

**APPLING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 2nd, 2024 @ 5:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INVOCATION/PLEDGE

The Appling County Board of Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 2nd, 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.

Vice Chairman Leggett gave the invocation and Henry Jones 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 Dedra Hewitt requested to be added to public input with regards to the upcoming county candidate forum. Commissioner Randy Sellers made a motion to approve the revised agenda; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the March 5th, 2024 Called Meeting minutes; Commissioner Edwards seconded; unanimously approved. Commissioner Harris then made a motion to approve the March 5th, 2024 Regular meeting minutes; Commissioner Edwards seconded; unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Appling Co. Hospital Authority Board Vacancy

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 Board 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 time of the March meeting and the item was tabled. At this meeting, the following were nominated;

- Judy Aycock.....nominated by Commissioner Sellers
- Angelisa Hodges.....nominated by Chairman Burch
- Millie (Ahls) Conaway.....nominated by Commissioner Harris.

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

Baxley/Appling County Hospital Authority - Quotes for Comprehensive Assessment

During the March meeting, County Manager Meadows asked the Board to allow him to research consultants and costs associated with firms that conduct studies of hospital operations in order to improve the hospital's performance. Included in the Board's meeting packets, were two (2) proposals for a Comprehensive Performance Improvement Assessment of the Appling County Hospital. Two proposals were submitted by the following consultants: Berkeley Research Group, LLC (BRG) in Emeryville, California and ADAMS Management Services Corporation from Rome, Georgia. Costs for both are comparable; BRG \$100,000 plus meals, travel, per diem, etc. and ADAMS \$85,000 with meals, travel, per diem, etc.

The CEO of Wayne Memorial Hospital, Joseph P. Ierardi, highly recommends the BRG group. County Manager Meadows stated after spending four (4) hours with Mr. Ierardi and his staff, he also thinks the BRG group will provide the most comprehensive product.

County Manager Meadows shared that this is not a budgeted item; but funding options are as listed:

1. Amend the budget
2. Use our contingency line item (Current balance \$83,339.53)
3. American Recovery Fund (Current balance \$996,023.76)
4. A combination of #2 and #3.

Commissioner Sellers made a motion to accept the quote from BRG; Commissioner Edwards seconded; unanimously approved. Cindy Tomberlin and Lee Lewis gave assurances that recommendations made by BRG will be implemented as quickly as a possible.

Commissioner Wilkerson asked which funds were being utilized for these services. County Manager Meadows restated the above fund options and Commissioner Wilkerson made a motion to use a combination of the contingency fund and American Recovery funds; Commissioner Harris seconded; unanimously approved.

Ambulance Replacement

On November 30, 2023 the County purchased a new ambulance; rotated the oldest ambulance out of the fleet; and used its equipment to outfit the new ambulance. The old ambulance has over 112,000 miles and has been in the shop multiple times for repairs. In the past, the County has rotated the older ambulances to EMA for their use. County Manager Meadows spoke with Darrel Holcomb and the EMA doesn't need another vehicle. On December 26, 2023 one of the ambulances was involved in an accident and was totaled. It was an older one and the insurance paid \$49,950 to the county for a claim on the totaled ambulance. This past Friday night another one of the ambulances was involved in an accident. It is still drivable but in need of body repair and will be out of service for several months. County Manager Meadows requested permission to sell the old one and use proceeds from sale plus proceeds from insurance claim to purchase another one. Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve this request; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Quotes for Bulldozer Engine

County Manager Meadows stated he solicited and received three quotes for a replacement engine for the County's landfill dozer. He shared that he'd spoken with the County Public Works Director and his Shop Foreman and they both agreed that estimate #1 from Yancy CAT for \$37,590.30 is the most desirable for them. This quote allows the dozer to be repaired at County shop and while Yancy CAT will perform the engine swap, the shop mechanics will be able to help and increase their knowledge on this machine. This will also eliminate a haul fee and County staff can actually perform tasks such as pressure washing and inspections on other parts of the dozer. Vice Chairman Leggett made a motion to accept the quote from Yancey; Commissioner Harris seconded; unanimously approved.

FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING

County Manager Meadows shared, “Appling County has dedicated First Responders that don’t hesitate to answer the call for help in our county. To excel with these careers, you need good people skills, compassion, physical strength, the ability to solve problems under pressure, and continuing training. After our First Responders are initially trained there are no requirements to receive continual training. The absence of continual training doesn’t keep our first responders current with new technology and techniques. Linton Deloach has developed a 16-hour recertification class for our First Responders. This training will be repeated every two years to ensure all remain current in their job skills. The training will be conducted by a member from our EMS who will be paid as the primary instructor from the Rural Fire Dept budget.” Kelsey Powell spoke on behalf of this training and stated that she used the most common scenarios relative to Appling County calls to help create the approved training.

Commissioner Harris voted to approve this requirement; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

VOTING REPEATER (Radio tower in Ten Mile Area)

County Manager Meadows shared with the board, “The radio tower in the Ten Mile Community, that our First Responders rely upon, was originally located at Ira Poole’s house. The new owner is asking for \$2000 per year to keep our “voter” on his tower. I have spoken with the leadership of EMA, County Fire, and First Responders and it seems to make sense to erect our own tower. Not having a tower in that area presents many problems and spotty at best communications. Our First Responders rely on timely and accurate communication in order to provide the best response possible. Initial research has indicated the County can purchase and erect our own 100’ tower for approximately \$30,000. This would also require an easement from a citizen for a suitable build site.”

Mike Monroe, whom has worked with Appling County radio/transmittal towers for the last 45 years, spoke in regards to the need and answered the Board’s questions. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to get bids from landowners and for the tower (at least 40’ foot tall) but preferably utilize county property for placement; Vice Chairman Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

PUBLIC INPUT

Appling Co. Swim Team

Stormi Alexander spoke on behalf of the Appling County Swim Team, thanking the Board for building the Aquatic Center and allowing the Middle and High schools to make history for Appling County.

Steve Spell – Landing Road

Mr. Spell spoke to the Board in regards to Landing Road and questioned why the road was abandoned by the County. He would like for the road to be paved. He stated that Terry Carter owns the other side of this road and wasn’t sure if he was going to allow the forty (40) foot easement. Commissioner Edwards made a motion for the County Manager to seek easements from land owners for county ownership. Commissioner Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

Dedra Hewitt

Ms. Hewitt announced the County Candidate Forum to be held at the Ag Center and invited everyone to attend. She stated there is no affiliation from any one political party that it’s simply for the citizens to learn about all of their candidates. The forum is scheduled for April 19, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

SHERIFF’S OFFICE – Mark Melton

No report was given at this meeting.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Dwight Watts

No report was given at this meeting.

PARKS & RECREATION – Timmy McGuirt

No report was presented at this meeting.

ROADS & BRIDGES – Carroll Weaver

Mr. Weaver shared that the last month had been a wet one for road work. Commissioner Harris stated logging companies are still parking on sides of county roads causing road destruction and liability concerns. He stated that we may need to begin towing vehicles and/or issuing citations.

LANDFILL – Robert Eunice

Mr. Eunice gave an update for the landfill. He shared that they receive about 25 loads a day at \$25/ton and half of that is household garbage. The landfill employees then have to travel to Toombs County to dispose of the household waste at \$35/ton. Mr. Eunice was advised to stop accepting household garbage effective April 4, 2024; this policy has been in place and signs have been posted for some time. After several questions of concern, Commissioner Wilkerson made a motion to table the discussion; Commissioner Edwards seconded; Commissioners Harris and Commissioner Leggett were in favor to table the discussion; Commissioner Sellers opposed.

Mr. Eunice shared the landfill received a tire grant that allowed collection of tires from citizens without charging a fee. This will happen on May 4th and May 18th; details will be published in the Baxley News Banner and the County website.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

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

Commissioner Edwards was excused for a funeral visitation.

Vice Chairman Leggett made a motion to move supervision of employee Kathy Sellers back to the Recreation Department (prior supervision under the County Manager); Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

County Manager Meadows announced that several tracts of land will be let for bid.

***175+/- acres North of airport with minimum bid of \$550,000**

Vice Chairman Leggett made a motion to approve the minimum bid and sale; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

***1.5 acres on Zoar Road with minimum bid of \$15,000**

Vice Chairman Leggett made a motion to approve the minimum bid and sale; Commissioner Sellers seconded; unanimously approved.

***23 acres – Falling Rocks RV Park – near Deen’s Landing with minimum bid \$250,000**

Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the minimum bid and sale; Commissioner Sellers seconded; unanimously approved.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Meadows shared, "On March 6, 2024, Commissioners Wilkerson, Edwards, Harris, Leggett, and I traveled to Atlanta for an office visit with the Chairman of the Ga Dept of Transportation, Russel McMurry. The purpose of the visit was to update the Commissioner of the progress in Appling County and to share our vision for growth. We were able to have the entire GDOT Senior Staff to listen to our plan to improve quality transportation in Appling County and to offer their suggestions and possible assistance for future projects. The next morning Commissioners Wilkerson, Harris and I attended the ACCG Legislative Breakfast also in Atlanta. This breakfast hosts many of the legislators that shape the vision and strategy for the state of Ga. and was very informative. The trip paid huge dividends for Appling County. Mrs. Ann Purcell, the Vice Chairman of the State Transportation Board called me yesterday and informed me that Appling County would receive an additional \$350,000 for road construction. The Chairman and Mrs. Ann were impressed with the Commissioners and the commitment they displayed for our county.

GDOT recently announced that the Legislature included additional funds in the Local Road Assistance Program. Eligible projects for these funds will be the same as the LMIG program. I am pleased to announce Appling County qualified for \$1,399,363.24. The commissioners and I will be deciding how to best use these funds soon.

The county's CDBG project initial estimate from Hofstadter and Associates came in at \$2,207,190. The Commissioners and I knew this was more than expected. I contacted our local GDOT Area Engineer and with his guidance we reworked the estimate and now have an adjusted estimate from Hofstadter of \$1,524,886.50. The assistance that GDOT provided did not cost the county and saved \$682,304.

The Otis Elevator Company completed the servicing and repair of the two county elevators, Courthouse and Annex. Otis has completed modifications to comply with the ASME, **American Society of Mechanical Engineers**, and Door Monitoring Code."

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Burch stated this had been a long meeting.

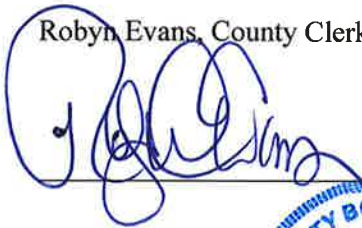
Vice Chairman Leggett stated that we need to discuss upkeep at Lake Mayers and bathroom maintenance, etc. "There used to be \$50,000 set aside for a position that handled these items."

Commissioner Harris shared that there doesn't appear to be any new work done at the Bitcoin Mining site since his last visit a month prior.

ADJOURN

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Robyn Evans, County Clerk



Leslie Burch, Chairman



ATTEST

