

**APPLING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
CALLED MEETING (BUDGET WORK SESSION) MINUTES  
July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 3:00 P.M.**

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

The Appling County Board of Commissioners held a called meeting on Tuesday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 3:00 PM in the Courthouse Annex.

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

Commissioner Daryl Edwards gave the invocation and Frank Smith led the group in the pledge.

Present were Chairman Leslie Burch; Vice Chairman Charlie Leggett; Commissioners Randy Sellers, Theodore Wilkerson (arrived late), Daryl Edwards and Doug Harris. Also present were County Attorney Tracy Brown (arrived late), County Clerk Robyn Evans and Finance Clerk LaFonda Solomon. County Manager Al Meadows was absent for this meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Review and Amend Proposed FY'2025 Budget**

County Clerk Robyn Evans began by stating this is the second budget workshop to discuss the County's FY'2025 budget. The goal is to adopt the budget and millage rate during the September 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting. The second draft of the budget is available on the BOC website for public viewing.

The Commissioners discussed several items including the following: differences in telephone usage for each department; tax assessment values increasing, which should increase revenues; Sheriff's office salaries increasing; etc. Probate Judge Bailey spoke on behalf of her department to keep Associate Judge Terry Turner on salary fulltime.

**COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

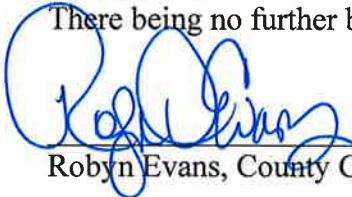
County Clerk Robyn Evans announced the next budget work session will be held on Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 3:00 PM before the regular monthly meeting.

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Burch thanked everyone for their attendance.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

  
Robyn Evans, County Clerk

  
Leslie Burch, Chairman

ATTEST



**APPLING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
July 9<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, July 9<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.

Frank Smith gave the invocation and Chad Kent 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 requested approval for the agenda as printed. County Clerk Robyn Evans stated that Andy Sellers wished to be added to Public Input in regards to Appling Healthcare. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to approve the addition; Commissioner Sellers seconded; unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting – June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the minutes presented; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

B. Called Meeting – June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the minutes presented; Commissioner Sellers seconded; unanimously approved.

Before entering the new business items, County Manager Meadows introduced and welcomed new County Extension staff: Carrie Vanderver, County Agent (Family and Consumer Sciences) and Will Brown, County ANR Agent (Agriculture and Natural Resources).

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Appling Healthcare Auxiliary Resolution**

County Manager Meadows read a resolution that expressed appreciation and dedication to the Appling Healthcare System Auxiliary members, for over 25+ years to the community. He then introduced Cary Long who spoke on the accomplishments of the auxiliary over those years and the commitment of each member. Mr. Long shared that the Auxiliary was being dissolved and their final donation of \$104,819.02, will be given to the County for purchase of an ambulance. Each member present was then presented a copy of the signed resolution.

**Appling Healthcare System Financial Update**

County Manager Meadows shared that on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, he received a letter from Andrea Graham, the CEO of Appling Healthcare. She requested the County increase the allotted budget for the hospital from \$1 million to \$3.5 million dollars. On April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the County entered into a contract with Berkley Research Group (BRG) to conduct a comprehensive performance improvement assessment of the hospital in order to identify opportunities and to improve financial and operational performance. The letter was shared with BRG and they will work closely with the Board and the hospital staff to find a solution.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Tonya Weaver, Unit Director for the Adult Psychiatric Unit, spoke to the Board stating there are 400 plus employees at Appling Healthcare and 70% of those live in Appling County. She asked the Board what the long-term effects will be in the County if the hospital is closed and to explore all options to keep it open.

Melisa Bass, Manager of the Radiology Department, spoke to the public asking everyone to write letters, come to meetings, and help preserve the hospital.

Andy Sellers, spoke from the heart, stating he began his career cleaning rooms and is now a Nurse Practitioner. He stated that healthcare doesn't make money and there's no quick fix to the current issue. He asked that the Board work with the hospital to find a resolution and stop focusing on the negative.

Quite a lengthy discussion was held amongst the Board of Commissioners, each one commenting with concerns and questions to consider. CEO Andrea Graham shared there is currently a shortage of mid-level medical staff and that a general practitioner (fresh out of school) will possibly accept no less than \$250,000/year in our area. She also expressed her concern that no physician is going to relocate to the area with the negativity in the community, surrounding the hospital.

## **NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED**

### **USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service Lease Renewal**

County Manager Meadows stated that US Dept of Agriculture has two separate offices, located in our Oak Street complex, in Appling County. One is the USDA Service Center that addresses Farm Services and the other is Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). The County has renewed the Farm Service lease earlier this year and the NRCS lease is now up for renewal. Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the lease renewal; seconded by Commissioner Edwards; unanimously approved.

### **GA Public Defender Indigent Services Contract**

County Manager Meadows shared that the Brunswick Judicial Circuit is made up of five counties: Camden, Glynn, Wayne, Jeff Davis, and Appling. The Brunswick Judicial Circuit Public Defender Indigent Services Contract for FY-24/25 is up for renewal. This agreement provides for the operation of an indigent defense system to assure that adequate and effective legal representation is provided independent of political considerations to indigent defendants in criminal cases. This is a budgeted item and the county's cost is \$156,650.59. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to approve the contract; Commissioner Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

### **DFCS Janitorial Contract Award**

County Manager Meadows reported to the Board that the bid for janitorial services for Appling Co. Department of Family and Children Services Building was advertised early June and the bids were opened on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The contract timeline is for six (6) months, ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to award the contract to Grasshopper Pro Services, the lowest bidder; Commissioner Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

### **Appling Heritage Center – New Roof**

County Manager Meadows stated that Appling Heritage Center is in need of a roof replacement. "Mr. Dwight Watts and his crew have patched and sealed it for years but it is now gotten to the point, it needs to be totally replaced. The county received three bids with the lowest being submitted by DBM Construction, located in Lyons GA, for \$21,850. If approved, funds for payment are available from the 2018 SPLOST line item 'Heritage Center'". Current available balance for this line item is \$96,029.69. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to table this item until appropriate bids could be received for raising the roof; Commissioner Sellers seconded; unanimously approved.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Baxley/Appling County Hospital Authority Board – Expired Seats**

CM Meadows shared the County has two seats, on the Hospital Authority Board, set to expire on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. They are Lee Lewis and Perry White. Both are willing to serve another term.

The following nominations were announced.

**Current – Lee Lewis**

*Commissioner Edwards nominated Lee Lewis*

*Chairman Burch nominated Keith Davis*

*Commissioner Leggett nominated Wally Sapp*

**Current – Perry White**

*Chairman Burch nominated Doug Harris*

*Commissioner Sellers nominated Leslie Burch*

*Commissioner Wilkerson nominated Randy Sellers*

Commissioner Sellers made a motion to approve all nominations; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

**Timber Harvesting Ordinance**

County Manager Meadows addressed the Board, “The County’s Timber Harvesting Ordinance hasn’t been updated in several years. Commissioner Harris has drafted an updated version that addresses the problems we face today such as road and ditch damage with respect to timber operations. The primary function of a Timber Ordinance is to ensure compliance with laws related to harvesting timber and preserving the forest resources and our rural roads. Once approved this ordinance will be sent electronically to all known timber harvesters that operate in our county.” This item was presented in the previous month’s meeting and tabled for review. Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the ordinance as presented; commissioner Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

**Dept. of Family & Children Services Lease Renewal**

County Manager Meadows explained the lease expired on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and they wish to renew at the same price of \$49,000 per year. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to approve the lease renewal; Commissioner Wilkerson seconded; unanimously approved.

**DBH & DD (Pineland) Lease Renewal**

The lease for the Pineland Bldg. located on South Main Street will expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 according to County Manager Meadows. The Pineland Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities organization wishes to remain a tenant and requests to renew their lease at the current rent of \$2300 per month for one year. (Fiscal year - \$20,700) County Attorney Tracy Brown advised the Board that he’d reviewed this agreement and would like to provide an addendum to Pineland to consider before signing the contract. Commissioner Leggett made a motion to table this item until the next meeting; Commissioner Harris seconded; unanimously approved.

**SHERIFF’S OFFICE** – Mark Melton

No report was given for this meeting.

**PUBLIC BUILDINGS**- Dwight Watts

No report was given for this meeting.

**PARKS & RECREATION**- Timmy McGuirt

**ROADS & BRIDGES** – Carroll Weaver

Mr. Weaver shared that it’s been a very productive month; still quite a bit of ditch work to be completed; able to build-up some roads but this will be a slow process due to hauling dirt all over the county. Public landing areas a Lake Mayers and the river landings were plowed and ready for the upcoming holiday.

**LANDFILL-** Robert Eunice

Mr. Eunice discussed the most recent tire grant project, stating 3,469 tires (141 tons) in 8 days were delivered to the landfill.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT/DIVE TEAM-** Linton DeLoach

Mr. DeLoach stated these departments were business as usual.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**PERSONNEL**

Commissioner Leggett made a motion to close the regular meeting and enter into executive session; Commissioner Harris seconded; unanimously approved.

Commissioner Harris made a motion to end executive session and re-enter the regular meeting; Commissioner Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

County Manager Meadows announced that Carroll Weaver completed his interim probationary period and his salary will be increased to \$66,560.00 annually. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to approve this personnel action; Commissioner Leggett seconded; unanimously approved.

**COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

County Manager Meadows shared that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks this year were held at the tractor pull area on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June. "We had a great turn out and a successful show. I would like to thank the Commissioners for sponsoring this event. Also, the State Swim Meet will be hosted by Appling on July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Last year was a great success and I fully expect this year to be even better."

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**


Thanked everyone for attending.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Robyn Evans, County Clerk

Leslie Burch, Chairman

  
ATTEST



