

**APPLING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
CALLED MEETING/WORK SESSION MINUTES  
Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 3:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INVOCATION/PLEDGE**

The Appling County Board of Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 3:00 P.M. in the Courthouse Annex.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Leslie Burch and he welcomed all those in attendance.

Commissioner Doug Harris gave the invocation and Vice Chairman Leggett led the group in the pledge.

Present were Chairman Leslie Burch; Commissioners Randy Sellers, Theodore Wilkerson, Daryl Edwards, Doug Harris and Charlie Leggett. Also, present were County Manager Al Meadows, County Attorney Tracy Brown and County Clerk Robyn Evans.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the agenda; Commissioner Edwards seconded; unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Appling Co. Hospital Authority Funding**

The purpose of this called meeting was to address hospital funding issues and seek resolutions. Members present from the Hospital Authority were as follows: Chair Cindy Tomberlin, Graham Floyd, Melissa Smiley, Cameron Mayers, Lew Lewis, Samantha Craven and Perry White. Staff Members present were: CEO Andrea Graham, COO Robin Crosby, CNO Shannah Martin, Pavilion LNHA Helen Burnworth, Pavilion DON Rachael Sizemore and Healthcare Compliance Attorney Matt Wilmot. Designated speaker for the group was Ms. Andrea Graham. She provided a packet to the Board to address questions previously asked at a prior hospital meeting. Ms. Graham stated that because the hospital is not a "Critical Access" hospital, they are limited to receiving reduced rates for Medicare reimbursements. Ms. Crosby, COO, stated that since 2022, the system has reduced operational costs by \$4,000,000. However, the hospital fee's have not been increased since 2017. There is a restriction on the rate of which those can be gradually increased. Attorney Wilmot sited that staffing/recruitment was currently a state-wide issue and not just in Appling County. In relation to building relationships with providers, Mr. Floyd stated, "...we have to have some buy in." Ms. Hartley agreed with Mr. Floyd stating, "we need the community's support; encourage people to use our hospital."

Various discussions were held, most of which involved increasing revenues and finding ways to work together to retain Appling County's community hospital. Ms. Graham stated that their group is working towards improvements but needs more time. Both parties were in favor to continue with an open line of communication and collaboration.

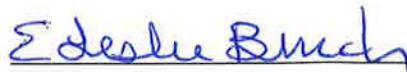
County Manager Meadows thanked everyone for attending.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Burch adjourned the meeting at 4:55 P.M.

Robyn Evans, County Clerk



Leslie Burch, Chairman



**APPLING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 5:30 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INVOCATION/PLEDGE**

The Appling County Board of Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 5:30 PM in the Courthouse Annex.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Leslie Burch and he welcomed all those in attendance.

Jonathan Mann gave the invocation and Chairman Leslie Burch led the group in the pledge.

Present were Chairman Leslie Burch; Vice Chairman Charlie Leggett; Commissioners Randy Sellers, Theodore Wilkerson, Daryl Edwards and Doug Harris. Also, present were County Manager Al Meadows, County Attorney Tracy Brown and County Clerk Robyn Evans.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Burch stated that Julie Scarborough asked to be removed from public input. Commissioner Randy Sellers made a motion to approve the revised agenda; Commissioner Harris seconded; unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Called Meeting/Work Session – March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- B. Regular Meeting – March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve these minutes; Commissioner Edwards seconded; unanimously approved.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Lease Amendment/Approval to renew Appling Co. USDA Service Center Agreement**

County Manager shared, “The USDA is requesting to renew their lease for their USDA Service Center located on 239 NE Park Avenue, Suite B, Baxley, Ga. The original lease is for 5 years and has a clause of a 60 day *notice to vacate* by the USDA prior to vacating the premises. The USDA has begun the planning to build a new facility in Appling County. The estimated time until the project is complete is 18-24 months. The USDA wishes to renew the lease agreement #7 for 5 years and exercise their 60-day notice option as their building nears completion. The annual rent remains the same at \$10,700 payable at the rate of 891.67 per month”.

Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the lease; Vice Chairman Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

**Landfill Deep Well**

County Manager shared, “The Environmental Protection Division of Department of Natural Resources approved the location for a new deep well to be installed at our landfill. The Land fill Supervisor Robert Eunice has gotten three (3) quotes and are included in your packet. Robert and I have discussed and believe a five (5) horsepower pump with a large capacity tank will best suit the landfill needs”.

Commissioner Sellers asked if the vendors submitting quotes knew to bid on the five (5) horsepower, to which County Manager stated that he requested \$20,000 to be the qualifying factor in requesting bids. After discussion and several questions for clarification, Vice Chairman Leggett made a motion to approve

the quote from Lyons Well Drilling; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; Commissioners Harris, Commissioner Edwards approved; Commissioner Sellers voted against the motion.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Proclamation: Appling Co. Crime Victims' Rights Week April 21-27, 2024**

National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be observed April 21<sup>st</sup> thru April 27<sup>th</sup> this year. Keith Higgins, District Attorney from the Brunswick Judicial Circuit, has provided a Proclamation for the Commissioners' approval and signature. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to approve the proclamation; Vice Chairman Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

#### **Statewide Mutual Aid & Assistance Agreement**

County Manager Meadows shared, "The State of Georgia is vulnerable to a wide range of natural and man-made disasters and emergencies. The Georgia Emergency Management Act gives local governments of the State the authority to make agreements for mutual aid assistance in emergencies. Pre-existing agreements for mutual aid assistance in emergencies help to ensure the timely provision of mutual aid assistance and the reimbursement of costs incurred by the parties who render such assistance. This mutual aid agreement is a renewal for 2023 Mutual Aid Agreement and is entered pursuant to authorities contained in chapter 3 Title 38, Official Code of GA Annotated". Commissioner Wilkerson made a motion to approve the agreement; Commissioner Sellers seconded; unanimously approved.

#### **Appling Co. Hospital Authority Board Vacancy (Paul Rentz resigned)**

The Baxley and Appling County Hospital Authority Board received notification that Mr. Paul Rentz resigned from the county seat on the board. Mr. Rentz's term expires on June 30, 2025. The Hospital Authority asked for the BOC to provide three (3) names/candidates, prior to the Authority's next meeting on March 28, 2024. An additional request from the Hospital Board was to possibly appoint a candidate with medical background. The Board did not have three (3) nominees with medical background at the moment; motion by Commissioner Edwards to table this item in order to give the Commissioners more time to seek candidates; second by Commissioner Harris; unanimously approved.

#### **Southeast Health District (HRSA) Addendum/Agreement**

The Appling County Board of Health Outreach Grant #725 agrees to pay the county in the amount of \$22,000 annually to satisfy the grants deliverables. The original contract is for funds to be spent on salaries for staff for nutrition education (FACS Program Assistant, Fani Orellana and Nutrition Education Specialist Volunteer, Elaine Tuten). No amounts have changed but the entire amount hasn't been spent. This Addendum is simply giving our Family and Consumer Science Agent, Mrs. Becky Collins, who already manages the expenditure of the funds, permission to spend the unspent funds on support of the Community Garden project, which will include, but not limited to, hiring an hourly part-time volunteer to work in the garden. Commissioner Wilkerson made a motion to approve the agreement; Commissioner Harris seconded; unanimously approved.

#### **Appling Co. Parks & Recreation Request – Timmy McGuirt**

Mr. McGuirt addressed the Board; requesting \$200,000 for new fencing at the Appling Co. Recreation Complex. Mr. McGuirt stated the Complex was built in 1997 and the fencing has a life expectancy of approximately 25 years and it's beyond that time limit. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to table this item so the Board could think about the request; Commissioner Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

### Voting Delegate for GA Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission & Regional Advisory Council

County Manager Meadows shared that the State of Georgia entered a Settlement Agreement with manufacturers and distributors of opioids that will bring payments of \$638 million to Georgia over the next eighteen (18) years. ACCG is assisting in assembling a Regional Advisory Council that will manage the program. Appling County is a part of this Settlement Agreement and as a result, must nominate an individual to vote on behalf of the Appling County Board Of Commissioners at Regional Meetings. County Manager Meadows recommended Brent Carter (EMA) to be the delegate. Commissioner Wilkerson made a motion to accept this recommendation; Commissioner Sellers seconded; unanimously approved.

### Bitcoin Data Mine Information

Much concern was expressed in the week prior to this board meeting, in regards to a Bitcoin Data Mine being built on leased land in the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) land district. Commissioner Harris visited the site and spoke with the project manager, along with researching online, and visiting another site in Vidalia. Commissioner Harris shared all that he'd learned with those in attendance. A presentation with pictures and videos was available but due to technology issues, wasn't able to be presented. This information will be uploaded to the Board of Commissioners' website for viewing.

Commissioner Harris addressed concerns from the public, including Steve Hughes and Wayne Canady. He also thanked Jonathan Mann for his assistance with investigating the matter and the citizens for speaking up with regarding their concerns. Questions were also asked about county ordinances and code enforcement - that there is not an enforcer, and that maybe the Board needs to consider this being addressed. Commissioner Harris remarked that "this is already in progress".

### Baxley Appling Co. Hospital Authority

County Manager Meadows asked the Board to allow him to research consultants and costs associated with an evaluation/corrective action plan of the Appling Co. Hospital. Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve; Commissioner Edwards seconded; unanimously approved.

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

Peggy Smith – Litter Pickup/Pipe Cleaning Contract

Ms. Smith addressed the Board and requested to renew her contract for litter pick-up and pipe cleaning on county roads. County Attorney Brown responded that contracts over \$200,000 must be let for sealed bids and the request would be published in the following week's edition of the Baxley News Banner.

### **SHERIFF'S OFFICE** – Mark Melton

Sheriff Melton extended an invitation to the Annual Law Enforcement Expo will be held on Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Ag Center. They are expecting over 2,000 people throughout the day including students from multiple surrounding counties.

### **PUBLIC BUILDINGS & GROUNDS** – Dwight Watts

No report was given at this meeting.

### **ROADS & BRIDGES** – Carroll Weaver

Mr. Weaver commended the department's employees and expressed they'd really stepped-up and accomplished several projects this month. He also mentioned that a lot of road signs are missing, particularly in the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) district area of the county, ie..Holmesville and Bowers Roads area.

**DIVE TEAM**

Requested permission to purchase approximately \$14,000 work of equipment that needs to be updated/replaced. They expressed appreciation for the building in which they are now housed. Funds for this purchase will come from the 2018 SPLOST remaining funds in the Fire Department area.

**LANDFILL** – Robert Eunice – No report given.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Vice Chairman Leggett made a motion to close the regular meeting and enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues; Commissioner Edwards seconded; unanimously approved.

Vice Chairman Leggett made a motion to close executive session and re-enter regular session; Commissioner Harris seconded; unanimously approved.

No personnel actions were taken.

**COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT**

County Manager Meadows shared that the 2024 Appling County Youth Livestock Show was held yesterday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Appling County Agriculture Center. This event was sponsored by the Appling County Stockman’s Association and was well attended. Four (4) cows and 48 hogs were shown by Appling County students. The event displayed the hard work and long hours the students trained with their animals and the support from the community.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Chairman Burch stated he was “tickled with the crowd tonight” and that radio problems were increasing on the north end of the county and discussion would be held at a future meeting regarding this problem.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Robyn Evans, County Clerk

Leslie Burch, Chairman

  
ATTEST



