

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON **APRIL 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2025, AT 6:00 PM** IN THE  
BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSISONER MEETING ROOM LOCATED  
AT 321 DEWEY MCGLARMRY ROAD.

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Hal Wiley	Chairman
Hope Harmon	Vice-Chair
Bennie Calloway	Commissioner
John Mooney	Commissioner
Hampton Raulerson	County Manager
Pamela D. Turner	County Clerk

Daniel Cowan was present via Telecom

**Call to Order**

Chairman Hal Wiley called the meeting to order

Commissioner Bennie Calloway gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the Agenda/Agenda Changes**

Vice Chair-Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Hal Wiley all voting for the motion.

**Acceptance of Prior Minutes**

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes that was held on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025. 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 Hal Wiley all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to close the Regular Monthly Meeting and to enter Public Hearing. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan and Chairman Hal Wiley all voting for the motion.

## **Public Hearing**

### 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update for Ben Hill County and The City of Fitzgerald

Marcus McConico from South Georgia Regional Commission gave a copy of the previous Plan and a sign in sheet to the Board and spoke on the following:

- ☐ Working on the 2026 Comprehensive Plan that is required by the State of Georgia every 5 years
- ☐ The Comprehensive Plan has to be approved by DCA deadline is February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026
- ☐ This process takes about 9 months to a year to complete
- ☐ Required to have 3 Stakeholders meetings that anyone may attend; would like to have these meetings in the last week of April, May, and June 2025
- ☐ Another Public Hearing is required before the Plan goes to DCA

County Manager Hampton Raulerson stated that he would like the Commissioners to be involved in the work planning, DCA wants to see that we are putting things down that we are achieving. I will be meeting with the Commissioners to see what we want to accomplish over the next 5 to 10 years.

Marcus McConico from South Georgia Regional Commission also stated that whatever was in the previous work plan that hasn't been completed, DCA does not take them out. You must give them a reason to take it out. DCA likes to see that you are completing the work plan items. Put things on your Work Plan that are achievable in 5 years.

## **There Were No Public Comments**

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to close the Public Hearing and to return to the Regular Monthly Meeting. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan and Chairman Hal Wiley all voting for the motion

## **Constitutional Officer: NONE**

## **Department Head Reports: NONE**

## **County Board Reports: NONE**

## **County Manager's Report:**

County Manager Hampton Raulerson reported the following:

- ☐ The new Administration Building (formerly Planters First Bank) painting is almost finished, ordering carpet for areas that need to be replaced, other carpet in the offices will be cleaned.
- ☐ AsystYou will be finished with IT work within the next 2 weeks
- ☐ The box Culvert on Flint Road has been installed, waiting on the paving to begin
- ☐ The clearing of the right of way on Ed Ward Road has started, after this portion has been completed, they will start building the road out
- ☐ No date yet for the paving
- ☐ Next Monthly meeting Pam and I will bring the Board a large set of updates for the Personnel Policy, there are a couple of Policy adjustments, some of the adjustments are a part of this Agenda.
- ☐ On order from the local Ford Dealership, a pickup for the Road Department that will be here in a couple of months

***Annexation Notification:***

533 Irwinville Hwy from G-F (General Farming) County to G-B (General Business) City.

**Rezoning Application: NONE****Alcohol Application: NONE****Appointments: NONE****Old Business:*****Inclement Weather Policy***

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to adopt the Policy for Inclement Weather. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Hal Wiley all voting for the motion.

**New Business:*****Compensatory Time for Exempt Employee Policy***

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to adopt the Policy for Compensatory Time for Exempt Employees. 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 Hal Wiley all voting for the motion.

***IGA Regarding Properties Used for Joint Services Between Ben Hill County and The City of Fitzgerald***

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement Regarding Properties Used for Joint Services Between Ben Hill County and The City of Fitzgerald. 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 Hal Wiley all voting for the motion.

***Finance Policy Draft***

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to adopt the Finance Policy Draft. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Hal Wiley all voting for the motion.

**Legislative Report:**

*Vice-Chair Hope Harmon reported the following:*

On Thursday, April 3rd, I attended a public hearing on the 2023-2024 CDBG-DR (Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery) Action Plan for the allocation of federal hurricane relief funds. The purpose of the hearing was to engage the public regarding the \$265,726,000 awarded to Georgia by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds are designated for recovery activities in areas affected by the 2023-2024 hurricanes and declared federal disaster zones. While Ben Hill County is not included in HUD's original disaster declaration, we were added to the state's eligible list, meaning our county is eligible to receive these funds. Several programs funded through CDBG-DR will be available to both citizens and local governments. Some of the key programs discussed included:

- Homeowner Rehabilitation
- Affordable Rental Rehabilitation
- Infrastructure Programs (for local government use on public facilities)
- Planning Programs, and more

Most policies governing the use of these funds are still being drafted and are expected to be finalized by summer 2025.

**A key point:** Eligible citizens in approved counties will be able to apply for assistance directly through the Department of Community Affairs (DCA)—without needing to go through local governments. I believe this is the best approach for ensuring fair access. I also raised a question about support for mobile homeowners, especially since several in our area have faced challenges with FEMA and insurance. I was told that mobile homeowners will be eligible for assistance under the Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program.

DCA is currently accepting public comments on the Disaster Action Plan until April 19, 2025. The full plan can be reviewed at [dca.ga.gov](http://dca.ga.gov) under the Disaster Relief section. Additionally, DCA is conducting two Unmet Needs Surveys related to the CDBG-DR funds:

1. A **public survey** for citizens, business owners, nonprofits, and others to report remaining disaster-related needs.
2. A **government** survey for local government units to assess community-wide unmet needs.

Both surveys are available at [dca.ga.gov](http://dca.ga.gov) under the **Disaster Relief – Unmet Needs section**.

Kathleen Trembly, the program director, shared that a recording of at least one of the public hearings will be made available by April 10, 2025. She also strongly encouraged us to spread the word about the surveys, as survey responses will help determine how some of the funds are distributed

**Public Comments: NONE**

**Executive Session: NONE**

#### **Commissioner's Remarks:**

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon stated that the initial meet and greet for the Opioid Prevention Program went really well, it was a great turn out. The Judges weren't able to attend, so we will have to meet with them separately.

A reliance session coming up this month, the flyer and calendar will be sent out to everyone.

**Meeting adjourned.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Hal Wiley, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Pamela D. Turner, County Clerk