

Baldwin County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
August 18, 2009
6:00 p.m.

A Meeting of the Baldwin County Commissioners was held Tuesday, August 18, 2009, at 6:00 p.m., Baldwin County Courthouse, Suite 319, 121 North Wilkinson Street, Milledgeville, Georgia, with Chair Bubba Williams presiding.

Members Present: Emily C. Davis
Linda Fussell
Sammy Hall
Faye Smith
Bubba Williams

Also Present: David Waddell
Joan Minton
Cindy Cunningham
Ralph McMullen
Linda Zarkowsky
Dawn Hudson
Scott Deason
Doug Hawkins

Call to Order

Chair Bubba Williams called the August 18, 2009, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Emily C. Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2009, Regular Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Department Report

Doug Hawkins, GIS and Technical Analyst, gave a presentation on the County's Geographic Information System. He discussed various administrative tasks to include: coordinating GIS mapping services with the Regional Development Center, providing Sheriff's Office with court graphics, assisting with right-of-way acquisitions for roads and utilities, assisting with grant applications and administration, coordinating airport maintenance, assisting Registrar's Office with mapping requirements, coordinating floodplain management, coordinating census data with census department and RDC; verifying and/or assigning all addresses; working with postal service, E911, Tax Assessors Office and Registrar's Office to resolve addressing conflicts; creating maps for dispatch of Fire Departments and Sheriff's Office, coordinating phase updates of E911 system. Mr. Hawkins explained layers of geographic information system (GIS) that are complete: property data, census information, voting districts, floodplains, contours, topography, lake and streams, land use plan, water tanks, pumping and lift stations and critical facilities such as fire, police and cell towers.

Financial Update

Finance Director Linda Zarkowsky presented an update on the financial status of the County. She reported we have been talking about revenue declines for months, and cost containment measures were put in throughout the last fiscal year (2009). She stated that in May she reported to the Board that revenue for the fiscal year 2009 could be down as much as \$3,000,000; preliminary figures still show this will be the case although final adjustments haven't been made. Ms. Zarkowsky stated cutbacks were made throughout the year (2009), but it wasn't enough to make up for all the loss of revenue and for unexpected costs. The result is the erosion of the County fund balance.

She reported that because of the decline in revenue, the Board implemented a solid waste fee for 2010, the new fiscal year budget, to pay for disposal instead of increasing the millage rate to cover the cost which would have been about 1.5 mills of tax. Even with that action, the new budget had to be reduced by another \$1.3 million to fit within the revenue that is expected to be collected during the year. These reductions were included in the FY 2010 budget, and some of those reductions were freezing and not funding vacant positions, eliminating part-time positions, switching to a new program for inmate prescription drugs, employees were asked to pay a larger part of the cost of their health care, and some other adjustments were made in the health care plan to provide more savings. She stated Commissioners are to be commended for making those hard decisions that were needed.

Ms. Zarkowsky reported the County is only one month into the new fiscal year (2010), but we aren't expecting collections to be any better than last year. She stated there is no guarantee that we will even collect all of the reduced revenue estimates. Also, the start date for the solid waste billing was set at September 1st, so that means two (2) months of the cost of disposal will have to be covered by some other revenue source.

Ms. Zarkowsky reiterated the fact that even more cuts will be necessary this year, and the County must continue to look at ways to eliminate some costs and no doubt more hard decisions will be necessary. She stated this year we need to use less revenue than we collect so that we can begin to rebuild our fund balance. She stated the County will continue to work on additional cutbacks, and asked for Commissioners to please provide input and recommendations to the County Management Staff.

Commissioner Emily C. Davis requested that the County evaluate whether there could be cost savings by implementing a four day, extended hour, work week for employees of non-emergency departments. She stated this would not be furloughs for employees; they would have the same number of payroll hours with departments being closed for one day.

2009 Tax Levy

Chair Bubba Williams stated the County's millage rate will be set at the September 15, 2009, Regular Meeting. He stated the millage rate is not being increased and will remain at 8.64.

Commissioner Sammy Hall stated that even though the millage rate is not going up, citizens will see some increase to their tax bills due to the fact that the State did not grant the homeowners tax relief credit.

Solid Waste Consolidation

Chair Williams stated the County has implemented the solid waste collection and disposal fee of \$13.50 per property owner, and issues have been raised from City residents about not having access to the County's Convenience Centers. He asked County staff to meet with City officials to discuss how this situation could be addressed.

Commissioner Sammy Hall commented he felt it would be of benefit to all concerned if the City and County had only once service for solid waste collection and disposal.

Parcels for GEFA Program Water Towers

Assistant County Manager Ralph McMullen presented appraisals for parcels of property for the construction of water towers in the County. He stated the property of .12 acres at 130 B Corral Road has been valued at \$1,920.00. Also, property on Lake Laurel Road for water tower construction and necessary easements is valued at \$6,080.00. Thus the total for property for the two proposed towers is \$8,000.00. Mr. McMullen requested Board approval to offer to purchase the properties as presented for \$8,000.00.

Vice Chair Faye Smith made a motion to authorize the County's offer to purchase the properties as presented for \$8,000.00. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Stimulus Funding for Resurfacing Browns Crossing Road

County Manager Joan Minton reported the County has been notified of approved Stimulus Funding for leveling, resurfacing, striping, shoulder building and grassing 3.65 miles of Browns Crossing Road. She stated the contract would be let in December.

CJCC Grant Award for District Attorney's Victim Services Initiative

Finance Director Linda Zarkowsky stated the District Attorney's office has received funding in the amount of \$35,704.00 under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Victim Services Grant Program for a victim advocate position. Ms. Zarkowsky reported there is no match required for the grant.

Commissioner Emily C. Davis made a motion to accept the CJCC Grant Award in the amount of \$35,704 for the District Attorney's Victim Services Initiative as presented. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Accounts Payable List Dated August 18, 2009

Vice Chair Faye Smith made a motion to approve the Accounts Payable list dated August 18, 2009. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Other Business

Commissioner Emily C. Davis recommended that Commissioners consider allocating time at the end of meetings to allow citizens a chance to speak to the Board. She requested the Commissioners allow no more than three members of the audience to address the Commissioners for a maximum time of two minutes each.

After discussion by Commissioners to allow public comment at the end of this meeting, the floor was opened for comments from the audience.

Mr. Casey Tucker addressed the Board regarding the issue of purchasing the land for water towers.

Mr. Rick Prance addressed the Board regarding solid waste collection.

Adjournment

Commissioner Emily C. Davis made a motion to adjourn the Board of Commissioners meeting at 6:45 p.m. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bubba Williams
Chairman

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk