



BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
September 15, 2023
1601 N Columbia St, Suite 220
11:30 A.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Emily Davis
John Westmoreland
Kendrick Butts
Sammy Hall
Henry Craig

OTHERS PRESENT

Bandon Palmer
Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Cindy Cunningham

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Emily Davis called the Meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

INVOCATION

Rev. Hillmon Graves delivered the Invocation

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair John Westmoreland led the Pledge.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to amend the Agenda for discussion of the appointment of an alternate hearing officer for County employee matters. Commissioner Henry Craig seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to amend the Agenda to consider a Resolution urging the Governor and General Assembly to continue efforts to reform and improve mental health services for citizens in Georgia. Commissioner Sammy Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2023, Regular Meeting, August 18, 2023 Called Meeting and the August 22, 2023 Called Meeting as submitted. Commissioner Sammy Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE / FISCAL MATTERS

Resolution Urging Governor and General Assembly to Continue Efforts to Reform and Improve Mental Health for Citizens in Georgia

Commissioner Henry Craig stated ACCG is strongly encouraging every county in the state to adopt a resolution urging the Governor and General Assembly to continue efforts to reform and improve mental health services for the citizens of Georgia. Commissioner Craig read the Resolution urging the Governor and General Assembly to continue efforts in the 2024 Session of the Georgia General Assembly to enhance Georgia citizens' access to vital mental health services, including the provision of state budgetary funding for additional behavioral health crisis centers across the state, additional co-responder units and other resources to assist those with mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented. Commissioner Kendrick Butts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

A copy of the Resolution is herewith attached and made an official part of the minutes at pages _____ and _____.

Appointment of Alternate Hearing Officer for County Employee Matters

Commissioner Sammy Hall stated County Policy outlines the process for handling employee grievance matters which includes appeals to a hearing officer. When the primary hearing officer is not available due to a conflict of interest, an alternate hearing officer may be appointed. County Attorney Brandon stated Attorney Ryan Frier is the primary hearing officer. However, in the instance the primary hearing officer has a conflict of interest and an alternate hearing officer should be utilized. Mr. Palmer recommends that the County appoint Attorney William H. Smith as an alternate hearing officer.

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to appoint Attorney William H. Smith as alternate hearing officer. Vice Chair John Westmoreland seconded the motion.

Commissioner Kendrick Butts suggested the County reach out to other attorneys, preferably outside Baldwin County, to ensure that the hearing officer has no conflict with County employee matters. He stated the County could send out a Request for Qualifications for the hearing officer so the Board could review other resumes. Attorney Palmer stated the County has a pending grievance, and this is a timely matter. Therefore, the appointment of an alternate hearing officer is necessary.

Commissioner Kendrick Butts made a motion to table this matter until the Board can solicit other potential candidates for this position. Chair Emily Davis seconded the motion.

Commissioner Henry Craig asked how Mr. Smith was selected. Attorney Palmer responded he consulted with the previous County Attorney who presented him with a list of potential candidates. Mr. Palmer stated he did a conflict of interest determination on each attorney. Mr. Smith did not have a conflict in dealing with this personnel matter.

Chair Emily Davis called for a vote on the motion to table the matter. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: Butts, Davis Nay: Craig, Hall, Westmoreland

Chair Emily Davis called for a vote on the motion to appoint William H. Smith as the alternate hearing officer for County employee matters. The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: Craig, Hall, Westmoreland Nay: Butts, Davis

Section 5311 Transit Program Application

Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson presented information for the FY 2025 Transit Program Application. She stated the total amount is \$314,548 which includes the purchase of a new van. She stated the County's share of the program totals \$148,718 for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. Ms. Hudson stated the match for operating and small capital purchases will be included in the County annual budget process, and the match for the large capital portion which is the van will be paid through SPLOST. She requested approval for the submission of the application and stated the grant award will be brought back to the Board for approval.

Commissioner Sammy Hall stated he feels there should be a more efficient way to operate the program for better use of taxpayer dollars. Commissioner Henry Craig stated there is no alternative at this time. Commissioner Kendrick Butts asked if there are other ways to run the program that would be more cost effective.

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to approve the submission of the Section 311 Transit Program Application as presented. Commissioner Kendrick Butts seconded the motion and it passed by the following vote:

Aye: Butts, Craig, Westmoreland, Davis Nay: Hall

Contract Negotiations for Ambulance Services

County Manager Tobar reported Request for Proposals (RFP) were solicited for the provision of ambulance services, and six responses were received. He stated that he, Assistant County Manager, EMA Director scored the proposals based 60% on price and 40% on qualifications. The Region 5 EMA Director provided information during the scoring process. He stated the highest scoring proposal was Atrium Health Navicent.

County Attorney Palmer stated there were some irregularities in a couple of proposals. It is a Board decision whether they want to waive the irregularities or reject all proposals and re-advertise requesting a speedy response time of proposals for the provision of ambulance services. County Manager Tobar explained the sealed proposals were opened, and the omission in one proposal was noted at the time of opening.

Discussion was held regarding the re-advertisement and the timeline for submission of proposals. County Manager stated he could reissue the Request for Proposals with a deadline to receive proposals in one week which would be Friday, September 22, 2023.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to reject current proposals and re-advertise Request for Proposals for provision of ambulance services. Commissioner Henry Craig seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Alcoholic Beverage License

County Manger Carlos Tobar presented an Alcoholic Beverage License application for Retail Package Beer and/or Wine for the Family Dollar located at 355 Allen Memorial Drive. He stated legal requirements for the application process have been met.

Vice Chair John Westmoreland made a motion to approve the Alcoholic Beverage License application as presented. Commissioner Henry Craig seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Land Bank Authority Members

County Manager Tobar recommended Building Official Greg Mahan to serve on the Land Bank Authority Board. He stated there have been recommendations for three citizens to be appointed to the board. They are Tina Behne, Cynthia Edwards and Amy Rabun. It is the Boards decision to determine which one of the citizens positions serves a two year term with the other two positions serving four year terms. Commissioner Sammy Hall stated since he had recommended Tina Behne to serve on this Board he would recommend her position be for a two year term with the other two citizen positions being for four year terms. Mr. Tobar stated that the representative from the Board of Commissioners would also serve a two year term.

Commissioner Sammy Hall recommended Commissioner Kendrick Butts serve as the Board of Commissioners' representative. Commissioner Henry Craig seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Old Business

Vice Chair John Westmoreland asked for an update on the Meriwether Convenience Center improvements. He requested a sketch of proposed improvements.

New Business

There was no New Business to come before the Board.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Carlos Tobar provided an update on County projects including the completion of water line tie-ins in the Coopers area; storm drain pipe replacement in Allenwood subdivision; visited Rocky Creek Court which is not a County road; proceeding with procurement of additional flock cameras; work began on rehabilitation of first three homes under CHIP grant; inspections completed on next three houses; Overview, Inc. provided weatherization to homeowners in order to remain on budget; DNR Land Water Conservation Fund webinar held and County has produced three of required environmental documents; HUD environmental document for Collins P Lee Memorial Library has been prepared; five Baldwin County employees who are emerging leaders will participate in NACo Leadership Academy; USDOT meeting scheduled regarding RAISE grant for Oconee Heights; CDBG

sewer project kickoff meeting held; West Apron Expansion public meeting scheduled 9/21/2023 at 5:30 p.m. at Government Building; Department of Agriculture training will be held October 10th; disk golf ribbon cutting ceremony tentatively scheduled for October 14th at 1 pm and staff, engineers and consultants are preparing for the next CDBG application.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The following citizens addressed the Board expressing concerns about expansion and improvements at the Airport.

Joan Crumpler, 237 Lakeshore Circle NE, expressed her concern with the close placement of hangars to neighborhood homes. She also stated the peaceful coexistence of the neighborhood and Airport will be threatened.

Brett Ward, 199 Lakeshore Circle NE, stated the placement of one of the hangars is in violation of the County Code.

Karen Barrett, 211 Lakeshore Circle NE, expressed her concerns with the location of hangars which is directly across from her residence. She stated concern for jets that are loud and powerful that will be warming up and taking off from this site.

Casey Bilz, 203 Lakeshore Circle NE, stated her biggest concern is that the natural buffer has been removed. She stated the buffer was a home for wildlife; but, it also protected neighbors from seeing and hearing planes and smelling odors.

David Bellew, 193 Lakeshore Circle NE, stated he is concerned about jet fuel runoff leaking into and contaminating ground water.

Carol Bellew, 193 Lakeshore Circle NE, expressed concern about toxic chemicals and their impact on humans. She stated an environmental impact study should be done on this area.

Susan Lebendiger, 235 Lakeshore Circle NE, stated she is a realtor and the location of the hangars will prove an external nuisance to homes and will lower the property values.

Richard Bilz, 203 Circle NE, stated the plan was established six years ago, and there is no documentation of any residents in the neighborhood attending any public meetings.

Cindy Giles, 205 Lakeshore Circle NE, discussed wind tunnel effect of 2 to 3 storage hangars. She stated the private drive potentially to be built in the area could be dangerous. She asked that hangars be located in a more appropriate area.

Ricky Giles, 205 Lakeshore Circle NE, stated that the plan that can be changed. He stated the location should be changed to accommodate more hangars.

Commissioner Henry Craig expressed his appreciation to residents for being in attendance to address this matter.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 12:50 p.m. Commissioner Sammy Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily C. Davis
Chair

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk