

Washington County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting

June 11, 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 \$272,275.19
 - Road Department \$41,852.26
 - Sheriff Dept. & Jail \$64,858.84
 - Courthouse \$55,969.87
 - EMA \$1,554.06
 - E-911 \$37,871.03
 - Landfill \$54,791.10

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.

Road Department Update

- Mr. Waller stated that the Road Department has not been able to utilize the services of the inmate work detail due to COVID-19 and asked the public to refrain from littering since the work detail's main duty was to remove garbage from County roads and rights-of-way. He also stated that a crew is working on cutting the overgrowth on Circle Drive, which has been a concern for the many citizens living in that area, and that Lamars Creek Road has been closed due to safety concerns.
- Mr. Waller stated that bids were received for oil and filters for the next fiscal year. Oil bids were received by Atkinson Oil for \$8,757.19, Rainey Oil for \$8,0236.19, and Schaeffer Oil for \$15,467.44. Filter bids were received by Great American Inc. for \$9,763.03, O'Reilly Auto Parts for \$12,120.26, and Twin City Auto Parts for \$9,743.94. Mr. Waller stated that the low bids were recommended for both items.
- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the low bids. A motion was made by Commissioner Simmons, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.

Appointments

- Weatherstone Dr. – Cassandra Jackson
 - Ms. Jackson announced that she was speaking on behalf of the citizens that live in the Fieldstone subdivision located off New Road. She stated that the citizens are in desperate need of road repairs, citing issues which include buses will not travel down the roads to pick up children, emergency vehicles having trouble getting to homes located in the subdivision, the people there have to take extra time to exit the subdivision due to the condition of the roads, and that the roads are hazardous and can damage vehicles easily. She went on to state that the residents living in that subdivision did not know or were not aware that the road would not be added to the County road system. She stated that years have gone by and nothing has been done to help the people with those roads, even though they pay their property taxes each year, and that the commissioners at that time should have spoken with each of the citizens buying property there to understand that the roads would not be included in the County road system.
 - Chairman Daniel stated that the board is aware of this subdivision and the road conditions there, as well as several other subdivisions constructed by the same individual that have the same issues. He asked Commissioner Burten to give his opinion since the Fieldstone subdivision is located within his district.
 - Commissioner Burten stated that the individual that constructed these subdivisions came to the commissioners and was given specifications for the roads in order for them to be added to the County road system once completed. He stated that the individual chose not to follow those guidelines, which resulted in the County not being able to add the roads. Ms. Jackson stated that the commissioners should not have allowed the roads to be built below standard, to which Chairman Daniel stated that the commissioners cannot dictate how roads are constructed on private property.
 - The County Attorney stated that the Home Owners Association was created by the previous county attorney, with that individual paying the overdue taxes out of his own pocket, to allow for the people in that subdivision to have control of the road and possibly be able to improve it enough so that the County would add it to the road system. He also stated that he had worked personally with ladies from the subdivision to seek out opportunities for grants to help with the repair of the road, but that each avenue for grants was closed since the state and federal government will not allocate funding toward privately owned properties. Ms. Jackson stated that the people did not understand that they would become owners of the roads after setting up the Homeowners Association for the subdivision and did not think the people there fully understood the process that they were getting into. She went on to ask what the solution for the issue would be. The County Attorney suggested that they speak with local companies that have the equipment needed to repair the road, to ask for in-kind services to help them with their issues. Ms. Jackson stated that the people in that area work and do not have the proper time to discuss any matters during the day.
 - Chairman Daniel stated that the property is private and that the County cannot interfere with private property. Ms. Jackson stated that she would advise the people there to disband the homeowners association and attend the next meeting to see what solutions the commissioners have for this issue.

Old Business

- Oconee River Boat Ramp
 - In light of the requests made at last month's meeting regarding access to a boat ramp located on the Oconee River on property owned by Thiele Kaolin, the County Attorney researched and developed a legal opinion on the matter of if there is public access and if the County has the authority to force Thiele to allow public access.
 - The County Attorney stated that a River Road did once exist in Washington County at some point in its history. However, this road is not on any County road system map dating back to 1974, maps before 1974 are not available. He stated that although the road may have been a public road at some point before 1974, it is clear that the road was abandoned by the County before that time, either by vote or by action. Since the road was abandoned, case law determines that the property in which the road is on would go to the landowners. In this situation, Thiele owns the entirety of the disputed area. As a result, the County has no legal authority to take possession of the road or any action to allow public access.

New Business

- Resolution – CARES Act Funding for Airport
 - The County Administrator explained that this resolution was required to authorize the execution of a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation in order to receive funding allocated for Kaolin Field as prescribed in the CARES Act.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Commissioner Simmons, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Emergency Road Repairs
 - Mr. Waller stated that Plantation Drive was in dire need of replacing or relining four pipes. He stated that the pipes were close to being inoperable and would cause road issues if not replaced or relined. He stated that since Plantation Drive is on the list for resurfacing this year, it would be pointless to resurface the road without having the pipes right, since that would require the removal of new pavement. Two quotes were received for relining the pipes by DBI in the amount of \$59,706 and Barksdale for \$67,750. Mr. Waller recommended the low bid. Commissioner Simmons commented that the board should consider awarding the bid to Barksdale, since they are a local company and can respond to issues quicker than the other if needed. Commissioner Hitchcock stated that \$8,000 is a large difference which could be spent on other items needed.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to award the bid to DBI. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion to award the bid to DBI, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed 4-0 with Commissioner Simmons abstaining.
 - The County Administrator explained that the bridge located on Agricola Road that crosses the Ogeechee River was in need a repair as a hole has developed in the pavement adjoining the bridge, causing that base to wash away allowing a clear view of the area beneath the bridge. He stated that C & H Paving, the company that has completed the County's resurfacing projects over the past few years, agreed to do the work for \$6,500.00, citing the

same issues occurring on the Glascock County side of the bridge previously. He stated that there is currently a steel plate covering the affected area to prevent any accidents, but the longer the County waits to repair the issues the more damage there will be to deal with.

- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the proposal. A motion was made by Commissioner Simmons to accept the proposal, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- FY 2021 Budget Amendment
 - The County Administrator stated that budget amendment for this year resulted in a \$98,800 difference of expenditures over revenues. He stated that this amendment included the purchase of the building for the Elections office for \$138,000, roof repairs for \$57,000, increased retirement costs for \$165,000, and increased garbage disposal costs for \$85,000, all of which were unanticipated costs. Without those costs, the County's amendment would have had a positive result with revenues much higher than expenditures.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the budget amendment. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion for approval, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Computer Upgrades
 - The County Administrator explained that four of the County's departments are operating with computers that have obsolete systems. He stated that these systems are no longer supported and pose significant security risks to the County's network system. He stated that the quoted price for one new computer is approximately \$900. He asked that the board approve an amount of up to \$11,000 to replace the obsolete machines.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the amount. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to allow the amount, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman Comments

Meeting Adjourned

Public Comment Session



Horace Daniel, Chairman

Attest:



Dustin Peebles, County Administrator/Clerk