

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON FEBRUARY 06, 2024 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
Daniel Cowan	Commissioner
Bennie Calloway	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

County Manager Michael Dinnerman requested to add agenda item 4-H to New Business

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the agenda that included agenda item 4-H Office Furniture. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, 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 January 02, 2024. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman Hope Harmon made a motion to suspend the Regular Monthly Meeting to enter the Public Hearing to discuss a Special Exception for Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and Cargo Trailer Customization & Sales. Commissioner Daniel Cowan second the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Bennie Calloway joined the meeting.

Public Hearing

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update/Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Marcus McConico, Southern Regional Commission Representative, stated the purpose of the Public Hearing to begin the process of working on updating Ben Hill County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to access FEMA and GEMA funds in the event of a natural disaster. The focus areas are hurricanes/tropical storms, tornadoes, floods, lightning, wildfires, extreme heat, and drought.

There were no public comments.

Cargo Trailer Customization & Sales

Building & Zoning Jacob Hughes stated he has reviewed the application. The proposed use of the land is suitable for the proposed business, there are enclosed workshops on the property, and enough distance from the highway to not cause issues. This should not impact the development of the adjacent properties. The proposed business will not adversely affect the existing use or usability of this property or the adjacent properties. The current zoning only allows for onsite utility trailer sales, manufacturing and repair requires a Special Exception.

Chairman Steve Taylor asked the Commissioners if any of them had a conflict of interest regarding the Special Exception request. Their answer was no.

Public comments for the Special Exception.

Irma Rodrigues Rivera, 1227 Bowens Mill Hwy, stated she and her husband have three kids. They are just trying to make a better living for their family. She stated the hours of operation will be from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm. They will customize an estimated two to three trailers a week or every two weeks.

Public comments in opposition to the Special Exception.

Alaine Cook, 1241 Bowens Mill Road, stated she owns the property that is adjacent to Ms. Rivera. She and her husband plan to build a home on their property and have livestock. She would like to maintain the zoning for the property as agriculture because that is the reason why they purchased their property. She asked if there is an industrial park that can house the business because she is concerned about the traffic. She requests the land to remain agriculture zoning.

Iris Ramirez, 1221 Bowens Mill Hwy, stated she is against the Special Exception because of an increase in traffic. She has small children that play outside and is concerned about strangers being in the area. She also thinks it is inappropriate to have a business in that location because she loves the peace of living in the area. She requests the land to remain agriculture zoning.

Irma Rodrigues Rivera stated if the current location is an issue, she has 14 acres and would consider moving to the back of the property.

County Attorney Nick Kinsley stated if Irma Rodrigues Rivera chose to change the location of the property for the business, she would have to submit another Special Exception application for that area.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to close the Public Hearing and return to the Regular Monthly Meeting. 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.

Appointments: NONE

Constitutional Officer: NONE

Department Head Reports: NONE

County Board Reports: NONE

Chairman allows Mrs. Amy Bryant to introduce herself to the Commissioners and to the public. She stated she is running for Superior County Judge for the Eight Judicial District. She resides in Cordele. Her husband's family is from Fitzgerald. She is running for Judge Denise Fachini seat because she is retiring.

County Manager's Report:

County Manager Michael Dinnerman reported:

- 4H Building is finished, just waiting on internet to be installed.
- The Commissioners meeting room needs a few things done before it is finished.
- Working on building on Kimble Road. The architect has been chosen; we just need to sign the contract.
- Mr. Dinnerman is also going to meet with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon and Commissioner Bennie Calloway to choose a plan for the building.
- The encroachment process is done for Ed Ward Road and the project is moving forward.

Annexation Request/Notification: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Appointments: NONE

Old Business:

Cargo Trailer Customization & Sales

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the Special Exception for the Cargo Trailer Customization & Sales. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion. Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Commissioner Daniel Cowan opposed the motion.

Qualifying Fee Resolution/Ratify

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the agenda that included agenda item 4-H. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

New Business:

Encroachment Agreement/Fitzgerald Water Light & Bond/Ratify

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to ratify the vote for the Encroachment Agreement with Fitzgerald Water Light & Bond on Ed Ward Road project. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Budget Amendment 2023-02

CFO Darlow Maxwell submitted this budget amendment that applies solely to Fund 100 – General Fund. The Official Code of Georgia Annotated section 36-81-3(b) requires an annual balanced budget for the General Fund, each Special Revenue Fund, and each Debt Service Fund and requires a project-length budget for each capital project fund. General Fund revenue is increased by \$1,651,567 and General Fund expenditures are increased by \$1,651,567.

A schedule of increases and decreases by Department is included in this amendment. The Budget Revision Edit Lists are included for both revenue and expenditures.

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment Resolution 2023-02. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

4H Office Furniture

County Manager Michael Dinnerman stated the 4H house is desperately in need of new furniture. They are close to moving into the newly renovated building with old and outdated furniture. He stated he would use the ARP money to make the purchase. Mr. Dinnerman said he is requesting permission to make the purchase.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to authorize County Manager Michael Dinnerman to purchase new office furniture for the 4H Office and use ARP funds to make the purchase. 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: NONE

Legislative Report: NONE

Public Comments:

Vickie Day Smith, 235 Dorminy Mill Road, stated she has a Revolving Loan Fund. She said she made a request to Mr. OD Netter to refinance her loan in 2021 after she paid a lump sum payment of \$15,000. She felt she had been overlooked in the process and would like answers as to what she owes. Ms. Smith believes she has made her last payment.

County Manager Michael Dinnerman expressed to Ms. Smith that he and CFO Darlow Maxwell will speak with Mr. Netter regarding her Revolving Loan and will get back with her.

Executive Session

Commissioners Remarks

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon thanked everyone for the work done on Kimble Road (Monitor Center).

Meeting adjourned.

_____ Steve Taylor, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk