

MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023, AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE COURTHOUSE BOC MEETING ROOM LOCATED AT 205 N. SELVIDGE 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:

Jevin Jensen, Chairman
Barry W. Robbins, Vice-Chair
Robby Staten, Member (ABSENT)
John Thomas, Member
Greg Jones, Member

Others Present:

Robert Smalley, County Attorney
Robert Sivick, County Administrator
Department Heads
Citizens
Press

Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to amend the agenda to add one additional item as presented: 1. Public Works – Water Truck Purchase. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Thomas and Jones in agreement.

Approval of Minutes: Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the November 8, 2023, Budget Workshop Minutes, November 13, Regular Business Meeting Minutes, November 14, 2023 Budget Workshop Minutes and the December 4, 2023 Special Called Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Thomas and Jones in agreement.

Chairman Jensen recognized Ricky Pratt as Employee of the Month for October 2023. Mr. Pratt works at the Fire Department.

Chairman's Report: Chairman Jensen noted that the Board plans to adopt the 2024 SPLOST referendum at the January Board meeting to be placed on the May 21, 2024 ballot. Jensen noted that roads and public work projects make up 86% of the SPLOST requests. Jensen also noted that tonight is the citizens opportunity to comment on the County's 2024 budget, with the budget adoption scheduled for December 21.

Report from Commissioners:

Commissioner Jones noted that Public Works is paving Houston Valley Rd. Chairman Robbins and Thomas did not have any updates to report for this month.

County Administrator Report:

County Administrator addressed the Board on the following: Appalachia Broadband Technical Assistance Grant, Senior Center –2024 Activities and RAISE Grants –Local Partners

October 2023 Financial Statement: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve the October Financial Statement as presented by Chief Financial Officer Debbie Godfrey. Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) collections: October collections of \$1,293,604 were 16.87% greater than budgeted collections of \$1,106,858. This was 1.98% more than September collections of \$1,268,476. YTD collections of \$12,723,113 were 6.49% greater than PY collections of \$11,947,741 for the same time frame. TAVT collections: October collections of \$402,728 were (6.78%) less than September collections of \$432,041. YTD collections of \$4,573,543 were 6.37% greater than PY collections of \$4,299,474 for the same time frame. YTD actual revenues of \$33,947,682 were greater than projected revenues of \$29,461,597 by \$4,486,085 or 15.23%. YTD actual expenditures of

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\$44,819,678 were greater than projected expenditures of \$44,468,007 by \$351,671 or 0.79%. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Thomas, Jones and Robbins in agreement.

Public Comment:

No comments.

2024 Budget Public Hearing:

Chairman Jensen opened the 2024 budget public hearing.

Kathryn Sellers asked the Board to consider giving more money to the Library.

Clyde McDaniel also asked the Board to raise the salaries for the Coroners Office.

There being no other comments Chairman Jensen closed the public hearing.

Finance – 2023 Budget Amendment: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the 2023 budget amendment as presented by Chief Financial Officer Debbie Godfrey. Finance is requesting BOC approval of various 2023 budget amendments as follows: \$2,503.80 from ARPA unrestricted funds to the CDBG-Food Bank Grant to cover administrative costs incurred. In the Special Revenue Opioid Fund: \$118,650 in expenditures and \$36,416 in revenue. The difference of \$82,234 will be covered by the \$218,398 received in 2022 from the first round of settlement funds. \$1,600,000 to cover additional medical and pharmacy expenses incurred in 2023. This will be prorated to the various funds based on headcount. Approximately \$1.18 million will be charged to the General Fund. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Thomas, Robbins and Jones in agreement.

Alcohol License Renewals - 2024: Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the 2024 Alcohol License Renewals. The Sheriff's Office is conducting background investigations on all establishments currently in operation and holding a 2023 Alcohol License, issuance will be contingent upon completed investigations and payment of license fees. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Thomas and Robbins in agreement.

State Grant Acceptance Judicial ARPA: Motion was approved by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to accept a State ARPA grant from the Judicial Council of Georgia for the Conasauga Circuit. Judge Cindy Morris and County Admin request the BOC's acceptance of a State ARPA grant from the Judicial Council of Georgia for the Conasauga Circuit. The award is \$38,051 and will fund an existing full-time Investigator position in the DA's Office. This is to help with the backlog of cases as a result of COVID and to focus on serious felony cases. The funding period begins in January 2024. The remainder of the personnel costs for this position are being covered by the existing Judicial grant from 2023 that will carry over into 2024. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Jones and Thomas in agreement.

Sheriff's Office – Detention Center COVID19 Mitigation Grant: Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the improvements to the HVAC at the Detention Center from Trane Co. At the October meeting, the BOC approved a \$100,000 grant from GA Southern for COVID-19 mitigation in confinement facilities. The project to be funded by this grant is HVAC improvements. We are requesting BOC approval of \$99,457 in HVAC improvements from Trane Company which is our sole source provider for the detention facility. The detention facility exclusively

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uses Trane equipment. 100% of this purchase will be covered by the grant. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Thomas, Robbins and Jones in agreement

Sheriff's Office – Purchase of 17 Vehicles: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve the purchase of 17 vehicles for the Sheriff's Office for the amount of \$807,114 using the 2020 SPLOST surplus. The Sheriff's Office is requesting the purchase of 17 Pursuit Dodge Durango vehicles (43,700 each) and 1 Silverado pick-up truck (64,214) per the recently developed replacement schedule. These vehicles had 150,000 miles or more. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement.

EMA – Motorola Service Agreement Renewal: Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve a six month (6) agreement with Motorola for \$91,568.38. The Motorola contract is up for renewal. After negotiations with TACN and Motorola, TACN has agreed to cover a portion of the contract. TACN will start paying their part on 07/01/2024. EMA's part for the first 6 months will be \$91,568.38. The original contract was for \$271,820 annually. The new contract total will be for \$150,543 for one year. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Thomas and Robbins in agreement.

Finance Dept. – Purchasing Policy Amendment: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve amending the purchasing policy originally passed in 2016. The approved amendment is as follows: Amend the current finance procurement policy, removing the phrase "except rolling stock". This will allow for use of state contract for future vehicle purchases. G. BIDS: 1. State Contract, General Services Administration, and U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance: Items available for purchase on either the Georgia Bid list, through the General Services Administration (GSA,) or through the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance, **except rolling stock**, shall be exempt from the bidding requirements hereunder. However, depending upon the item, the County Administrator or Finance Department may recommend to the Board of Commissioners that such item(s) should be bid by Whitfield County nonetheless. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Thomas and Robbins in agreement.

Fire Department Uniforms: Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve up to \$78,000 for Uniforms from Municipal Emergency Services. WCFD has budgeted their annual expenditure for station uniforms. The annual line item expenditure amount will not be used in its entirety for this purchase. Other non-Nomex items such as boots, coats, hoodies, and uniforms will be purchased from this line item. The department will utilize Sourcewell Contract and the price may vary from listed depending on when the order is made. Below amount is the price of contract items as of December of 2023. Shirts: \$112.86 per unit, Pants: \$131.79 per unit. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement.

Fire Department – Bathroom Remodel Stations 2-6: Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the low bid from Graphite Construction for remodeling bathrooms at Fire Stations 2-6 in the amount of \$607,000. The present bathrooms will be demolished and replaced with two separate bathrooms. All new fixtures will be water conserving and lights will be LED. All five stations have the same floor plan/layout and are identical. The price is \$121,400 per station for a total of \$607,000 dollars. This is a SPLOST 2020 project. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Jones and Thomas in agreement.

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Fire Department – First Due Computer Program Purchase: Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the First Due Computer Program purchase for \$49,000 as a sole source vendor as presented in the 2024 Fire Budget. The Fire Departments current computer-based applications for the department include multiple vendors, Target Solutions, Vector Check It, Vector Scheduling, Active 911, FirePrograms and an Access Data Base. First Due has made it possible to use one application to process all this department information. This would improve scene safety and streamline administrative duties. This is a cloud-based system. The Finance Department has reviewed this request. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioner Robbins, Thomas and Jones in agreement.

Juvenile Court – Indigent Defense Attorney Contracts: Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve the Independent Contractor's Agreement between Whitfield County Juvenile Court and Jerry Moncus, Bryan L. Rayburn, and Joshua J. Smith. Mr. Moncus, Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Smith will provide legal representation in all indigent cases as determined by the Whitfield County Juvenile Court. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement.

Juvenile Court – Guardian Ad Litem/Attorney: Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve the Independent Contractor's Agreement between Whitfield County Juvenile Court and Matthew Thames. Mr. Thames will provide legal representation in all indigent cases as determined by the Whitfield County Juvenile Court. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement

Human Resources/Board of Commissioners: Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve ACCGs (Association County Commissioners of Georgia) guideline recommendation for Non-Chief Magistrate base pay for any new Magistrate Judge elected after January 1, 2024. ACCG and State guidelines require the County to pay less than 90% of the Chief Magistrate OR \$56,600 annually. Currently, the County pays 90% of the Chief Magistrate. This does not impact current pay but brings us into compliance. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement.

Building Inspections Building Permit Fees: Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve a flat fee of \$100.00 per sq. ft. for any new residential building projects. Previously the permit fees were calculated by the price of construction of the buildings the builders were building. Moving to a flat fee of \$100.00 per sq. ft. makes the buildings permit fees more consistent and fair. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement.

Town of Cohutta Annexation – parcel 11-024-06-008: Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Jones for no land use classification objection to tax parcel number 11-024-06-008. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement.

Rezoning Recommendation: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve the following recommendation of the planning commission approving the rezoning request of; **Grant Family Properties to rezone from General Commercial (C-2) to Limited Commercial (C-1A) a tract of land totaling 1.18 acres located at 106 N.E. Wildwood Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (11-277-01-001).** The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Thomas and Robbins in agreement.

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Rezoning Recommendation: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve the following recommendation of the planning commission approving the rezoning request of; **Teddy R. Higginbotham Jr. to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to Transitional Residential (R-6) a tract of land totaling 0.46 acres located at 759 Townsend Lane, Tunnel Hill, Georgia. Parcel (27-056-01-030).** The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Thomas and Robbins in agreement.

Rezoning Recommendation: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to approve the following recommendation of the planning commission approving the rezoning request of; **John West to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 16.82 acres located at 3613 Lindsey Memorial Road, Rocky Face, Georgia. Parcel (27-310-16-000).** The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Thomas and Robbins in agreement.

Public Works – Water Truck Purchase: Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the low bid from Lee Smith Inc for 2024 Ford F-750/Valew water truck in the amount of \$144,700.00. Public Works recommends the purchase of the diesel engine truck from Lee Smith Inc. for its longevity and fuel efficiency under heavy load. This truck best meets the needs of thier operations. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Thomas in agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No comments.

ADJOURN Unanimous



JEVIN JENSEN, CHAIRMAN
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: 1/8/2024