

Washington County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting
February 9, 2023
9:00am

Commissioners Present: Horace Daniel, Doug Watkins, Bobby Jackson, James Hitchcock, Frank Simmons

Prayer & Pledge

Approval of Previous Minutes

- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approved the minutes of the previous meeting. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion to begin the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.

Bills

- Chairman Daniel read the bills to be ratified in the following categories and amounts:
 - Administrative & Other \$1,170,530.60
 - Road Department \$132,662.81
 - Sheriff's Office & Jail \$82,474.79
 - Courthouse \$54,563.12
 - EMA \$1,521.63
 - E-911 \$186,036.03
 - Landfill \$90,298.47
- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the expenditures. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.

Road Department Update

- Mr. Holmes stated that work is being done on JS Veal Road to repair drainage issues, while motor grader crews are in the North Sparta-Davisboro Road and North Indian Trail areas. Garbage pickup is being done around the Tennille-Harrison Road area, and dumpsters are being changed out at various locations as needed. Commissioner Simmons asked for a review of the condition on Ivey Drive, and Commissioner Hitchcock asked for the wash-boarding of Stephens Road to be smoothed.

Appointments

- Magistrate Court – Charles White
 - Mr. White introduced himself and inquired of the process for the replacement of the magistrate judge. The County Attorney stated that the superior court of the district that Washington County is in will make the appointment. He went on to say that an advertisement has been placed in the newspaper for anyone that is interested to apply to the superior court judges' office, and that any recommendation letters for certain applicants should be sent there as well. In closing, he stated that the Commissioners have no say in the appointment according to state law and provided Mr. White with a copy of the law pertaining to this matter.
 - Mr. White asked why there wasn't a special election. The County Attorney explained that the state law does not call for that, only the appointment by the judges of superior court.

- Quarterly Chamber Update – Katie Moncus
 - Ms. Moncus gave an update on the activities of the Chamber of Commerce to the Commissioners and attending public. The Chamber has surpassed 300 member, with 39 new members and an 87% retention rate of prior members. She stated that the Chamber has reached its sponsorship goal and will have new events for this year, along with the typical meetings and events that have been held. The Commissioners thanked Ms. Moncus for her work in the community and facilitating a successful Chamber.

- Great American Cleanup – Carly Nielsen
 - Ms. Nielsen introduced herself as a member of the Ogeechee River Keepers and announced that the organization would be participating in the Great American Cleanup, which is a day in April, the 29th this year, devoted to cleaning up areas that are littered. She stated that volunteers and community partners are needed to make this a successful event, along with suggested locations that need cleanup. She asked that the suggested locations be waterways or drainage areas to keep in line with the organization's mission of keeping waterways clean. Ms. Nielsen gave out her information and encouraged anyone with suggestions or volunteers to reach out to her at any time. The Commissioners thanked her for attending the meeting and the organization for taking on the cleanup project.

Old Business

- Alcohol Applications
 - The County Administrator explained that the application from the prior meeting was not contested from anyone in the public and that the investigative report on Ms. Nimmalla came back with no issues. Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the license. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
 - The County Administrator stated that two more applications were received: Mr. David Ellison for the sale and consumption of distilled spirits at the Cornbread Poolhall, to go along with that of beer and wine already renewed, and Mr. Namraj Lamsal for the sale of beer of wine at the Warthen Express. He stated those applications would be advertised for public comment and voted on at the next meeting.

- Tax Assessment Proposal
 - The County Administrator explained that the Tax Assessors office is currently behind in the assessment process as the office has had issues with finding suitable employees that can do the job and pass the certification exams. He stated that a proposal was obtained by the chief appraiser to help the office catch up on the year or more appraisals that they are behind. He stated that the contractor would perform the duties necessary to get the office up to date on appraisals over an 18-month period. The cost of the proposal is approximately \$196,000 but will keep the County from violating rules set by the Georgia Department Revenue on tax appraisal. Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the proposal. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.

Business

- EMA – Rescue Equipment
 - The EMA Director stated that the request for rescue equipment this year is for cribbing. He stated that those items are made for stabilizing vehicles and equipment during an emergency extrication. He stated that the cost of the equipment is \$5,000 and will be placed on the County's rescue truck, with the equipment being replaced going to another rescue unit if possible. Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the purchase. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Architect Proposals – Courthouse Windows
 - The County Administrator stated that proposals were solicited for the architecture and design for the windows in the courthouse. He stated that the windows are deteriorating and need to be repaired or replaced. He stated that five proposals were received and reviewed, with the recommended proposal being that from Architectural Collaborative (Arcollab). He stated the Arcollab had the best proposal and the most relevant experience with a reasonable cost of \$67,500 from start to finish on the project. Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the proposal. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Alcohol Ordinance Amendment
 - The County Attorney explained that this amendment was to clarify the sale of manufactured alcohol at distilleries, wineries, and breweries. He stated that the amendment would create the permit needed for those entities to sale at their establishment under the guidelines of state laws set forth, as the County did not have a permit established for this type of sale. Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the amendment. Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.

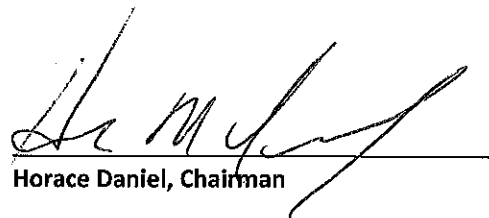
Executive Session – Property

- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to go into executive session. Commissioner Hitchcock made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Upon returning to the regular session, the County Administrator stated that the business discussed was in regards to the hospital and its plans after the management company contract was not renewed.

Meeting Adjourned

Comments from Chairman

Public Comment Session



Horace Daniel, Chairman

Attest:



Dustin Peebles, County Administrator/Clerk