

Baldwin County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
December 1, 2009
6:00 p.m.

A Meeting of the Baldwin County Commissioners was held Tuesday, December 1, 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
Sgt. Michael Childs

Call to Order

Chair Bubba Williams called the December 1, 2009, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Linda Fussell made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2009, Regular Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Recommendation from Revenue, Finance and Budgets Committee

County Manager Joan Minton presented a report from the Revenue, Finance and Budgets Committee which consists of Committee Chair Bubba Williams and Member Linda Fussell. She stated the Committee met November 17, 2009 to discuss the financial position of the County. She reported even though Baldwin County has been operated as one of the most fiscally sound and conservative governments in the State, the County has also suffered because of the severe economic recession. Ms. Minton reported that a \$2.5 million dollar revenue shortfall combined with unbudgeted expenses for startup costs for the jail, ongoing costs and new personnel associated with the jail, unbudgeted costs for boarding prisoners, overruns for inmate medical costs and substantial increases in group health insurance for all County employees have eliminated the County's \$1.7 million dollar fund balance resulting in a \$1 million dollar deficit going into the current fiscal year. County Manager Minton stated County governments are not allowed to operate with ongoing deficits which can result in sanctions imposed by the State.

Ms. Minton reported that for the coming fiscal years the goal is to first address the deficit and fund balance issues and then to continue basic county services without tax increases; but with an acknowledgement that the County will be facing serious revenue shortfalls over the next few years.

Ms. Minton stated the Revenue, Finance and Budgets Committee recommended a change in the County's fiscal year that runs from July 1st to June 30th to a calendar fiscal year lasting from January 1st through December 31st. She stated Baldwin County can make use of a one-time change to its fiscal year to more properly allocate ad valorem taxes to the fiscal year for which they are collected. She reported it is very

important to remember that the change of the fiscal year will not provide additional operating funds; but, it will eliminate the deficit and begin the rebuilding of the fund balance. She stated the County will have to continue to monitor expenditures closely and keep in place all cost-saving measures such as freezing open positions and suspending all unnecessary capital purchases.

County Manager Minton presented the following recommendation from the Revenue, Finance and Budgets Committee regarding the County's fiscal year and financial position:

- a. The current fiscal year which would have ended June 30, 2009, will end March 31, 2010.
- b. The remainder of 2010 (April 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010) will comprise the other transition fiscal year;
- c. The first full fiscal calendar year will begin January 1, 2011. In order to obtain the full positive effect of the change in fiscal year, other things need to be done. Early in April, 2010, the County will need to issue tax anticipation notes, invest the proceeds in higher interest bearing accounts to minimize overall interest costs, draw down the proceeds as needed to fund operations, and pay off the notes with ad valorem taxes collected at the end of 2010. This process will be repeated at the beginning of each fiscal year thereafter.

Commissioner Emily C. Davis made a motion to approve the recommendation from the Revenue, Finance and Budgets Committee as presented to move forward with necessary steps to change the County fiscal year to a calendar year. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Ocmulgee Drug Task Force Grant

Finance Director Linda Zarkowsky reported that in July the Board accepted twenty-five percent funding for the drug task force for July through September due to the fact the Criminal Justice Council had not received their award from the Department of Justice. Funding for the remaining 75% has now been released, and grant documents have been received.

Finance Director Zarkowsky reported the grant award is \$194,250.00 with a required match of \$64,750.00. The match is shared by the participating jurisdictions, and Baldwin County's share of \$15,000.00 is included in the budget.

Commissioner Emily C. Davis made a motion to accept the Ocmulgee Drug Task Force Grant and to authorize the Chairman to execute grant documents. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Alcoholic Beverage License Application

Assistant County Manager Ralph McMullen presented an alcoholic beverage license application for retail beer, wine, and liquor by the drink at 2813 Irwinton Road. He stated the applicant, Jonathan Tollison, has met all legal requirements of the application process and the site meets requirements of Baldwin County's Ordinance.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to approve the alcoholic beverage license for Jonathan Tollison at 2813 Irwinton Road as presented. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Water / Sewer Department Report

Water / Sewer Department Superintendent Tommy Williams discussed operations of the Water / Sewer Department. Office Manager Vanessa Hale presented information regarding office location, phone numbers, water / sewer rates, deposit / payment procedures and general administrative / operating policies.

Finance Director Linda Zarkowsky stated the water fund is an enterprise fund; therefore, self-supporting and operates with revenue generated by the provision of water and sewer services. She stated this revenue is not to be used for other County operations.

She reported over the last several years water service has been expanded into most areas of the County with revenue bonds that are being paid with sales tax. However, maintaining the new infrastructure has put a strain on the operating revenue of the system. Rates were last increased in 2001, and these need to be reviewed in the near future.

Engineer Tim Ingram discussed current water usage, the need for additional water storage tanks and future expansion of the current water system. He reported an application was submitted to GEFA for construction of additional water storage tanks, and the application is on GEFA's fundable project list. However, if funding does not become available through GEFA other funding sources must be pursued. He stated the greatest need at this time is for water storage in the Hopewell area; additional storage is also needed in the Meriweather / 212 area of the County. Mr. Ingram reported future needs also include a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA) which the Board previously authorized as well as an automated meter reading system and the replacement of remaining two inch lines in the County. He stated there are currently no plans to expand the sewer system.

Accounts Payable List Dated December 1, 2009

Commissioner Emily C. Davis made a motion to approve the Accounts Payable list dated December 1, 2009. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Appearances

Ms. Mildred Endsley, Community Outreach Representative for Evercare, presented information regarding hospice and palliative care services available to area citizens through Evercare.

Commissioner Emily C. Davis made a motion to allow Mr. Clyde Waller to address the Board.

After discussion, the motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: Davis Nay: Fussell, Hall, Williams

Adjournment

Commissioner Linda Fussell made a motion that the Board of Commissioners meeting be adjourned at 6:50 p.m. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bubba Williams
Chairman

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk

