

Washington County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting
February 11, 2021
9:00am

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

Prayer

Pledge

Call to Order

Approval of Past Minutes

- A regular meeting in January was not held due to the increased transmissions of Covid-19.
- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Hitchcock to approve the minutes from the previous regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.

Bills

- A motion was required to approve the bills for the past two months as follows:

○ Administrative & Other	\$266,802.00	\$896,433.15
○ Road Department	\$76,124.90	\$46,490.71
○ Sheriff Dept. & Jail	\$79,657.74	\$58,146.60
○ Courthouse	\$41,948.40	\$44,250.36
○ EMA	\$713.65	\$26,067.42
○ E-911	\$6,226.70	\$130,908.13
○ Landfill	\$63,537.02	\$78,306.62

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.

Road Department Update

- Mr. Waller stated that the Road Department is doing its best to keep up with the conditions of roads. He stated that with the continuous rainy days it is difficult to scrape roads and keep gravel on them due to rainwater washing it away and creating washes in the roads. He asked the public to bear with the Road Department until more dry weather arrives.

Appointments

- Loaded Trucks – Scottie McCoy
 - Mr. McCoy stated that log, container, and dump trucks are travelling down South Sparta-Davisboro Road, ignoring the load limit signs. He stated that a majority of the traffic he has seen is trucks hauling containers. He stated that he has spoken with someone at the state office and that they are not willing to do anything. He asked if the County could do anything to help with issue
 - Chairman Daniel stated that the County will consult with the Georgia Department of Transportation for advice on the issue. He stated that Mr. Waller and Commissioner Burten will check into this with the GDOT.

- Mr. McCoy asked if the Sheriff's deputies or the Code Enforcement Officer could stop the trucks and issue citations if they are loaded. Commissioner Watkins expressed that he wasn't sure if the trucks could be stopped simply to check if they are loaded. The Sheriff stated that several citations have been issued, but that doesn't seem to fix the issue.
- Chairman Daniel stated thanked Mr. McCoy for bringing the issue to the attention of the commissioners and told him that the County would do what I could to address the issue.
- Hi Lo Trail – Mary Charles Howard
 - Ms. Howard introduced herself and handed out packets to each of the commissioners regarding the trail. She stated the organization is a non-profit entity with the main goal of establishing a cycling trail that spans from Athens to Savannah. She stated that the Firefly Trail, that was introduced in Athens, will reach to Union Point and would be a connecting point in the overall Hi Lo Trail. The trail would address several issues in the communities that the trail would go through, including health for children, tourism, connecting schools, property values, and providing safe places for everyone to cycle. She stated that the Firefly Trail began with what is called model miles, where a community commits to establishing one mile section of the trail and then the gaps are filled in over time. She stated that the old Wiggle and Twist railroad the goes between Tennille and Wrightsville would provide an excellent foundation for the trail in Washington County, and that discussions with the railroad has already begun. She stated that the project would utilize the PATH Foundation for assistance, which would do research, studies, estimates, and other required items to create a plan to establish the trail. She asked the County to provide a contribution of no more than \$3,500 to help begin raising funding for the plan. She stated that the plan would be completed by August 2021, considering the funding is procured.
 - Chairman Daniel stated that the commissioners would consider providing the funding for the plan. Ms. Howard was thankful for the consideration and the opportunity to speak about the trail with the commissioners. Chairman Daniel and the commissioners thanked her for attending the meeting and discussing the project.
- FY 2020 Audit – Brian Wright
 - Mr. Wright of Wright & Wright, P.C., the County's accounting auditor, presented the financial statements of Washington County for the fiscal year 2020. He stated that the County net position increased, where over the past several years it has decreased, signaling improvements are occurring in the County. He stated that the County's overall fund balance decreased approximately \$200,000 compared to the previous year. However, with the onset of Covid-19, an increase in costs, and a decrease in certain revenues, the County had a good year considering the unexpected changes that occurred. A copy of the audit is located in the Board of Commissioners' office for the public to review.

New Business

- Bond Refinancing
 - The County Administrator introduced Mr. William Camp (Raymond James), Mr. Jim Woodward (Gray Pannell & Woodward), and Ms. Cait Haygood (Gray Pannell & Woodward) to discuss the matter of the refinancing of jail bonds procured in 2013.

- Mr. Camp gave greetings and handed out packets to the commissioners for their review and began going over the details of the refinancing. He stated that the current rate of the bonds was 3.98% and that since the first discussion of the refinancing at all in November 2020, the rates have begun to go up. He stated that the new rate, with all costs included at \$10.9 million, would equate to 1.8412% that would net the County savings of approximately \$528,000 in present value terms. He stated that the closing for this would not occur until March, due to items that have to be done legally, but all rates and savings are fixed as of the approval of the resolution to refinance.
- Mr. Woodward stated that the only action item for the County to take is to pass a resolution to approve the execution of the refinancing. He stated the resolution would give the authority for the execution of any further documentation required to finalize the refinancing, which are the bond purchase agreement, creation of an escrow account, and an intergovernmental contract with the Public Facilities Authority.
- Chairman Daniel asked if the commissioners had any questions. There were none. He asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- **Broadband Ordinance**
 - The County Administrator explained that the proposed broadband ordinance was based on a model ordinance created and distributed by the Association County Commissioners of Georgia. He stated that the proposal makes the permitting process for broadband companies looking at establishing in Washington County is streamlined. He stated that this would also help in obtaining the Broadband Ready certification issued by the Department of Community Affairs. He stated that this would be advertised properly and read once more at the next regular meeting before any vote occurs on the matter.
- **Intergovernmental Agreements – Inmate Housing**
 - The County Administrator explained that since the inmates from the cities of Sandersville, Tennille, and Davisboro are housed in the County jail, there is a fee that can be collected by the municipal courts in which proceeds can be used to assist with costs of the jail. He stated that these agreements authorize the cities to collect those fees and remit them to the County and will be kept separately as prescribed.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the agreements. A motion was made by Commissioner Watkins, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.
- **Recreation Board Appointments**
 - The County Administrator explained that three vacancies on the board have received recommendations. Sam Brooks (Deepstep), Eric Braswell (Davisboro), and Julie Brantley (Harrison) were recommended by the mayors of each town to represent those areas of the County on the board.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the recommendations. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- **Elections Agreement – City of Oconee**
 - The County Administrator explained that City of Oconee would like to continue using the County for the implementation of its elections. He stated this agreement would provide for

the County to do so, and set reimbursement from the City for all costs related to any of their elections.

- Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Roof Replacement – Elections Building
 - The County Administrator explained that the building purchased to house the elections office in the future has issues with water leaks in several spots in the building. He stated that a packet was put together by Ben Carter of Carter Watkins Architects, at no cost to the County, for companies to submit quotes. Four quotes were received from the following companies: Bone Dry Roofing in the amount of \$49,850.00; Peachtree Construction in the amount of \$73,970.15; MMI Construction in the amount of \$61,320.00; and Skyline Construction in the amount of \$51,430.00. The recommended quote was from Bone Dry Roofing, as advised by the Architect and County Administrator.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to award the work to Bone Dry Roofing. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Adams Road Realignment
 - The County Administrator stated that Thiele Kaolin contacted the County regarding the realignment of Adams Road in December 2020, where they are planning on digging a new mine in the area of where the current road is. He stated that Thiele submitted plans by their engineers to the County for review, in which the County Engineer reviewed and approved. Thiele would be responsible for all costs and must keep the road open for residents. He stated Thiele owns the property where they are asking for realignment, and provided a copy of what the realignment would entail. He stated that he consulted with the County Attorney regarding any notification or other related items, in which there were none.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to allow Thiele to realign Adams Road. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Agreement Renewal – 4H Shotgun Range
 - The County Administrator stated that the Washington County 4H program called and requested a renewal of the agreement in which the County allows the 4H program to utilize a portion of property, located next to the landfill, for shooting clay targets. He stated that the original agreement was executed in 2016 for five years, with the renewal simply extending that for another five years.
 - Chairman Daniel asked for a motion to approve the renewal. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Contract Ratifications
 - The following contracts were considered for ratification
 - Washington County Machine Shop
 - Concrete island removal at new elections building
 - \$4,829.00
 - Southern Security Systems
 - Installation of security system at new elections building

- \$4,318.92
 - Chairman Daniel asked for motion to ratify the contracts. Commissioner Hitchcock made a motion for ratification, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Executive Session
 - This was not held due to the contraction of Covid-19 by the party expected to attend and make a presentation.

Chairman Comments

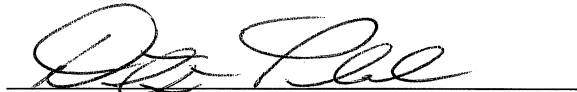
Meeting Adjourned

Public Comment Session



Horace Daniel, Chairman

Attest:



Dustin Peebles, County Administrator/Clerk