

## Washington County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting

July 11, 2019

9:00am

**Commissioners Present:** Horace Daniel, Doug Watkins, Edward Burten, James Hitchcock,

**Prayer**

**Pledge**

**Call to Order**

### **Approval of Past Minutes**

- A motion was made by Commissioner Burten to approve the minutes from the previous regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion to approve those minutes passed with a show of hands.

### **Bills**

- A motion was required to approve the bills for the past month as follows:
  - Administrative & Other \$215,974.78
  - Road Department \$98,565.38
  - Sheriff Dept. & Jail \$115,892.64
  - Courthouse \$35,803.06
  - EMA \$2,759.16
  - E-911 \$103,284.23
  - Landfill \$69,578.47

A motion was made by Commissioner Watkins to approve the bill for the past month, seconded by Commissioner Burten. The motion was passed by a show of hands.

### **Road Department Update**

- The Roads Superintendent explained the progress being made on the Lamar's Creek Road project, stating that nearly all the dirt work and cuttings were complete. The grass cutting crews are roughly 75% through the first cut of the year and are currently in the Davisboro area. The delivery status on the tractor and mower approved for purchase earlier this year is still unknown as far as an exact date is concerned.

### **Appointments**

- Property Re-evaluation – Barry & Joy Pendry
  - Mr. and Mrs. Pendry discussed the assessment for their property located at 701 W. Church St. in Sandersville. They stated that their new assessment increase was excessive and unrealistic, and expressed concern for other property owners in the County. They express further concern over the use of private firm to perform the re-evaluations in the County, as the firm was based out of Atlanta, stating that values in metropolitan areas are vastly different from values in rural areas of the state. They discussed their experience with the Board of Equalization and the factors that they felt should have significantly lowered their appraised value. They did reveal that they received a

reduction on their valuation, but were still unsatisfied with the result. In addition, they requested that property taxes be rolled back and that an exemption be established on education property taxes for seniors.

- Chairman Daniel asked interim Chief Appraiser Kathy Reynolds to explain the process of the valuations. Ms. Reynolds stated that the Pendry's did appeal and receive a reduction from the Board of Equalization, and that if they were unhappy with the result that they have the option to appeal to Superior Court. She went on to state that GMASS was brought in to assist with re-evaluations due to the loss and turnover of employees in the Tax Assessors office, and challenges in keeping trained staff to properly conduct the appraisals. Chairman Daniel asked Ms. Reynolds if she would continue to talk with the Pendry's and help them with any appeals in the future. Ms. Reynolds agreed to do so.
- **Information Regarding Elderly, Disabled & Handicapped Citizens – Ms. Mary Anne Allison Bass**
  - Ms. Bass did not attend the meeting to discuss this item.
- **2020 Census – Ty Harps**
  - Mr. Harps introduced himself and explained his duties with the US Census Bureau. He reviewed the importance of the census and insuring that everyone is counted, as it determines the amounts of federal and state funding that a county will receive. He stated that citizens will have 3 options of submitting their information: traditional mail, over the telephone, and via mobile devices or computers. He encouraged the creation of a local Complete Count Committee to promote citizens to be counted. He also asked the Board of Commissioners to pass a resolution to partner with the census bureau to foster coordination and collaboration.

#### **Old Business – None**

#### **New Business**

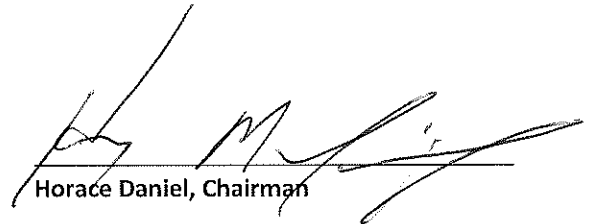
- **DFCS Board Appointment – Julia Poythress**
  - The County Administrator explained that Mr. Bern Anderson had resigned from the DFCS board and that Ms. Poythress has agreed to serve on the board if appointed. The County Administrator explained that she is highly recommended, very intelligent and would be an excellent addition to the DFCS board. Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to appoint Ms. Poythress to the DFCS board.
  - A motion was made by Commissioner Watkins to appoint Ms. Poythress to the DFCS Board, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.
- **Railroad Crossing at Jones Road**
  - The County Administrator explained that Norfolk Southern has approached the County requesting the closure of the railroad crossing on Jones Road. Norfolk Southern has cited the low traffic count and accidents that have occurred at that crossing in the past. Norfolk Southern is willing to pay \$25,000 to the County for the closure and utilize \$7,500 in Georgia Department of Transportation funds to remove the crossing. This item will be advertised in the newspaper for public comment and will not be voted on at this meeting.
- **Contract Ratification**
  - Helton Electric
    - Air Conditioning Unit at Library
    - \$5,455.00 on June 21, 2019
  - Mel Daniel Heating & Cooling

- Replacement of Lighting in Gym and Tennis Courts
  - \$11,678.00 on June 24, 2019
- A motion was made by Commissioner Burten to ratify the contracts, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.
- SPLOST 8 Projects
  - The County Administrator explained that the SPLOST 8 referendum would be taking place in November and that the County needed to establish the categories in which projects would be funded for the County Level II projects as well as the Level I projects. The County Administrator presented the following categories for funding for Level I: Jail and EMA Radio System. The following was presented for Level II projects: Transportation, Road Department Equipment, Fire Departments, Sheriff's Office Equipment, Recreation Department, Emergency Medical Services, and Animal Control. The percentages and projected amounts applied to each category will be approved at a later meeting.
  - A motion was made by Commissioner Watkins to accept the project categories, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Chairman Comments**

**Meeting Adjourned**

**Public Comment Session**



Horace Daniel, Chairman

**Attest:**



Dustin Peebles, County Administrator/Clerk