

**MINUTES FOR THE WORK SESSION OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY MAY 12, 2018, AT 8:30 A.M. AT EDWARDS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER, 115 EDWARDS PARK, DALTON, GA**

**WORK SESSION**

The Chairman called the work session to order.

**The following members were present:**

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

**Others Present:**

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

**Work Session:**

Chairman Laughter called the work session to order.

County Administrator Mark Gibson updated the Board and Dept. Heads on the 2015 SPLOST collections and summary.

Finance Director Alicia Vaughn went over the potential SPLOST 2019 timeline.

Finance Director Alicia Vaughn informed the Board about some topics that her department is working on. Vaughn noted that the Audit RFP will go out in July 2018, the committee to select the winning proposal has been selected. Vaughn further noted that some personnel changes will be forthcoming in the next couple of months.

Fire Chief Edward O'Brien went over an overview of his departments activities. O'Brien noted that Station 11 will be complete on June 22. O'Brien also noted that they will be hiring 9 new employees for Station 11.

EMA/911 Director Claude Craig informed the Board of some projects that have been completed in his department.

Animal Shelter Director Diane Franklin went over recent changes and challenges in the department. Franklin noted that the owner reclaim fee is \$150.00, if the animal is not sterilized. Franklin also noted that animal surrender and euthanasia requests fees have gone up. Franklin further noted that in order for the Animal Shelter to continue its success the department needs more space, personnel and funding. The Board was in agreement with Franklin regarding personnel and for a transport van to assist with transports to other rescue groups in other states.

Mike Babb updated the Board and department heads on several projects going on at the Grant Farm.

Public Works Director Dewayne Hunt gave the Board an update on his department. Hunt noted that the work order volume has risen greatly by private citizens. Hunt also went over 2015 SPLOST bridge and culvert projects that were completed. Hunt informed the Board about a recent bid the Dalton Convention Center held to patch, resurface, and mill the parking lot, one

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bid received was \$690,000. Hunt noted that his estimate for the public works department to do the work is \$627,000, however, this estimate did not include bringing ADA parking spaces into slope compliance.

Information Technology Director Rick Lovelady informed the Board about his departments completed projects in 2017. Lovelady noted that they moved all of the County Fire stations into the County's network for data, voice, and wireless networks. This allows for greater access to internal resources, reduces costs associated with voice and lower cell costs with Wi-Fi access. Lovelady also noted the Board of Commissioners regular business meetings are now being live-streamed to ensure greater transparency and accuracy with a visual record of meetings. Lovelady further noted that they have also added wireless connectivity between sites to cut or reduce costs. They were able to connect the new Public Defender's offices to the administration building without any recurring costs. They also connected the County Extension office to Buildings and Grounds with wireless bridges to further reduce monthly costs. Lovelady also noted they connected Admin #2 to a wireless bridge keeping Dalton Utilities as a backup connection reducing the monthly costs by one-half. Lovelady also mentioned to the Board that they approved the transition from a traditional antivirus to an End-Point-Protection solution in order to prevent ransomware attacks. Lovelady noted the City of Atlanta was recently attacked with ransomware which caused them to shut down all online services for six days. Lovelady noted they are working on updating the County's website.

County Engineer Kent Benson updated the Board on remaining SPLOST 2007 projects & current SPLOST 2015 projects. Benson also went over the Carbondale Business Park, Greater Dalton MPO, the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plans and Inspections.

Chairman Lynn Laughter addressed the Board regarding the meeting location of the Board's regular business meetings. Laughter noted currently there has been some discussion as to moving the meetings to the jury assembly room inside of the Courthouse. Laughter noted the Courthouse Administration has made several stipulations as to when the Board is able to use the assembly room. Laughter noted that at this time the meetings will still take place in Administration Building #2. Chairman Laughter also noted there have been several discussions with Whitfield County Schools about their proposed cost sharing request regarding the hiring of 5 additional School Resource Officers (SRO). Laughter updated the Board on the current status of the Service Delivery Agreements with the Cities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell. Laughter noted she and Robert Smalley will be attending a City of Dalton work session on Monday, May 21, at Dalton City Hall where the agreements will be discussed. Laughter noted the Cities of Cohutta, Tunnel Hill and Varnell have signed the required form from the Department of Community Affairs stating the current agreement is not changing at this time. Laughter noted that if any changes are needed they can be made at a later date.

Buildings and Grounds Director Gary Brown informed the Board of the deterioration of the Administration #2 building.

Parks and Recreation Director Brian Chastain updated the Board on the current participation numbers. Chastain asked the members of the Board and Department Heads and Citizens to take a quick tour of the current construction that's taking place on the ballfields of Edwards Park.

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The work session was adjourned at 3:28.

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R. LYNETTE LAUGHTER, CHAIRMAN  
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /