

MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON JANUARY 22, 2019 AT 11:00 AM IN THE
BEN HILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX

Those present for the meeting were as follow:

Steve Taylor	Chairman
Hope Harmon	Vice-Chair
Bennie Calloway	Commissioner
Daniel Cowan	Commissioner
John Mooney	Commissioner
Michael Dinnerman	County Manager
Donna R. Prather	County Clerk

Chairman Steve Taylor called the meeting to order.

Website Virtual Office/Scott Spivey

Scott Spivey stated he has rebuilt the County website. As of now, if you click on the old website address it will redirect to the new website. Mr. Spivey asked the Commissioners what information if any would they like to have on the Commissioner Virtual Office on the County's website? The Commissioners discussed the information that is available on the old website. Chairman Steve Taylor asked the Commissioners to go into the CVO and write down what information they want on the new website and turn their information into him by the end of January.

Scarborough Exotics Pet Store

Development Authority Director OD Netter introduced Thomas Scarborough to the Commissioners. Mr. Netter stated Thomas Scarborough wants to start an Exotic Pet Store. He is asking for a loan in the amount of \$22,000, 3.75% interest rate, and a five to seven-year loan term.

Mr. Thomas discussed his inventory and stated he will provide an animal inventory list of exotic and domestic animals. He also stated his business will also educate pet owners on how to provide and take care of their pets. He stated the \$22,000 will get his business started. He also has an online business that has been in operation for year; but he has 10 years of experience regarding the business. Mr. Thomas has spoken with the Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Humane Society to help them get their pets adopted; but he will not be selling dogs and cats.

Chairman Steve Taylor and County Manager Michael Dinnerman asked Mr. Thomas questions regarding customer base in Fitzgerald and surrounding County and inventory.

The Commissioners discussed the probability of this business working in Fitzgerald and the success and failures of prior loans.

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon stated that they should look at the vacancies on the Board and select more business minded people to serve.

Chairman Steve Taylor stated they need to look at Department of Community Affairs guidelines, update the Revolving Loan Fund Board, and make the necessary guidelines to make the Board better and beneficial to the community.

Retirement Contribution

County Manager Michael Dinnerman provided copies to the Commissioners of surrounding counties retirement options. Mr. Dinnerman explain that this plan is for new employees that started after the Commissioner voted to freeze the old plan December 2018. This new plan is for employees that began employment on January 1, 2018 and after.

The Commissioners discussed the options and asked Mr. Dinnerman to gather more information on a 2% base and 4% max retirement plan.

Special Exception Ordinance

County Attorney Virginia Hall provided a Special Events Ordinance, Resolution for Special Exception to Zoning District, and a Special Event Permit Application. Ms. Hall asked the Commissioners to review the documents and let her know of any changes they might have.

The Commissioners briefly discussed the documents, asked questions, and suggested some changes.

Ed Ward Road Closure

Chairman Steve Taylor stated he had received a letter from the President of Modern Dispersions South Inc. regarding closing Ed Ward road to through traffic. Modern Dispersions South Inc. concerns are the new Fitzgerald High School that will be built in the area that will increase traffic. This road is notorious for speeding and disregarding rail crossing signs. The through traffic volume that the new school will bring to Ed Ward Road will add an enormous safety risk to Modern Dispersions South Inc. operations and public travel.

The Commissioners discussed the safety issue that comes with the new school being built in the area. County Manager Michael Dinnerman recommended cutting the road instead of closing it. The Commissioners discussed that possibility and ask Mr. Dinnerman to follow up that possibility.

Library Board Appointments

Chairman Steve Taylor stated we have received three applications for the Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Library Board. Mr. Taylor stated they need to fill two vacancies.

He asked the Commissioners to review the applications and be prepared to make

appointments.

Hospital Authority Board Appointment

Chairman Steve Taylor stated we have received three applications for the Hospital Authority Board vacancy. He stated three names must be submitted to the Hospital Board and they are responsible for choosing one of three. Chairman Taylor believes all three names are good candidates to replace Barry Peavey.

DLS Discussion

County Manager Michael Dinnerman explained a conversation he and Department of Leisure Services Director Keith Morrison had regarding his budget and the short fall. Mr. Dinnerman provided the Commissioners with Department of Leisure Services 5-year budget history and a 2019 revenue and expense report. Mr. Morrison is asking the County for a \$23,499.50 increase to bring Department of Leisure Services finances back to a healthy place.

After further discussion by the Commissioners, Mr. Dinnerman recommended giving the money to the Department of Leisure Services under three circumstances:

1. The City of Fitzgerald contribute the same amount as Ben Hill County
2. Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County
3. A reduction of registration fees

Meeting Adjourned

_____ Steve Taylor, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk