

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

December 12, 2022

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on December 12, 2022. Chairman Christopher Cohilas presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Administrator Michael McCoy, County Attorney Alex Shalishali, County Clerk Jawahn Ware and other staff. The public and representatives of the media participated in person via live streaming of the meeting on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel.

The Chairman asked the Commission to review the minutes of the November 21st Regular Meeting, November 28th Work Session, November 28th Special Called Meeting and November 29th State Delegation Meeting.

The Chairman recognized citizen Sharon "Nyota" Tucker to share the information she learned and advocated for during her service at the Albany/ Dougherty Hospital Authority. She requested that the Board of Commissioners continue to have oversight of the appointed Hospital Authority and not remove individuals when members question action and acquiesce.

The Chairman recognized local entrepreneur Quantavious Gammage to share his ideas for the City of Albany. He shared that he is looking for investors and requested that the Commission contact him directly so he would not have to breach his nondisclosure agreements.

The Chairman recognized Fire Chief Cedric Scott, EMS Director Sam Allen, and Dougherty County Police Chief Kenneth Johnson to provide an update on the visibility of address numbers in the unincorporated area of the County. Commissioner Jones contacted Chief Scott regarding this presentation. Mr. Allen shared the current ordinance dictates the size lettering for homes and mailboxes. Chief Johnson stressed that it is important for citizens to understand the need for clear numbers to not negatively impact response time, especially in critical situations. Commissioner Jones asked either that the ordinance be amended or citizens be educated. He requested that Public Information Officer Wendy Howell also be involved. Commissioner Newsome asked that Code Enforcement, who is responsible for the ordinance management, be included. Suggestions on how to implement citations, County funding, fundraising, and Neighborhood Watch Associations were discussed. Commissioner Jones shared that he will heavily address this in 2023. Commissioner Edwards asked that the Public Safety Commission review this and no direction was provided by the Chairman.

The Chairman called for a discussion to purchase eight desktop computers and ten mobile computer terminals from single source vendor Dell Technologies in the amount of \$46,358.81

for the Dougherty County Police Department. The purchase will replace the current worn and outdated equipment. Funding is budgeted in ARPA. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Chief Kenneth Johnson was present.

The Chairman called for a discussion to accept the bid for the construction of the Flint River Trails (Albany State University to Downtown sector) from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting specifications, HTS Construction (Albany, GA) in the amount of \$1,538,769.47 subject to execution of the contract by the County Administrator. Three bids were received with the highest being \$2,122,453.02. Funding is available in SPLOST and TSPLOST. The Georgia Board of Regents was awarded \$750,000 for the project. County Administrator Michael McCoy and Engineering Manager Jeremy Brown addressed. City of Albany Buyer Ricky Gladney was present. Mr. McCoy said that this discussion started in 2017 and added that he and Finance Director Martha Hendley would provide specific funding availability. Mr. Brown addressed various questions by the Board and the Chairman provided kudos to the parties involved.

The Chairman called for a discussion to approve the alcohol application from Family Dollar Stores of Georgia, LLC., Patricia Lynn Sawyer licensee, dba Family Dollar #31395, at 3907 Gillionville Road for Package- Beer and Wine. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal's Office recommended approval. Chief Deputy Anthony Donaldson, Code Enforcement Department, addressed. Commissioner Johnson asked if we will see a trend of these requests and Chief Donaldson shared that six had already been presented to the City of Albany.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation from the Emergency Medical Services Department to apply for the extension of the FY20 COSSAP Naloxone Initiative Grant through the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in the amount of \$15,000. This is a 100% grant with no local match. EMS Director Sam Allen addressed. It was shared that this is the second portion of the grant and that there are various types of drugs seen in the community causing the overdoses.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation to accept the list of roads to be resurfaced with the FY 2023 Local Maintenance & Improvements Grant (LMIG) funds (\$420,641.51), SPLOST VII Resurfacing (\$425,000), TSPLOST Resurfacing (\$2,000,000) and TSPLOST Striping (\$132,924.37). The total cost estimate for 25.15 miles is \$2,978,565.88. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis and Engineering Manager Jeremy Brown were present. Mr. Brown clarified that the list was provided for consideration and will be bid out later. Commissioner Johnson asked about the possibility of LMIG funding being reduced [by the State]. Mr. Brown also shared that it is a possibility and Mr. McCoy reminded the Board that our ask to the legislature is to fully fund LMIG. He added that Spurlock Street was removed due to initial funding constraints but can be included again and he commended the Public Works staff for their good work.

The Chairman called for the review of the FY22 and FY23 ARPA budgets and to consider reallocating funding from the FY23 ARPA budget for a housing program. County

Administrator Michael McCoy and Finance Director Martha Hendley addressed. Mr. McCoy provided the historical perspective, Tranche 1 FY 2022 ARPA spending plan approval process, housing discussions and a reflection of items noted from previous meetings. Information was shared relative to FY 2023 ARPA budget for Tranche 2 and the remaining balance of Tranche 1. He presented a staff-proposed housing rehabilitation program, but stressed direction of the Board is needed because the program was requested in the middle of the approved budget year. If funding from ARPA is to be utilized, reallocations of funding will be needed. Chairman Cohilas asked if there is a consensus to proceed with a housing project with the proposed budget of \$600,000. During the discussion, Mr. McCoy shared that this is a program proposed by the City of Statesboro and is very similar to the CHIP program. The fee for the grant administrator was discussed. Upon the suggestion by Commissioner Gray, it was clarified that most of the money has been earmarked and being spent down. Commissioner Gaines suggested that money, on a smaller scale, be used to create a study for a sustainable long-term approach to housing addressing Dougherty County needs; ideally for new homes and new people. Mr. Mathis addressed questions pertaining to earmarked funding for Public Works parks. After discussion, Chairman Cohilas recapped the board discussion of how to proceed and requested that \$75,000 be earmarked from contingency to later be determined how to proceed and there were no objections.

The Chairman called for the discussion of the proposed request to secure the Spring Run Bridge landing for complete and total public access. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Currently, the landscape is not in compliance with the ADA guidelines. If possible, establishing compliance would be a significant operational task costing over \$500,000. It was shared that permits must be approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Protection Department with the lengthy time frame being 1.5 years. Rail designs would ideally prevent children from slipping through and the cost for that is about \$13,000-\$15,000. Operational maintenance and public safety concerns were shared. Staff provided the professional opinion, based on the potential risk and possible liability, to restrict public access to the Spring Run area and only allow access for maintenance. Commissioner Edwards shared that he is still asking for a site visit to find a way to encourage tourism.

Mr. McCoy shared that the next meeting will be on Monday, January 9, 2023.

Commissioner Johnson shared that he has enjoyed serving with his fellow Commissioners [during the year]. Commissioner Gray wanted to thank Chairman Cohilas for the years of service to the Board. Commissioner Jones asked about the status of the disaster money and the Radium Springs grant. Mr. McCoy will provide an update on the disaster money and shared that the Chairman-Elect has been briefed. Chairman Cohilas spoke about funding for Radium Springs and said that an update can be provided. Commissioner Jones ended by sharing sentiments for Chairman Cohilas. The Chairman provided reflections from his eight years of service and thanked everyone.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK