



BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
February 21, 2023
1601 N Columbia St, Suite 220
6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Emily Davis
John Westmoreland
Kendrick Butts
Henry Craig
Sammy Hall

OTHERS PRESENT

Bandon Palmer
Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Cindy Cunningham

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Emily Davis called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION

Reverend Franklin delivered the Invocation

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Students from the Education Brings Leadership and Achievement Academy (EBLA) along with founder Dr. Moss led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS

Disk Golf

County Manager Carlos Tobar stated Mr. Feldberg is not here at this time and requested that this presentation be made at a later time during the meeting.

Request from Atrium Health Navicent

Ms. Joy Monten-Thomas, Assistant Vice President of Government Relations, addressed the Board regarding the Community Heart Health Walk. She stated this is a monthly community event hosted by Atrium Navicent in partnership with the community. Ms. Monten-Thomas requested the County's participation as a partnering organization for the April 1st Community Heart Health Walk and Easter Egg Hunt. She requested authorization to use the County logo, along with the City logo, on flyers and other publications.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to authorize the use of the County logo on Heart Health Walk publications. Vice Chairman John Westmoreland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chairman John Westmoreland made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2023 Regular Meeting and the February 7, 2023 Executive Session as submitted. Commissioner Kendrick Butts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

AMENDMENT TO AGENDA

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to add an Executive Session to the Agenda to discuss litigation. Commissioner Henry Craig seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE / FISCAL MATTERS

Disk Golf

Vice Chairman John Westmoreland requested that County Manager Tobar make the presentation on the Disk Golf course at this time.

County Manager Carlos Tobar presented an update reporting that all 18 holes have been cleared, and the Public Works Department will be pouring the pads at each hole in the very near future, weather permitting. Mr. Tobar stated there will be no cost to the public to utilize the Disk Golf Course. He encouraged everyone to visit the site and enjoy the beautiful trail.

Resolution for Adoption of Comprehensive Plan

County Manager Carlos Tobar reported the Comprehensive Plan has now been completed, submitted to DCA for their review, and found to be compliant by DCA. Commissioners, staff and citizens have had input into the development of the Plan. He stated there have been no changes to the Plan since the last public hearing. A resolution must be adopted by the County and City officially adopting the Joint Comprehensive Plan. He presented the Resolution of Adopting for the Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for the Board's consideration.

Commissioner Kendrick Butts made a motion to approve the Resolution Adopting the Joint Comprehensive Plan Update. Commissioner Henry Craig 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 _____.

Airport Advisory Committee

County Manager Tobar presented the recommendation from the Airport Advisory Committee for confirmation of Ms. Jessica Mitchell to serve as an At Large Member on the Airport Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to confirm the appointment of Ms. Jessica Mitchell to serve as an At Large Member on the Airport Advisory Committee. Vice Chair John Westmoreland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Development Authority Appointments

County Manager Tobar presented a letter from the Development Authority Board requesting the reappointment of Mr. Mac Patel and Mr. Edward Walker.

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to reappoint Mr. Mac Patel and Mr. Edward Walker to serve on the Board of Directors of the Development Authority of Milledgeville and Baldwin County. Vice Chair John Westmoreland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kendrick Butts requested that, in the future, Commissioners have an opportunity to meet potential candidates that are being considered for appointment to various boards.

Tax Anticipation Note (TAN)

Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson stated the County solicited interest bids for the 2023 Tax Anticipation Note (TAN), and two bids were received. One bid in the amount of 4.25 % was received from Century Bank and Trust, and the second bid was from Exchange Bank in the amount of 6.25%. Ms. Hudson recommended the Board accept the interest bid from Century Bank and Trust for 4.25% for the 2023 TAN and to authorize the Chair to sign necessary documents. She presented a Resolution authorizing the Chair to execute documents to borrow money from time to time during the year from Century Bank and Trust to pay current year's operating expenses in an amount not to exceed \$6,000,000.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to adopt the TAM Resolution and to authorize the Chair to sign necessary documents. Commissioner Henry Craig seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kendrick Butts asked Assistant County Manager Hudson to explain the TAN for the benefit of the public.

Intergovernmental Contract Creating the Baldwin County Land Bank

County Manager Tobar reported that during the last meeting he was attending virtually and had misunderstood the Board's instructions relating to the Land Bank Intergovernmental Contract. He stated the Board had suggested holding a Work Session to discuss items included in the Intergovernmental Contract. He reported some Commissioners have provided input which has been incorporated into the Contract. However, one part of the Contract states that all property in the Land Bank must be conveyed to non-profit organizations which is something the City wanted to be included. However, the County has expressed a desire to transfer Land Bank property to for-profit or non-profit organizations. There is a property on the southside that could potentially be developed by a for-profit company. In order to address such issues, Attorney Brandon Palmer suggested the Intergovernmental Contract include language to bifurcate voting for the City and County. The County Manager reported the Land Bank Governing Board will have three representatives appointed by the City. Attorney Palmer reported that for properties acquired by the Land Bank, those in the unincorporated area must be approved by the majority of a quorum of the Board. For those properties in the incorporated area, property must be approved by a majority of a quorum of the Board; however, at least two of the affirmative votes must be from City of Milledgeville appointees.

Commissioner Henry Craig stated the Land Bank will not be a place to dump property that people want to get rid of. A Land Bank is designed to benefit neighborhoods, and there should be a reason a property is placed in the Land Bank. There should be a goal in making something happen before acquiring a property.

After discussion, Commissioners stated there are many questions that must be addressed before considering the Intergovernmental Contract creating the Land Bank.

Commissioner Kendrick Butts made a motion to table the issue until such time that a Work Session is held to address questions. Vice Chairman John Westmoreland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Work Session will be scheduled prior to the March 7th Regular Meeting, and the City of Milledgeville Officials will be invited to attend.

Vice Chairman John Westmoreland made a motion to table the Resolution. Commissioner Kendrick Butts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chair John Westmoreland stated the convenience center at Meriwether Road is getting in worse condition and it must be taken care of. He also said the County has to address litter along the roadways.

Commissioner Sammy Hall asked about the Keep America Beautiful organization; cost for contracting with State to keep trash cleaned up on the roads. Vice Chairman John Westmoreland suggested an "Adopt a Road" program. Commissioner Kendrick Butts stated citizens must buy in to keeping the roadways clean and take pride in the community. He recommended doing a Public Service Announcement to make citizens aware of the need to keep the community clean. Commissioner Henry Craig recommended that Chair Davis appoint a committee to find solutions and make proposals about the trash issue. He also recommended contacting our Judges who administer community service mandates to see if community service workers can be used.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Emily Davis introduced Ms. LaTonya Howard to give a presentation on Black History.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Carlos provided an update on the Oconee Heights Street Scape Project. He discussed details of the project as well as the budget. 100% funding from RAISE grant program is being requested for a total project cost of \$4.9 million. Mr. Tobar requested approval for the submission of the application. Commissioner Henry Craig asked if part of the project is located in the City. Mr. Tobar responded that it is, and the City has no objection to the grant application; however, an Intergovernmental Agreement must be entered into with the City if the grant is awarded. Commissioner Sammy Hall asked how do we respond to people who do not have lighting in other areas of the County; but, we are putting lights in this area.

Mr. Tobar responded that some of the other areas in the County are not eligible to apply for such grants.

Commissioner Kendrick Butts made a motion to authorize the County Manager to move forward with the grant application for the Oconee Heights Street Scape Project. Commissioner Henry Craig seconded the motion and it passed by the following vote:

AYE: Butts, Craig, Davis

NAY: Hall, Westmoreland

County Manager Tobar gave a synopsis of his presentation for the Eggs & Issues meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Damian Francis addressed the Board on the issue of food insecurities in the community. Discussions were held at a stakeholders meeting about food distribution through the Middle Georgia Food Bank and food pantries. He stated a letter has been drafted and sent to the County for their review. Dr. Francis requested that Commissioners agree to send the letter on behalf of stakeholders for sustainability of food distribution centers in order to bring a solution to the food insecurities in Baldwin County. Chair Emily Davis requested that the County Manager forward a copy of the letter all Commissioners.

Mr. Willie Coats and Mrs. Zenaida Coats of 316 Emily Circle, NW addressed the Board regarding the construction of a driveway from the backyard of their property onto Meriwether Road. They stated they had requested a driveway permit but were told they could not have a drive there. They also received a letter from the County Attorney regarding the situation. The Coats requested answers from the Board as to why they cannot have a driveway from their backyard onto Meriwether Road. County Manager Tobar responded it is against the County ordinance to have a drive there. He reported the county property along the ditch line there has been destroyed. Chair Davis instructed Mr. Tobar to meet with the Coats regarding this situation.

Ms. Steve Sealey of 162 Willow Brook Way, NW, addressed the Board about the roads in the Oaks subdivision. He stated a number of the Home Owners Association Board members are also in attendance about this matter. Ms. Bethany Begnaud of 196 Lakemere Lane NW has also signed up to speak regarding this issue.

Mr. Sealey presented background information about the development of the subdivision. In 2013, residents met with Board about the roads in the subdivision; but, he has no confirmation of whether the County has accepted the roads. Mr. Sealey said the roads are getting worse, and they need maintenance on roads. He asked the Board for assistance in maintaining the roads in the Oaks Subdivision.

Ms. Bethany Begnaud presented pictures of the condition of the roads. She stated the roads are getting worse. Chair Davis asked that the pictures be given to the County Manager who will look into the matter.

Mr. Andrew and Mrs. Marion Simmons of 109 Water Bend Drive presented an update on their situation with Tax Assessors Office regarding their property taxes. She stated an agreement has been reached with Chief Appraiser Williams. Mrs. Simmons expressed her appreciation to the Board for assistance in this matter.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. to discuss litigation. Commissioner Kendrick Butts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

REOPEN REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to reopen the Regular Meeting at 7:50 p.m. Commissioner Kendrick Butts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:50 p.m. Vice Chair John Westmoreland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily C. Davis
Chair

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk