

## Washington County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting

November 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 Watkins to approve the minutes from the previous regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Burten. 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 \$368,681.52
  - Road Department \$104,529.15
  - Sheriff Dept. & Jail \$101,625.66
  - Courthouse \$44,650.23
  - EMA \$2,789.22
  - E-911 \$141,952.63
  - Landfill \$65,754.99

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

### **E-911 Update**

- Sheriff Cochran explained to the public the transition of the E-911 Center to be under the umbrella of the Sheriff's supervision. Stating that a consultant was brought in to evaluate the center and make recommendations about its performance and needs. The recommendation of the consultant was to allow the Sheriff to be in charge of the center to make improvements needed. The Sheriff introduced Captain Corey King as the immediate supervisor of the center.
- Captain King stated that the overall morale of the center has increased. He stated that the shifts are now balanced shifts, as opposed to the previous style of scheduling. He stated that minor issues at the center have been addressed: indoor cameras, CAD system texts, and the mobile map. He stated that the telephone system currently in use at the 911 center is obsolete, and that he has contacted 2 companies for quotes to replace it. He went over a few other issues that were system related that would need attention in the future; such as garbled radio traffic, rearrangement of the wiring, rapid SOS for pinged locations. He stated that training has been scheduled for the dispatchers that are not certified as well, and that there were a couple of free software programs available to improve the service of the center.

- Commissioner Burten asked if the current system utilized by the Sheriff's office for mobile integration is being utilized by any other agencies. Captain King stated that only the Sheriff's office is using that program for now.
- Chairman Daniel thanked the Sheriff and Captain King for their efforts at the center.

### **Road Department Update**

- Mr. Waller stated that the Road Department has been working hard to catch up with the myriad issues facing the County with roads, trash, grass cutting, and grading. He stated that Covid-19 and extraordinary rainfalls have pushed them farther behind than usual. He stated that there are only a few roads left in the County that aren't passable following the rains from Hurricane Sally, and that precautions will be taken to mitigate damages from the winter rains where possible.
- Chairman Daniel thanked Mr. Waller for the work being done by the Road Department and expressed understanding for them being behind.

### **Appointments**

- Frankie Dixon – Law Enforcement Issue
  - Mr. Dixon stated that in 2017, under the previous Sheriff, his son Jonathan Dixon was "tazed and busted up" by the deputies responding to the call. He stated that his son needed help and "was out of his mind." He stated that his son was simply walking down the road, but had removed all of his clothing, and that his son was in need of being taken to the hospital for his condition or sent to a mental institution nearby. He stated that he went over the situation with the deputies, but said they were not accommodating to the issues taking place, quoting the deputies as saying "we have not heard what we needed to hear." In closing, Mr. Dixon asked the commissioners to provide the assistance that his son needs.
  - Chairman Daniel asked for the Sheriff to make any remarks he would like regarding the issues. Sheriff Cochran stated that he had discussed the situation with his team, and that Mr. Dixon's son was taken to the hospital to be evaluated, and subsequently discharged since he was not recommended for mental health treatment. He stated that Mr. Dixon's son admitted to taking PCP, to which Mr. Dixon stated his son was not using drugs. Sheriff Cochran stated that there is video footage available of the incident if needed.
  - Commissioner Simmons stated that, even though the incident occurred during the previous Sheriff's era, we are still responsible to take care of issues that arise.
  - Chairman Daniel asked the attorney for comments. The County Attorney stated that he would need to look into the issue before making any statements.
  - Commissioner Burten asked Mr. Dixon exactly what he was asking for from the commissioners, to which Mr. Dixon stated that he was asking for compensation for his son resulting from the mistreatment by the deputies.
  - Chairman Daniel asked Mr. Dixon to consult with the County Attorney regarding the matter.

### **Old Business – None**

## New Business

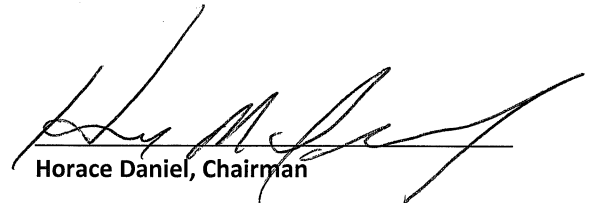
- Emergency Rescue Equipment
  - EMA Director Russell Riner stated that the equipment requested was part of the ongoing program to provide fire departments and rescue teams throughout the County the equipment needed to rescue those in peril. He stated that 2 units would be going to Deepstep Fire Department, while the other unit would be sent to Davisboro Fire Department. He stated that he supervises all the equipment and training for the equipment, which allows each of the departments to train together.
  - He went on to introduce the new Fire Chief for the City of Sandersville, Chief Elliott DeBiase. Chief DeBiase stated that he has been a fire fighter for 30 years and also has background with EMA. He stated that he is originally from Chicago but was most recently in Hardeeville, SC. He stated that he looks forward to living here and becoming a part of the community.
  - Chairman Daniel welcomed Chief DeBiase to Washington County and wished him well in his new post.
  - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the purchase of the rescue equipment. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Elections Building Improvements
  - The County Administrator explained that he had procured quotes for three different jobs at the elections building. He stated that the first was for the installation of new restroom and breakroom fixtures. He stated that he received one quote from McDonald Plumbing in the amount of \$2,992.00. The next item was for the installation of a glass panel wall to meet requirements of the State of Georgia on the counting of votes. He stated he received one quote from Ricks Glass in the amount of \$4,395.00. The final item was for the installation of spray-foam insulation. He stated that he received one quote from Sandersville Builders Supply in the amount of \$5,461.90. He stated that he solicited quotes from several different companies but only received those quotes in time.
  - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the improvements. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Library Board Appointments
  - The County Administrator explained that the Library Board requested the reappointment of Randy Thomas and John Wilson, as well as the appointment of Stacey Brown to fill the remaining term of Anne Prichard, who resigned from the post previously.
  - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to appoint the individuals to the Library Board. Commissioner Simmons made a motion for appointment, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Hospital Authority Appointment
  - The County Administrator explained that there was still an open position to fill for the Hospital Authority. He stated the Commissioner Burten made the recommendation for Vivian Pierce to serve on the authority. He stated that the chairman of the Hospital Authority, Jim Croome, had spoken with Ms. Pierce regarding the position. He stated that Mr. Croome felt like Ms. Pierce would be a welcomed addition to the authority.

- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to appoint Vivian Pierce to the Hospital Authority. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to appoint, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Sheriff's Office Vehicle Purchase
  - The County Administrator explained that the Sheriff had requested the purchase of two new Ford F-150 Police Responders. He stated that the Sheriff had procured two quotes for the vehicles: Brannen Motor Company in the amount of \$35,375.00 each, and Wade Ford for \$37,669.40 each. He stated that Brannen Motor Company was the recommended bidder, and that the Sheriff had the funds available through the FY 2021 Budget and fund in SPLOST 7.
  - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the purchase. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Executive Session – Property
  - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to enter into executive session. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
  - Upon re-entering the regular session, the County Administrator explained to the public that the executive session was for the discussion of refinancing the bonds of the jail. He stated that there is a strong possibility that the County will be able to save money on the interest of those bonds.

**Chairman Comments**

**Meeting Adjourned**

**Public Comment Session**



Horace Daniel, Chairman

**Attest:**



Dustin Peebles, County Administrator/Clerk