

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 7, 2023

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on August 7, 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, Ed Newsome, and Anthony Jones. 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.

The Chairman provided the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman recognized Consultant Ed Wall to provide an update on the County's financial position. Mr. Wall reviewed the County's PT 32.1 form and explained the rationale between "The Truth and Taxation Law." There was positive growth in the tax digest. He explained the rollback concept and shared how the County fared as compared to other counties. He was not in favor of rolling back the millage rate and provided a monetary explanation. With the 2.1% increase and keeping the millage rate the same at 19.069 for the countywide area, there will be an increase to the County in the amount \$817,716. He also reminded the Board that about \$5.7 million will not be received in the future due to the discontinuation of ARPA. Other supporting rationale, to include maintaining a healthy fund balance, were shared. He reviewed the PT 32.1 form for the Special Services District and the positive growth of 1.81%. If the recommendation is to keep the millage rate of 9.173 the same, there will be an increase of \$97,903 to the County. He explained the rationale that some counties utilized in the past regarding vacant positions versus a newer rationale for revenue. It was suggested that Mr. Brooks direct HR to provide a report regarding the true number of vacancies so the questions of Commissioner Gaines can be answered. In response to the question of Commissioner Gaines, he provided effective ways on how the County can advertise the increase. He noted that this increase was less than inflation and answered additional questions from the Board.

The Chairman recognized citizen Bruce Capps who shared that a unifying vision needed to be established by the City of Albany and Dougherty County. Once established, he added that a plan should be mapped out between the two entities. He said that there were many silos in the community and that having both governing bodies set up visions and goals would help.

The Chairman recognized citizen Leon James Payton who shared his personal story and mentioned that there are many citizens in the community that have mental health issues that should be addressed. He also requested sidewalk improvements in East Albany.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution providing for the execution of the revised Special District Mass Transportation Sales and Use Tax Intergovernmental Contract between Dougherty County, Georgia and the City of Albany, Georgia for TSPLOST II. The document approved on July 31, 2023 had an error on the County's project list. County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed by sharing that there were non-substantive changes from a typo.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Johnson, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 23-038 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE APPROVAL AND
EXECUTION OF A SPECIAL DISTRICT MASS
TRANSPORTATION SALES AND USE TAX
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA AND THE CITY OF
ALBANY; REPEALING RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF
RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HERewith; AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution requesting the Call of a Special District Mass Transportation Sales Special Referendum by the Dougherty County Board of Elections for November 7, 2023. County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. This is the request to the Board of Elections and the meeting will be held on September 1st.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Gaines commended Attorney Shalishali for the work done. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 23-039 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA AUTHORIZING THE IMPOSITION
OF A ONE PERCENT SALES AND USE TAX AS AUTHORIZED BY
ARTICLE 5A OF CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 48 OF THE OFFICIAL CODE OF
GEORGIA ANNOTATED TITLED SPECIAL DISTRICT MASS
TRANSPORTATION SALES AND USE TAX; SPECIFYING THE

PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE PROCEEDS OF SUCH TAX ARE TO BE USED; SPECIFYING THE PERIOD OF TIME FOR WHICH SUCH TAX MAY BE IMPOSED; SPECIFYING THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED FROM THE PROCEEDS OF SUCH TAX; REQUESTING THE ALBANY-DOUGHERTY COUNTY BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS TO CALL AN ELECTION OF THE VOTERS OF THE SPECIAL DISTRICT OF DOUGHERTY COUNTY TO APPROVE THE IMPOSITION OF SUCH SALES TAX; APPROVING THE FORM OF BALLOT TO BE USED IN SUCH ELECTION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chairman called for consideration the recommendation to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to retain the millage rates from 2022. The proposed 2023 millage rates for the County-wide General Fund is 19.069 and 9.173 for the Special Services District. Finance Committee Chairman Clinton Johnson addressed. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Finance Director Martha Hendley were present. Finance Committee Chairman Clinton Johnson thanked the committee and staff.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Newsome, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

Mr. Brooks said that the appropriate information will be presented to the public regarding action being taken on the tax increase. He also shared information with the Board regarding iVeuit which is a partnership with the City of Albany aimed to help the County make better decisions regarding land use. Lastly, Mr. Brooks noted that the City's closure of Jefferson Street for the sewer project will begin next week. County Attorney Shalishali said that the County received \$8,590.75 from the Johnson opioid settlements. He will provide an update regarding a question from Commissioner Johnson regarding fentanyl. Commissioner Edwards would like for the County to either have a grant writer or partner with someone. Mr. Brooks responded with some plans. Commissioner Johnson would like the Finance Committee to review information from the projects that Mr. Brooks will work on with HR relative to the vacancies in the County. He also said that he would like the public to understand and receive advertisements regarding TSPLOST and the increase in the millage rate per law. Commissioner Gaines invited the Board to participate in the Governmental Affairs Meeting where she wanted to start a discussion on revising the Code of Ordinances. Commissioner Jones read his letter for reappointment with NACo.

The Chairman called for the consideration of the recommendation from the County Attorney to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending and potential litigation and then to adjourn.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Johnson, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

There being no further discussion, the Board entered into Executive Session at 11:25 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK