

Washington County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting
November 9, 2023
9:00am

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

Prayer & Pledge

Motion to Begin

- Chairman Simmons made a motion to begin the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.

September Minutes

- Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve the September 2023 Board Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.

Bills

- The bills to be ratified were as follows:
 - Administrative & Other - \$170,899.16
 - Road Department - \$121,863.55
 - Sheriff office & Jail - \$112,319.52
 - Courthouse - \$50,083.70
 - EMA - \$1,043.50
 - E911 - \$136,955.68
 - Landfill - \$68,845.51
- Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve the expenditures, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.

Road Department Update

- Road Department Director Robert Holmes Jr. gave an update on where the crews are for the week. New County Administrator Derick Durden commented that G.P.'s plans to start the Jones Road repairs Monday (Nov. 13th) if the weather permits.

Appointments

- Cedar Creek Road Closure – Brantley Yu
 - Mr. Yu stated that he wanted to bring this back to the board for discussion to close off a portion of Cedar Creek Road. Mr. Yu stated that he had gotten in touch with some of the people that previously signed the petition to keep the road open and he thinks they were okay with having that portion closed now.
 - Commissioner Jackson stated that he is not up to date on this issue, and he suggested they possibly table this decision. Commissioner Hitchcock stated that this road is in his district, and he made the motion to table the decision on this road closure.

Commissioner Watkins seconded the motion. The motion to table Cedar Creek Road closure passed unanimously.

- Development Authority – Jayson Johnston
 - Mr. Johnston came to speak on the two items on the agenda for the Development Authority. He just stated that there were four reappointments being presented and he thinks the Development Authority has been working well together and would like to continue their work with the board and would like the commissioners to reappoint these four members for another four-year term. Mr. Johnston also stated that there is an Intergovernmental Agreement that states the Commissioners would continue to provide the ½ mil to support economic development. Administrator Derick Durden stated that these two items are on the New Business portion of the agenda to be voted on and they would proceed with the vote at that point.

Old Business

New Business

- Intergovernmental Agreement with Development Authority
 - Commissioner Watkins made the motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Hitchcock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Development Authority Re-appointments
 - The four individuals for re-appointment are: Sonny Barksdale, Travis Collins, Erica Harden, and Trey Sheppard.
 - Commissioner Simmons made the motion to approve the four re-appointments, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Library Board Re-appointments
 - There are three individuals for re-appointment on the Library Board for another three-year term. They are Randy Thomas, John Wilson, and Stacey Brown.
 - Commissioner Watkins made the motion to approve the three re-appointments. Commissioner Hitchcock seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Board of Health Re-appointment
 - Dr. Jennifer Tarbutton's term is expiring as the Physician on the Board of Health. They would like the Commissioners to re-appoint Dr. Tarbutton to serve an additional six-year term as the Physician for the Board of Health.
 - Commissioner Simmons made the motion to approve Dr. Tarbutton's re-appointment, seconded by Chairman Daniel. The motion passed unanimously.
- Recreation Department Board Re-appointment
 - The Recreation Board requested a representative from the Town of Harrison and the Town of Deepstep be appointed to serve on their Board. Harrison city clerk stated that Ms. Mattie Bivens would represent the Town of Harrison. The Mayor of Deepstep stated that Mr. Johnathan Veal would represent the Town of Deepstep.
 - Commissioner Watkins made the motion to approve Recreation Board appointments, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Fire Funding
 - There were four options that the Commissioners reviewed and received input from the public at three different meetings held at Tennille FD, Davisboro FD, and Deepstep FD.

The commissioners agreed to use the millage rate to help funding for the volunteer fire departments.


- Commissioner Jackson made the motion to create a special tax district outside the city of Sandersville to assess a 3.7 mil rate for funding a rural fire service budget. Commissioner Simmons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Hi-Lo Trail Grant Resolution
 - The Resolution for the Hi-Lo Trail states the Commissioners approve to pay \$3,000 in match funds and maintain the Trail once it is built.
 - Commissioner Simmons made the motion to approve the resolution. Seconded by Chairman Daniel. The motion passed unanimously.
- CDBG Grant Resolution – Mary Drive
 - The Resolution for this CDBG Grant is to help pave Mary Drive. Commissioner Jackson is working on getting an income survey for the residence on this road to determine if it qualifies for the CDBG Grant.
 - Commissioner Simmons made the motion to table this until all documentation is complete, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion to table passed unanimously.
- Resolution- Comprehensive Plan Amendment
 - This Resolution is to Amend the Comprehensive Plan so that it includes Hi-Lo Trail, Linton Park, Recreation Department Expansion, and possibly Mary Drive.
 - Commissioner Watkins approved the resolution. Commissioner Simmons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Road Agreement with Solar Panel Company
 - County Attorney Michael Howard explained that this agreement states that Washington County Solar is responsible for the repairs to all roads affected by the trucks coming in for construction of the solar farm project. The agreement states that once the solar project is complete, Washington County Solar is responsible for having all roads repaired at that time and the road construct contractor shall be approved by Atlas, the county's engineering firm.
 - Commissioner Hitchcock stated to Attorney Howard that he would like him to look into an ordinance for solar panel farms.
 - Commissioner Simmons made the motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion passed unanimously.
- Retiree Medical Changes
 - This is to change Retiree medical coverage and clarify when the retiree will come off the county's insurance once they are Medicare eligible. This is subject to Anthem creating a separate plan document for retirees.
 - Commissioner Watkins made the motion to approve these changes. Commissioners Simmons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Retirement Plan Changes
 - This is to change the match contribution from 50% to 100% of the first 6%, on amounts Participants contribute to the 457(b) Plan. This is subject to Anthem creating a separate plan document for retirees.
 - Commissioner Watkins made the motion to approve the changes, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion passed unanimously.

- Alcohol License
 - There was one Alcohol License to be approved, which was SanWar. Chairman Daniel dismissed himself from this vote due to his son being part owner of this business.
 - Commissioner Simmons made the motion to approve the license to sale & consume distilled spirits/beer/wine for SanWar. Commissioner Hitchcock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Contract Ratification
 - There were four contracts to be ratified. Two of the contracts were for G.P.'s who is repairing Jones Road. One was for Pat's Cleaning service to be the new cleaning company for all county buildings. The fourth one was for Tony's Lawn Service, and he cut trees around the Gazebo area.
 - Commissioner Watkins made the motion to approve all contracts. Commissioner Simmons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Comments

Meeting Adjourned: Motion made by Commissioner Hitchcock, Seconded by Commissioner Watkins. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment Session


Horace M. Daniel, Chairman

Attest:


Keri Sumner, County Clerk