



REGULAR MEETING

July 01, 2024
10:00 AM

Albany-Dougherty Government Center
222 Pine Ave, Room 100, Albany, GA 31701

AGENDA

The public will also have access to the live meeting by accessing the Dougherty County Georgia Government Facebook page at facebook.com/Dougherty.ga.us or viewing the public government access channel (Channel 16).

1. Call the meeting to order by Chairman Lorenzo Heard.
2. Roll Call.
3. Invocation.
4. Pledge of Allegiance.
5. Minutes.
 - a. Consider for action the Minutes of the June 3 Regular Meeting and June 10 Work Session. **ACTION:**
6. Delegations (*The Commission will hear comments on those items pertaining to Dougherty County for which a public hearing has not been held or scheduled. Please be brief, to the point, and considerate of time for others*).
 - a. Larry Thomas, Vice-Chair of Board of Tax Assessors and Adam Bridges, Chief Tax Appraiser are present to update the Board on the 2026 revaluation.
7. Updates from the Acting County Administrator.
 - a. **REMINDER** - The Administrative Offices of Dougherty County Board of Commissioners will be closed on Thursday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day.
8. Updates from the County Attorney.
9. Updates from the County Commission.

10. Consider for action the recommendation from the County Attorney to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and then to adjourn. **ACTION:**

Dougherty County's Vision Statement

Dougherty County will be a committed leader in sustaining a high quality of life by partnering with citizens, businesses, and other government agencies to make this a community of choice for living, working, and leisure activities.

Dougherty County's Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life for all our citizens by being accessible and good stewards of our resources while delivering cost-effective, responsive, services with integrity, fairness, and friendliness.

Individuals with disabilities who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities are required to contact the ADA Coordinator at 229-431-2121 promptly to allow the County to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

June 10, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on June 10, 2024. Community Advocate Geraldine West Hudley sang a son by Ella Baker in support of the County's upcoming Juneteenth Community Celebration. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome. Also present were Acting 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 minutes of the May 20th Regular Meeting.

The Chairman recognized Public Information Officer Phyllis Banks to update the Commission on the upcoming 2024 Juneteenth Event. A video was shown and an interview with Daniella Patterson with the Thronateeska revealed a connection to events in 1865 revealing a poem written by Karen Bowen relative to Juneteenth. PIO Banks provided treats and informed the Board of the significance of the colors. Accolades were given and the Commissioners made suggestions for future events to include dates, times, local vendor participation, and a Commissioner sitting on the planning committee. She did clarify the use of several new local vendors. Mr. Brooks shared that the Commission could consider an item pertaining to governance to discuss which additional committees they would like a Commissioner or citizens to participate in. Ms. Banks shared the positive collaboration experience she has had with the City of Albany.

The Chairman called for zoning consideration for Dave Patel, applicant, and C. W. Geer, Jr., owner, (24-027) request to rezone a 2.83-acre parcel from C-1 (Neighborhood Mixed-Use Business District) to C-2 (General Mixed-Use Business District). The rezoning would allow the development of a commercial development. The property is on 1542 South Mock Road parcel. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director addressed. The Public Hearing and Action on this item are scheduled for the June 17, 2024 Regular Meeting. The desire was for commercial retail space.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the contract from Flint River Consulting (Albany, GA) to survey and perform a subsurface investigation for Phase I of the Dougherty County Stabilization Project on Gillionville Road in the amount of \$35,100. Funding is available in SPLOST VI. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, Public Works Director Chuck Mathis, and Engineering Manager, Jeremy Brown addressed. Mr. Brown clarified that this was a professional service with an existing relationship with the vendor. He answered questions from Commissioner Johnson regarding TSPLOST funding use and Phase 2.

The Chairman called for the recommendation from Keep Albany Dougherty Beautiful (KADB) to apply for a GA Environmental Protection Division Scrap Tire Abatement Reimbursement (STAR) Grant in the amount of \$75,000. The grant will be used for abatement, disposal, and the scrapping of used tires discarded at illegal dumping sites all over the City and County to aid in keeping our community clean and livable. This is a reimbursable grant with no local match. KADB Executive Director Jwana Washington and CDBG-DR & Grants Program Manager Harriet Hollis addressed. Ms. Hollis shared that this was a reimbursable grant, but no money was to be expended by the County. They explained how the funding process by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) was being handled. The Commission shared comments and potential concerns were addressed. The concern and request of the majority of members were to have multiple collection sites. The Chairman asked the ladies to please research the suggestions and partnerships that could make the program more effective and attractive for citizens.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to establish a Tenant Based Task Force to assist in the development of a Master Plan for the Dougherty County Judicial Building. The Dougherty County Judicial Building needs a comprehensive, cost-effective, and operationally efficient Master Plan. Approval is requested to obtain the necessary authority to create a “Judicial Building Task Force” to work with the architectural firm of SRJ Architects, Inc. to develop the comprehensive plan. Funding to support this developing plan will follow for Board approval in FY 2025. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey, and Architect, Mike Johnson, SRJ Architects addressed. Superior Court Judges Joseph Dent and Denise Marshall were present. Mr. Brooks said that the needs for the Judicial Building have been shared with the Board. There were many tenants in the building, and we needed to be sensitive to everyone’s needs. In addition, it was noted that this was why the Task Force Committee was significant. Architect Johnson is very familiar with the building and Ms. Hailey said that there had not been enough money to redesign the space. The building was built in the 60’s and was not used as initially designed. It was planned for this to be a phased approach to include evaluation of other sites. Commissioner Newsome asked to be the Board’s representative on the Task Force. Mr. Brooks shared that the estimated cost for the Master Plan and services that need to be broken out was a little under \$400,000. He clarified for Commissioner Gaines that a budget had not been approved. This request was to establish a Task Force that has a minimal cost associated with its creation. Upon the comment by Commissioner Jones, the Chairman clarified that the building belonged to the County, and he has a strong interest in ensuring that Municipal Court will return to the Judicial Building. It was noted that the City of Albany and other tenants pay [rent]. Judge Dent provided updates on the upgrades and progression made noting that the second system was updated at no cost to the County based on a grant received. He also requested to be on the Task Force and Judge Marshall thanked the Board for their support.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to approve the alcohol application from Mahadev Cordele, Inc., Alpeshkumar A. Patel licensee, dba Stop N Shop, at 700 Cordele Road for Package-Beer and Wine. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal’s Office recommended approval. Chief Deputy Anthony Donaldson, Code Enforcement Department, addressed. Chief Donaldson shared that this was a transfer of ownership and clarified that this was in District 6.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the nomination for County Clerk Jawahn Ware to serve as the Commission's Voting Delegate at the NACO Business Session on July 15, 2024. Chairman

Lorenzo Heard addressed. The Chairman shared that Commissioner Jones usually attends but could not do so and asked for support of Clerk Ware.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the Task Order from Atlantic Coast Consulting to proceed with professional services to Solid Waste for the modifications of the Horizontal and Vertical Expansion of the Dougherty County Fleming/Gaissert Road Municipal Solid Waste Landfill. The total contract amount for the Task Order shall not exceed \$225,000. Atlantic Coast Consulting is the County's current consultant company. Funding is budgeted in the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks and Solid Waste Interim Director Melvin Williams addressed. Consultant, David Hamilton, Atlantic Coast Consulting, was present. Mr. Brooks shared that this was the topic that we had discussion on in the Finance Committee Meeting.

The Chairman called for the presentation and review of the proposed update to the Vegetation Ordinance based on recommendations by the Governmental Affairs Committee and input by consultant Molly Esswein with Jarrard & Davis, LLC. Committee Chairwoman Gloria Gaines, Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, and County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Molly Esswein was available via teleconference. Commissioner Gaines shared that there were "on the ground real problems" that the Commissioners were trying to address. She thanked all for their participation and believed the documents were in good voting order. Attorney Shalishali mentioned the historical concern that was presented by Commissioner Edwards. Some specific revisions to the policy were noted and Commissioner Gray clarified his request for the \$25 citation fee. Commissioner Gaines and others shared that we want to keep our areas clean but should be consistent across the Board with fees. Commissioner Edwards requested that the request not be held for the potential fee.

The Chairman called for the presentation and review of the proposed update to the Timber Harvesting Ordinance based on recommendations by the Governmental Affairs Committee and input by Molly Esswein with Jarrard & Davis, LLC. Committee Chairwoman Gloria Gaines, Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, and County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Commissioner Gaines provided additional sentiments and Attorney Shalishali shared that the PIO provided concerns and he thanked Ms. Esswein. He mentioned key aspects of the model ordinance and Ms. Esswein was available via teleconference to respond to questions from the Board.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept Option B for the improvement of access points from the County Right-of-Way joining the Cul-de-Sac of Shady Glen Lane in the amount of \$4,120 as recommended by the Public Works Committee. Funding is available from TSPLOST. The purchase is within the Administrator's authority but discussion amongst the full Board was requested. Public Works Committee Chairman Ed Newsome and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Mr. Brooks shared that there was a request for the Board to review other options not selected by the Committee. Commissioner Newsome said that the staff recommendation was supported and Chairman Heard shared that the item will be presented next week.

The Chairman called for the presentation and review of the proposed FY 2025 Budgets as recommended by the Finance Committee. Finance Committee Chairman Clinton Johnson, Acting

County Administrator Barry Brooks, and Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld addressed. Commissioner Johnson thanked the Finance members, Board members and staff for working on a good presentation. Mr. Brooks provided comments and turned the presentation over to Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld. She shared that our amended FY24 budget was \$92,108,421 and the proposed FY25 budget is \$98,911,413 which was a 7.4% increase. In regard to the FY 24 year-end projections, the beginning fund balance was \$26,414,352, unaudited with estimated revenues through 6/30/2024 of \$63,225,000 and to date estimated expenditures of \$62,000,000. There was a projected overage of \$1,225,000 received, but it was noted that all expenditures have not been received giving an estimated fund balance for 6/30/2024 of \$27,639,352. Ms. Westenfeld reminded the Board that in FY23 over \$9 million in ARPA funds were received that we did not receive in future years. The Capital Improvement Program was discussed. The proposed FY25 CIP Fund Balance is \$1,231,702 with planned expenditures of \$388,456. In regard to the Special Services District, the unaudited beginning balance was \$9,745,054 as of 7/1/2023 with estimated revenue through 6/30/2024 of \$8,966,591, estimated expenditures of \$8,455,010 providing a project ending net position at 6/30/2024 of \$10,256,635. It was noted that the proposed FY25 budget is \$10,453,726. For the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, as of 7/1/2023, the unaudited beginning balance was \$28,440,443 with estimated revenues through 6/30/2024 of \$5,556,000 with estimated expenditures of \$4,363,874 providing an overage of \$1,192,126 for an estimated net position of \$29,632,569 as of 06/30/2024. The proposed FY25 budget is \$4,451,760 and the proposed Capital Outlay expenditures are \$3,407,500. Commissioner Johnson shared that there was still pending approval of a CPI for tipping fees which may change the numbers. He also said that most of the specific questions posed by Commissioner Gaines would be addressed by our consultant, Davenport. Mr. Brooks shared most of the answers are usually provided during the millage rate presentation. However, information will be sought before approval.

Mr. Brooks reminded the Board that the Governmental Affairs Committee will meet at 1 p.m. today in Room 120. He also shared that the Clerks were working to schedule a Recreation Committee Meeting. It was expected that the FY23 audit will be provided before the June 15th deadline. He provided an update on Spring Flats and County Line Road, sharing that there have been fatal accidents at this intersection and based on a traffic study done by Worth County, they presented the request to Commissioner Jones for improvement. Dougherty County would fund the \$40,000 project and be reimbursed 50% by Worth County. This [final amount] was under the purview of Mr. Brook's authority, but he wanted to update the Board on the discussion with Commissioner Jones. There were no objections to proceeding with the correction and there was no request to place the item on the agenda. Commissioner Jones added insight on the corrective action and thanked Public Works for their support. Mr. Brooks confirmed for Commissioner Johnson that this was TSPLOST eligible. Upon a question by Commissioner Edwards, Mr. Brooks shared that having a policy was always good for reference. Commissioner Edwards said that there was no current policy and Mr. Brooks shared that there was an engineering study that supported the need. Commissioner Gray left at 12:02 p.m. The Board thanked Ms. Hudley and former Fire Chief Eugene Anderson for being present in the meeting. Commissioner Johnson thanked Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld and Interim Assistant Finance Director Kim Woods for doing well on their first presentation. He stressed that the Board always wanted to hear the needs of the department managers. Commissioner Johnson requested that work with Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA) needed to be done and not be held up

for the [including of the] Albany Dougherty Land Bank. Commissioner Gaines highlighted the conference that City of Albany Commissioner Jon Howard had on poverty. She thanked Mr. Brooks for the work being done to address a concern in her district. Commissioner Jones recognized Attorney Shalishali for his two years of service to the County. The Chairman commended Ms. Sherrell Byrd and SOWEGA Rising for their event pertaining to Gun Violence and asked that a moment of silence be given for Dr. Eugene Sherman who recently passed to reflect on his life.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

June 3, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on June 3, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Anthony Jones, Clinton Johnson, and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Attorney Alex Shalishali, Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, 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. Commissioner Victor Edwards was absent.

After the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by the Chairman, he called for approval of the minutes of the May 6th Regular Meeting and May 13th Work Session.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Newsome, the minutes were unanimously approved.

The Chairman recognized SOWEGA Rising Founder and Executive Director Sherrell Byrd to accept the proclamation recognizing the first Friday, June 7, 2024 as National Gun Violence Awareness Day in Dougherty County. Ms. Byrd shared that it was "Wear Orange Week" in the nation, and this was the 3rd annual proclamation in our community. She requested that our leaders take a strong stance and create policies against gun violence. It was noted that there was an alarming rate of gun violence among the youth in our community. The week's events were shared and Commissioner Johnson and Chairman Heard asked for examples of what others were doing. Ms. Byrd provided examples highlighting the need for a gun task force. Many members agreed that many individuals needed to be involved, stressing the involvement of the youth. Mr. Tracy Taylor, Yolanda Brown, the mother of youth Nigel Brown who was killed in our community and his siblings were also present. Mr. Brooks said that he would work with the City of Albany to light the foundation orange to support the gun violence week. After the reading of the proclamation, Ms. Byrd shared the alarming rate of black maternal health death rates. Her organization is working with the state to create a program through the Morehouse School of Medicine to be community perinatal navigators also known as doulas. Three women Dwan Ashe, Phylicia Price and Sharri Anderson were present, and Deputy County Clerk Bristeria Clark Hope was also recognized as a participant. The proclamation reads as follows:

**2024 DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA PROCLAMATION
DECLARING THE FIRST FRIDAY IN JUNE TO BE**

NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS DAY

This proclamation declares the first Friday in June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day in Dougherty County Georgia to honor and remember all victims and survivors of gun violence and to declare that we as a country must do more to end this public health crisis.

WHEREAS, every day, more than 120 Americans are killed by gun violence and more than 200 are shot and wounded, with an average of more than 18,000-gun homicides every year; and

WHEREAS, in Georgia (state) has 1,927-gun deaths every year, with a rate of 17.9 deaths per 100,000 people, a crisis that costs the state \$23.9 billion each year, of which \$597 million is paid by taxpayers. Georgia has the 15th highest rate of gun deaths in the US; and

WHEREAS, in January 2013, Hadiya Pendleton was tragically shot and killed at age 15; and on June 7, 2024 to recognize the 27th birthday of Hadiya Pendleton (born: June 2, 1997), people across the United States will recognize National Gun Violence Awareness Day and wear orange in tribute to -(1) Hadiya Pendleton and other victims of gun violence; and (2) the loved ones of those victims; and

WHEREAS, the idea was inspired by a group of Hadiya's friends, who asked their classmates to commemorate her life by wearing orange; they chose this color because hunters wear orange to announce themselves to other hunters when out in the woods, and orange is a color that symbolizes the value of human life; and

WHEREAS, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to wear orange on June 7th, the first Friday in June 2024, to help raise awareness about gun violence; and

WHEREAS, by wearing orange on June 7, 2024 Americans will raise awareness about gun violence and honor the lives of gun violence victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, we renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the hands of people who should not have access to them and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our families and communities safe.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Chairman Lorenzo L. Heard of the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County declares the first Friday in June 7, 2024, to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day. I encourage all citizens to support their local communities' efforts to prevent the tragic effects of gun violence and to honor and value human lives.

This the 3rd day of June, 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: _____
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman

The Chairman recognized Angel Gray, Deputy Director of Planning & Development Services, to provide an overview of the Albany Dougherty Land Bank. Ms. Gray highlighted how the Land Bank was created and shared that the primary purpose was to return tax delinquent properties to productive use. Acquisition and disposition of properties were discussed. The vast accomplishments including partnerships and community developments were presented to the Board. Commissioner Jones encouraged Ms. Gray to share the personal recognition she received. She provided in-depth information pertaining to tax foreclosures (in-rem), success stories with this type of acquisition, and potential partnerships with Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA).

The Chairman recognized Cedrick Shelton, Owner of Tim's Artistic Art, to discuss procurement concerns in regard to his business services not being utilized.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from Public Works to apply for the FY 2024 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Local Road Assistance (LRA) Supplemental Funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation in the amount of \$558,492.34. The funds will be used for adding a sidewalk on the north side of Honeysuckle from the railroad tracks to Radium Springs Road, adding a turn lane off of Honeysuckle into the Radium Springs Middle School, and resurfacing 1.05 miles of roads. There is no local match required. The application deadline is June 15th. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis and Engineering Manager Jeremy Brown addressed. Mr. Brown explained that the County typically has a 30% match for LMIG, but the supplemental funding requires no match. Additional information regarding the project design was shared.

Commissioner Newsome moved for approval. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Gaines asked for clarity on a statement made. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation for three Speed Hump Installations for Phoebe Road (Phoebe Park Subdivision). The estimated cost is \$17,055 and funding is available in TSPLOST. The County's Traffic Calming Policy requires that the Commission approve or deny the request. In the May 20, 2024, Regular Meeting action was not taken. County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Attorney Shalishali shared that on May 20th the Board appeared to take action on this item; however per Robert's Rules of Order, there needed to be a motion, second, and action. Upon the question of Commissioner Johnson, the Attorney mentioned that our ordinance adopted the use of Robert's Rules; however, if our rules conflict with Robert's Rules, ours take precedence.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion. The motion failed with two ayes by Commissioners Newsome and Jones and four nays by Commissioners Johnson, Gray, Gaines, and Chairman Heard.

The Chairman called for consideration of the proposed board appointment to the ASPIRE Behavioral Health and Development Disability Services Board. Attorney Shalishali said that there was clarification to be made regarding the original vote of 3/2 on May 6, 2024. Attorney Shalishali had previously shared that under Robert's Rules of Order with abstains, the majority prevailed. However, our ordinance dictates that there needed to be four votes for a quorum. The nomination by Commissioner Jones for Mr. Cooper failed with five nays by Commissioners Newsome, Johnson, Gray, Gaines, and Chairman Heard. Upon the nomination by Commissioner Gaines, Commissioner Clinton Johnson was appointed to the ASPIRE Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Services Board to fill a three-year term ending June 30, 2027, with five ayes by Commissioners Newsome, Johnson, Gray, Gaines, and Chairman Heard and one nay by Commissioner Jones.

Mr. Brooks will be meeting with the Interim City Manager to discuss Municipal Court, the [Judicial Building] Task Force, and downtown security including the Government Building. It was added that the Board would like to split the costs 50/50. It was mentioned that the City of Albany was seeking a certified 911 center, and the County may have to make policy changes pertaining to the upgrade. It was shared that the County's MOU will need to be clarified for the tennis center and there will be a Finance Committee Meeting at 10 am on the upcoming Wednesday. Attorney Shalishali said that \$19,904.30 would be received on the opioid settlement and commended the City's Attorney, Nathan Davis, on his retirement. Upon the request of Commissioner Johnson, the Attorney clarified the use of funds from the settlement. Commissioner Gray suggested that there be an oversight panel created to make suggestions for funds and did not object to the topic being settled through the Public Health Committee. Commissioner Newsome recognized Commissioner Russell Gray for being named the Vice Chair of ACCG's Health and Human Services Policy Committee. Commissioner Johnson invited all to the upcoming Finance Committee Meetings and shared an update from the tour of the Jail. He commended the building on its good condition despite being 35 years old. It was shared that the County needed to be on the radar for the next steps on the best approach for the Jail. Mr. Brooks clarified information regarding the life cycle and department needs. Commissioner Gaines shared that she was not sure how to address the rising population of the Jail. Mr. Brooks addressed and reminded the Board that we were hosting other inmates due to renovations to other facilities. Commissioner Jones shared the same sentiments with Commissioner Gray and wished City Attorney Nathan Davis a great retirement. Chairman Heard congratulated Commissioner Gaines who will continue serving District 5 and recognized that the upcoming Wednesday will be the first anniversary of Mr. Brooks serving the County.

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

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

There being no further discussion, the Board entered into Executive Session at 12:02 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK