

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON NOVEMBER 07, 2023 AT 6:00 PM IN THE  
BEN HILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

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

**Call to Order**

Chairman Steve Taylor called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the Agenda/Agenda Changes**

Chairman Steve Taylor added Cell Tower Agreement to the agenda under New Business.

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the agenda to include Cell Tower Agreement. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

**Acceptance of Prior Minutes**

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes that was held on October 03, 2023. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

**Appointments: NONE**

**Constitutional Officer: NONE**

**Department Head Reports: NONE**

**County Board Reports: NONE**

**County Manager's Report:**

County Manager Michael Dinnerman reported:

- 4-H Office is looking good.
- Held a Public Hearing with the SGRC regarding the Road Improvement Grant for Flint Road. We were awarded \$1,000,000 for the project.
- Meet with the architect to discuss the Monitor project.

- The cite certification has been signed regarding encroachment for Ed Ward Road with Southern Telecom and the project is back on track.
- Had someone look at the Monitor building roof.
- Working on the FY 2024 budget. It will be ready to present sometime in December.

**Annexation Request/Notification:**

The City of Fitzgerald sent annexation notifications for said properties located at the following:

- 129 Ocilla Hwy/GB County to GB City
- 5 Acre Tract Number 964/Lot Number 300 Located on Bowens Mill Hwy and Hwy US 129/GB County to GB City
- 6.47 acres 255 Benjamin Hill Road /P & GB County to GB City

**Rezoning Application: NONE**

**Alcohol Application: NONE**

**Appointments: NONE**

**Old Business:**

*Special Exception/ Christian Recovery Center*

Building & Zoning Administrator Jacob Hughes stated we are here to discuss the Special Exception for the Christian Recovery Center.

During the August 8, 2023, meeting the Christian Recovery Center was presented a letter giving them 60 days to come into compliance with various local and state codes. A list of violations was provided to them by the Department of Public Health, Fire Marshals, EPD, and me.

Mr. Hughes stated he visited the property on October 3rd and informed the Christian Recovery Center of various items that needed to be addressed.

On November 6, 2023, Mr. Hughes made an unannounced visit to the Christian Recovery Center to check on the progress of the items that I asked them to address during the visit on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The following were found:

- The receptacles on the exterior of the buildings were not Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GRGI) compliant.
- A broken window in the pantry had not been fixed since August.
- They were advised to remove extension cords and surge protectors at the first visit in August, when he returned in October they were complying, but at the November 6, 2023, inspection they were out of compliance again.
- They were still operating two washing machines after assuring Mr. Collins of DPH that they would be removing one machine to come into compliance with DPH wastewater standards for the existing drain field.
- The laundry room electrical panel box was still unlabeled.
- GFCI/Arc fault breakers are required for damp and outdoor fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
- The electrical panel on the dorm building had improper labeling.
- They initially told the County they would be housing approximately 30 patients, but

they later reduced that number to 15 patients. On November 6, 2023, the housing set up did not appear to have changed from housing 30 patients.

- In the kitchen area, there are multiple appliances still on the same receptacle; code requires that each appliance be on a separate dedicated circuit.
- Fire extinguisher inspection by a certified inspector is required onsite to assure proper placement and typing of extinguishers. Mr. Hughes called the company to verify compliance. Upon speaking with the Inspector, he explained that no site inspection has been done but the Christian Recovery Center brought in the extinguishers, and they were certified.
- In October, Mr. Hughes requested that the broken outlets and missing switch cover in the pantry be replaced. This was not completed by the November 6 inspection.
- The Pantry panel box appeared to be improperly labeled.
- An untagged camper was on the property during the October inspection. The CRC was advised that they had 30 days to remove it. The camper was still on the premises at the November 6 inspection.
- No attempts were made to make any of the buildings ADA compliant regarding the ramps and the bathrooms.
- The old fire alarm in the building is nonfunctioning, but the pull handles and fire alarm bells were still present throughout the facility giving the appearance of fire security. Code requires an integrated alarm system that has not been installed.
- Mr. Hughes sent a quote to CRC from International Fire Protection, Inc of Tifton, GA in October to install a sprinkler system. During the November 6 inspection, a sprinkler system was not installed. Mr. Hughes called International Fire Protection to verify the status of installation and was advised that CRC has not followed up after receiving the quote in October.
- Two sets of architectural drawings are required by code. This information for architect has not been provided.

Mr. Hughes stated, given this background, the proposed use will cause an excessive or burdensome use of services to the County. CRC's operation adversely influences the conditions of that area. To protect the public health and safety of the residents of Ben Hill County, I recommend the denial of this application for Special Exception and give CRC 45 days to vacate the property.

County Manager Michael Dinnerman stated this is a health and safety issue. We were willing to work with them. We laid out a plan to help them move forward but the little stuff that could have been done has not been done. They were given 90 days to correct the issues at the facility. Mr. Dinnerman stated his recommendation is to support Building & Zoning Administrator Jacob Hughes to deny the application for the Special Exception and give CRC 45 days to vacate the property.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to deny the application for the Special Exception and give CRC 45 days to vacate the property. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

### **New Business:**

*Election Board Appointments/Thelma Graham & Danny Young*

Chairman Steve Taylor reminded the Commissioners of the two appointments coming up in

December.

*Cell Tower Agreement/ Astor Road*

Building & Zoning Inspector Jake Hughes stated he presented a Special Exception for a communications tower at 556 Astor Rd at the June 6, 2023, Regular Monthly Meeting, for consideration.

The Commissioners voted to approve this special exception contingent on signatures on a Communication Tower Agreement that would allow for Ben Hill County to use space on the tower for Emergency Services.

When the agreement was presented to Vertical Bridge VBTS, LLC for approval, they made some changes to the contract. After reviewing the new contract with the County Attorney, County Manager, and other radio tower professionals the new contract was accepted by the Ben Hill County Building and Zoning Department

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to adopt the new cell tower agreement with Vertical Bridge VBTS, LLC on Astor Road. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

**Agenda Changes and/or add on:**

**Legislative Report: NONE**

**Public Comments: NONE**

**Executive Session**

**Commissioner's Remarks:**

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon announced that Senator Raphael Warnock and Senator Jon Ossoff will be in Fitzgerald November 14<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 4 pm at New Life Community Center on Sawyer Drive with Federal and State representatives to discuss social security along with other important topics.

Chairman Steve Taylor announced the Employee Appreciation Lunch, November 20<sup>th</sup> at the Senior Citizen Center from 11 am to 2 pm.

HR Director Pamela Turner stated this event is to show the employees they are appreciated.

**Meeting adjourned.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Steve Taylor, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk