

Baldwin County Commissioners
Called Meeting
June 13, 2017
2:30 p.m.

A Called Meeting of the Baldwin County Commissioners was held Tuesday, June 13, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., Baldwin County Courthouse, Suite 319, 121 North Wilkinson Street, Milledgeville, Georgia with Chair Sammy Hall presiding.

Members Present: Sammy Hall
Tommy French
Emily C. Davis
Henry Craig
John Westmoreland

Also Present: Ralph McMullen
David McRee
Dawn Hudson
Cindy Cunningham

Call to Order

Chair Sammy Hall called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Chair Hall stated the purpose of this meeting is to discuss whether the County will provide financial assistance to Oconee Regional Medical Center to ensure the medical facility remains open to provide health care to the citizens of this area. Chair Hall stated the County has been working with Oconee Regional Medical Center to find means to assist during their reorganization.

Interim CEO Steve Johnson stated this is about preservation of a community asset. He reported that officials announced that the sale of the hospital is pending that will allow Prime Healthcare to purchase ORMC. He stated this process is currently on track. The sale must also be approved by the State Attorney General's office before it can be finalized. This process will also open the bidding for possible bidding by other entities for purchase of the hospital

Mr. Johnson stated the County can get involved in this process by partnering with Oconee RMC and sending the message that there is unity and a true partnership in delivering health care to this community.

He stated the hospital has approximately \$6,000,000 per year in indigent care costs and any help, even \$500,000, would serve to do more than just helping to offset costs.

Commissioners discussed the importance of keeping the hospital open for the community.

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion for the County to committ provide \$500,000 per year for 10 years to support the hospital. Commissioner John Westmoreland seconded the motion to go into further discussion.

Commissioner Emily Davis expressed concern about the Board making a financial commitment for a ten year term.

County Attorney David McRee stated he would look into this issue. He stated any action the Board might take at this time would be subject to the ability for the Board to make an obligation for a term of 10 years.

Mr. Mike Couch, Executive Director of the Central State Hospital Redevelopment Authority addressed the Board about the importance of having a medical facility in the community. He stated he cannot get agencies to come to Central State campus if there is not a medical facility nearby, and those that have located here would have to leave if the hospital closed.

Chair Hall stated the economic impact of the hospital and its future to this community to create and keep jobs is of utmost importance. He stated that time is of the essence, and the County should provide the hospital with their decision for assistance as soon as possible. He stated an agreement should be prepared outlining a \$500,000 per year commitment for a certain number of years (5 – 10) with stipulations for Oconee RMC to show the County how the money would be spent. He stated this agreement needs to be sent to the State Attorney General as soon as possible.

Commissioner Emily Davis stated this commitment should not take priority over County functions, and the County must continue to carry on with County business even though this commitment is made to Oconee RMC.

Mr. Hall explained that how this money would be collected would be a decision of the Board; however, he stated this could not come from SPLOST.

Chair Hall called for a vote on the motion to provide \$500,000 per year to Oconee Regional Medical Center for 10 years. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Hall stated an agreement would be prepared as discussed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to adjourn the Called Meeting at 3:05 p.m. Commissioner John Westmoreland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sammy Hall
Chair

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk