

Washington County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting

March 12, 2020

9:00am

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

Prayer

Pledge

Call to Order

Approval of Past Minutes

- A motion was made by Commissioner Simmons to approve the minutes from the previous regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. 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 \$213,102.42
 - Road Department \$52,409.28
 - Sheriff Dept. & Jail \$44,262.35
 - Courthouse \$39,585.71
 - EMA \$3,880.41
 - E-911 \$6,848.96
 - Landfill \$62,285.80

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

Superintendent of Washington County Schools

- Chairman Daniel recognized Dr. Rickey Edmond to speak briefly before the beginning of the business of the meeting.
- Dr. Edmond stated that the school system is currently marketing the continuation of the E-SPLOST. He went on to say that the sales tax is vital for the continued upgrades and improvements to infrastructure, security, transportation, and technology utilized by the school system. He stated that the largest projects would be renovations to the middle school, as it is the oldest of all school building, and the former youth detention center to be utilized as an IGAL academy. The sales tax would also fund the purchase of new school buses that would be fueled by propane, which would save money on fueling costs, as well as upgrading the security systems for the schools. Commissioner Burten inquired as to how many buses would be purchased. Dr. Edmond stated that the purchase and integration of the new propane fueled buses would take time, but would effectively allow for a reduction in 10 school buses on the current list.
- He introduced Mrs. Sandra McMaster, the chief financial officer for the school system, and she stated that the sales tax is extremely important for the upkeep and well being of the schools. She stated that this would help the school system become proactive as opposed to reactive, and eliminate the need for any property tax increases in the future.

- Chairman Daniel thanked them for attending the meeting and presenting the information regarding the E-SPLOST that will be voted on in May of this year.

Road Department Update

- Mr. Waller stated that the Road Department will be experiencing the retirements of at least two long-tenured employees. He stated that Leroy Andrews Jr. and Ricky Sheppard will be retiring at the end of this month, which are the most experienced of the staff at the Road Department. He asked for the public to be patient as the department is hiring new operators and doing its best to keep up with the roads following a record amount of rainfall since the beginning of the year. He stated that the roads have been too wet to allow for motor graders and other machinery to fix the roads.
- Commissioner Hitchcock stated that Burdett Road was in need of attention as there was a large washout on the road.
- Commissioner Burten asked if anything had been done about the washout across Amerson Mill Road. Mr. Waller stated that both roads would be taken care of if they have not been already.
- Chairman Daniel commented on the erosion issues on the Lamars Creek Road project being severe, as well as the deterioration of Jones Road where dirt is being hauled to the Sandersville Truck Route project. The issues on those roads will have to be rectified by the contractors of each respective project.

Appointments

- Flooding Problems on Thornberry Drive – Teresa Lovett
 - Ms. Lovett introduced herself and stated that she lives on Thornberry Drive and understands that it is a private road, but pleaded with the commissioners to fix the roads and drainage issues that are prevalent in the area. She passed around photographs taken of the surrounding area following the rains that showed the extent of the issues. She also inquired as to who owns the roads, since it is not on the public road system.
 - Chairman Daniel stated that discussions were had with officials with the State of Georgia to determine if anything can be done to help, and that no promises could be made since it is a private road. He also stated that since it is private, if the County were to fix one private road, that would open the door for all private drives and roads to be maintained by the County, which is not feasible.
 - Commissioner Simmons stated that the County needs to fix the roads and drainage since they are tax-paying citizens of the County.
 - The County Attorney stated that the roads are owned by a neighborhood association that was formed several years ago. He stated that the association could raise money to have the roads fixed, since the roads are owned by the association.
 - Chairman Daniel stated that the issue would be investigated further and thanked Ms. Lovett for coming to the meeting and discussing those roads.
- Condition of Mary Drive – Betty Darrisaw
 - Ms. Darrisaw introduced herself and stated that she has been living on Mary Drive for 30 years. She went on to say the any time there is rain, the road is terrible with potholes, clogged ditches, accidents from people sliding around, and becomes nearly

impassable for school buses to travel on. She also stated that it is not fair for the citizens in that are to pay such taxes and the road not be fixed or paved, since it is the only road near the schools that is not paved already.

- Chairman Daniel stated that Mary Drive is second on the current list behind Kittrell Creek Road to be paved. He stated that the County cannot pave roads so quickly or easily, due to the costs and overall process to have a road paved.
- Commissioner Burten agreed that the road was in bad shape previous and need to be paved, but the list is followed in order unless a road is to be removed from the paving list.
- Ms. Darrisaw was thankful that the road is on the paving list, but would like to see it done within the next couple of years. Chairman Daniel stated that the County will get to it as soon as it can by following the policy set forth with the list. He thanked Ms. Darrisaw for voicing her issues with the road to the commissioners.

Old Business – None

New Business

- E-911 Computers
 - The County Administrator stated that the server and computers being utilized at the E-911 center have become obsolete and will no longer be updated or supported by any IT companies. He stated that one quote was received from EZ 911, the company that installed the dispatching system, to install the new equipment in the amount of \$29,700. Other IT companies were requested to provide a quote, but none felt comfortable installing those items with an emergency response system. He stated that not upgrading these items would leave the County at severe risk for hacking and other security issues.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the proposed quote. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- IT Services Contract
 - The County Administrator stated that the current contract has ended, but that the current company will continue its service until the end of this month. He stated that 3 proposals were submitted for IT Services for all County computers and network system, and that a committee of himself and 3 employees of the County was created to review and select the best overall proposal. Cogentes, Waddell & Company, and Bowen Technical Management. After review by the committee, the unanimous recommendation was Bowen Technical Management. Their proposal totaled an amount equal to \$45,420.00.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for motion to award the contract to the recommended company. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to award the contract, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Reforestation Contract
 - The County Administrator stated that the property in which timber was harvested on Kaolin Road needs to be sprayed, burned, and replanted. One bid was received from Hammock Forestry to take care of these items for \$21,875.00.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the forestry activities. Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.

- Executive Session
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session. Commissioner Simmons made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
 - Chairman Daniel reopened the public meeting.
 - The County Administrator explained that the executive session was in reference to a new building for the Elections office, as they are working out of several different locations. No votes were to be taken regarding any property at this time.

Chairman Comments

Meeting Adjourned

Public Comment Session



Horace Daniel, Chairman

Attest:



Dustin Peebles, County Administrator/Clerk