

MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, MAY 8, 2017, AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING #2, 214 W. KING STREET

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

The Chairman called the meeting to order.
Pledge of allegiance to the Flag
Roll call to determine quorum

The following members were present:

R. Lynette Laughter, Chairman
Harold Brooker, Vice Chairman
Greg Jones, Member
Roger Crossen, Member
Barry W. Robbins, Member

Others Present:

Mark Gibson, County Administrator
Robert Smalley, County Attorney
Citizens
Department Heads
Press

Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the agenda with the addition of the Rezoning Recommendation for Greg Phillips who has two parcels to rezone. The motion was approved 4-0.

Mr. Billy Crow was named the Whitfield County Employee of the Month for March 2017. Mr. Billy Crow works in the Whitfield County Sheriff's Office.

PRESENTATION

1. Katie Fries, Lizzy Gregory Stuckey and Brandy Wyatt with the Dalton-Whitfield County Library informed the Board and Citizens about the services and classes that are offered at the Library.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. **Appointment to the Whitfield County EMS Quality Review Committee:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to appoint Bruce Satterfield a two-year term to the Whitfield County EMS Quality Review Committee to expire on December 31, 2017. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Jones, and Robbins in agreement.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the Regular Business Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2017, Special Called Meeting April 24, 2017 and Work Session Minutes of April 24, 2017. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.

PROCLAMATION

1. **Proclamation – Foster Care Month:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to proclaim May 2017 as Foster Care Month in Whitfield County, Georgia. Whitfield County Department and Family Children Services County Director Danny Nuckolls received the proclamation. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement.

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FOR CONSIDERATION

1. **Emergency Management Services Agreement:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the Emergency Medical Services agreement between the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners and Hamilton Emergency Medical Services, Inc. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Robbins and Crossen in agreement. Commissioner Jones and Robbins suggested to the Board to put out an RFP for Emergency Management Services prior to January 2018. **(SEE EXHIBIT "A")**
2. **March 2017 Financial Statement:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the March 2017 Financial Statement as presented by Finance Director, Alicia Vaughn. In discussion, Mrs. Vaughn reported that Local Option Sales Tax for March 2017 is \$826,304. LOST percentage 2017 = 62.653%, Local Option Sales Tax for March 2017 show an increase of 8.9% compared to Local Option Sales Tax Collections for February 2017; Local Option Sales Tax collections for March 2017 show a decrease of 3.1% compared to March 2016 collections. Year to date actual Revenues of \$7,536,341 for March 2017 are over year to date projected revenues of \$7,121,587 by 6%. Year to date actual Expenditures of \$9,520,858 for March 2017 are under Year to date projected expenditures of \$10,021,178 by 5%. TAVT collections for March 2017 were \$203,853, budgeted revenues were \$143,750. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "B")**
3. **Finance – 2016 Budget Amendment #9:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the 2016 budget amendment #9 as presented by Finance Director, Alicia Vaughn. The proposed budget amendment is to adjust line items as a final clean up to the 2016 budget in preparation for the year-end audit. This will get the budget more in line with actual revenues and expenditures. Also included are adjustments for other funds that were not included in previous amendments. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Jones, and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "C")**
4. **Finance – 2017 Budget Amendment #2:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the 2017 budget amendment #2 as presented by Finance Director, Alicia Vaughn. The budget amendment adjusts the SPLOST fund budget for expenditures incurred in 2016 after 2017 budget amendment was approved and to allocate funds to the 2017 budget for expenditures not finalized in 2016 and incurred in 2017. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Jones, and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "D")**
5. **Finance – American Consulting Professionals, LLC Contract:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to enter into a contract with Professional services with American Consulting Professionals, LLC in the amount of \$8,760.00. The County is applying for a loan with the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). As part of the loan requirements, environmental documentation is required to be approved by the Georgia EPD. Based on conversations with the EPD, a project overview is required to determine if the project will qualify for a Categorical Exclusion or will require and Environmental Assessment. This is an agreement/contract with American Consulting Professionals, LLC to perform professional services to prepare a project overview for the CBP Sewer Capacity

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Upgrade project to assist the Georgia EPD in determining if the project will qualify for a Categorical Exclusion. If it is determined by the EPD the project does not qualify for a CE then a new contract and separate scope and fee for the work to perform the Environmental Assessment will be provided. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Jones, and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "E")**

6. **Petition to Close Covington Drive and set public meeting date:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to accept the petition and to hold a public hearing to close Covington Drive, in Whitfield County, Georgia. The public hearing for this petition will be held at the next regular Board of Commissioners meeting on June 12, 2017, at which time a decision can be made to close and abandon Covington Drive. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "F")**
7. **Sheriff's Department – Equipment and Upfitting Ten (10) 2017 Utility Vehicles:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to award the bid to West Chatham Warning Devices for \$69,898.40. This purchase will be made with SPLOST funds. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.
8. **Sheriff's Office Declaration of Vehicle Surplus:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to surplus several vehicles and place them on GovDeals.com. A copy of the list of vehicles surplus are included in these minutes. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Crossen, Robbins, and Jones in agreement.
9. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the rezoning request of Tom Price to rezone a track of land (parcel 12-159-01-024) containing a total of 0.3 acres located at along the east R/W of the North Bypass, from Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) to General Commercial (C-2). The Planning Commission has recommended that the Board approve the rezoning. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen, and Robbins in agreement.
10. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Jones to deny the rezoning request of Cecil Headrick to rezone a tract of land (parcel 09-252-01-101 containing 1.4 acres located at 605 Law Drive from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Commercial (C-2). The Planning Commission has recommended that the Board deny this rezoning. The motion to deny the request was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen, and Robbins in agreement.
11. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the rezoning request of Greg Phillips' two tracts of land parcel 12-135-01-000 containing a total of 109.45 acres located at 525 Lower Dawnville Road and parcel 12-135-06-000 containing a total of 42 acres located along the west R/W of Lower Dawnville Road from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to General Agriculture (GA). The Planning Commission has recommended that the Board approve the rezoning. The motion to was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen, and Robbins in agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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Darryl Long came forward and suggested to the Board that they ask the Georgia Legislature to allow a referendum to be put on the November General Election for Senior Citizens to be exempt from a portion of Whitfield County maintenance and operation property taxes. Chairman Laughter let Mr. Long know that they will have to research this topic and discuss it at a later date.

Jan Eaton who resides in Gilmer County came forward to address some issues she has with the Whitfield County Animal Shelter. Ms. Eaton is part of an animal rescue group in Ellijay, GA. Ms. Eaton questioned the Board to inquire as to the recent euthanization of five (5) dogs on May 5, 2017. Ms. Eaton commented to the Board that this situation is unacceptable in her opinion since there were open runs available. Ms. Eaton suggested to the Board to purchase more cages to accommodate more animal intakes to prevent this situation again.

Kaye Bartenfield Lipscomb came forward and addressed the Board regarding the Whitfield County Animal Shelter. Ms. Lipscomb stated that the reason why the euthanasia rates have come down is due to the rescue groups pulling animals from the Shelter. Ms. Lipscomb stated that the Animal Shelter is not contacting the rescue groups however it's the rescue groups contacting the Shelter. Ms. Lipscomb stated that the rescue groups should receive credit for the decrease of the euthanasia rates at the Animal Shelter. Ms. Lipscomb also questioned the Board regarding the recent euthanization of the five (5) dogs on May 5, 2017. Ms. Lipscomb stated that the five (5) dogs were not held in accordance with the animal shelter policy. Chairman Laughter responded to Ms. Lipscomb that she would personally look into this situation and contact Ms. Lipscomb with the findings.

Tiffany Huckabee came forward and questioned the Board regarding the Target Zero Program. Ms. Huckabee asked if the Whitfield County Animal Shelter is a participant of Target Zero, why were the five (5) dogs euthanized. Ms. Huckabee asked why the Animal Shelter does not offer public adoptions. Ms. Huckabee also questioned what the \$6,000 that is budgeted for veterinary costs in the Animal Shelter's budget goes towards if they do not provide any veterinary services.

Micky Burrows came forward to respond to some of the questions that Ms. Huckabee asked the Board. Mr. Burrows noted that the \$6,000.00 is for the veterinary license costs associated with euthanization process. Mr. Burrows noted that a zero-kill shelter is not realistic, due to health issues often times pet owners will bring their animals to be euthanized at no cost to them, whereas a veterinary office will charge them a fee. Mr. Burrows also noted that if an animal is a danger to the community the only choice is euthanization. Mr. Burrows noted that the Target Zero program states that the optimal holding time for animals is 3-5 days. Mr. Burrows noted the longer the animals are held the more the chances increase of them developing sickness and spreading them to the other healthy animals.

Rita Burrows came forward to speak on the topic. Mrs. Burrows has been working with the Animal Shelter and pulling animals since 2006. Mrs. Burrows noted that she has seen great improvements throughout the years she has dealt with the Animal Shelter. Mrs. Burrows suggested that if the community would like to adopt any animal from the Animal Shelter and since the Animal Shelter does not do any adoptions they should get in contact with the Humane Society who does adoptions to pull the animal from the Animal Shelter and then have the Humane Society spay or neuter the animal. Mrs. Burrows also noted that the Department of Agriculture does not allow animals to be held in crates.

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Jevin Jensen came forward to give a statement from the League of Women Voters regarding the recent Board of Commissioners Strategy Session held in Savannah. The statement strongly recommends that the Board hold any of their meetings locally for the public to be able to attend.

Executive Session – Personnel: Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to go into executive session to discuss Personnel. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement. Present for the meeting were Chairman Lynn Laughter, Commissioners Robbins, Brooker, Crossen and Jones, County Attorney Robert Smalley, County Administrator Mark Gibson.

Motion was then made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commission Crossen to come out of Executive Session. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Brooker, Jones and Crossen in agreement.

ADJOURN Unanimous

R. LYNETTE LAUGHTER, CHAIRMAN
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /