expand its business into the Albany area and the location was ideal. It was confirmed that no machinery will be seen from Gillionville and the request fits within the Planning and Zoning Land Use Plan. The Public Hearing and Action on this item are scheduled for the October 16, 2023 Regular Meeting.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to purchase a 2016 Ford F250 Animal Control Vehicle for use by Dougherty County Police from Shumate Truck Center (Tampa, FL) in the amount of \$45,800. The purchase will meet the immediate needs of the department and provide an additional vehicle for future use. Funding is available in Contingency. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Captain Jason Hager was present. Mr. Brooks shared that our current vehicle is very antiquated and posed a risk for potential worker's compensation claims. The downside was that contingency would be utilized. This purchase is an exception and is a very reasonable approach. Captain Hager shared that the current vehicle has over 290,000 miles and mentioned a proactive approach. Mrs. Ware said that the budgeted amount was \$55,000 and the current PO was over \$52,000. Captain Hagar was commended for working with Procurement for the proactive approach taken prior to knowing the risk concerns.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to approve the alcohol application from MJT Management Group, Travis W. Williams licensee, at 1304 Williamsburg Road for Consumption-

Liquor, Beer, and Wine. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal's Office recommended approval. Deputy Marshal Marcus Mitchell, Code Enforcement Department, addressed. Deputy Marshal Mitchell confirmed that the location was the racetrack. Commissioner Jones shared that the location was obtaining special approval alcohol licenses in the past and is now seeking to obtain a permanent license.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to renew the Rental Agreement between the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners and the State Properties Commission on behalf of the Department of Driver Services located at 2062 Newton Road, Albany, GA 31701. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Mr. Brooks shared that this was the driver's services location and Dougherty County managed the building. The last lease was \$10 a month and staff was able to negotiate a rate of \$580 a month. [The actual rental agreement amount was later confirmed to be \$504.84].

The Chairman called for a recommendation from the Emergency Medical Services Department to apply for the FY 2024 EMS Trauma Related Equipment Reimbursement Grant through the Georgia Trauma Commission in the amount of \$10,434. This is a 100% grant with no local match. EMS Director Sam Allen addressed and shared that this was a new grant.

Mr. Brooks reminded the Board of the Special Called Meeting scheduled for immediately following the Work Session and said that he would be planning a Government Affairs meeting. He provided the retreat dates of February 1-2, 2024 at Callaway Gardens and said he will work with the Board to determine what they would like on the agenda and will discuss with the Chairman. He will be coordinating our annual legislative meeting with Representative Gerald Greene. Attorney Shalishali informed the Commission that the surplus property previously discussed on Highland could be deeded to another public entity. Commissioner Johnson said he would like to know more about the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus and would like for the School Board to extinguish taxes for senior citizens on fixed income, sharing that Dougherty County could extinguish ours as well. He suggested started a Citizen Engagement Committee. Commissioner Gaines shared concerns regarding the financial audit component that was out of compliance with the Landfill. Mr. Brooks responded by sharing that compliance was met except for capital assets and that will be provided after the audit is finalized.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK