

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON APRIL 06, 2021 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
Michael Dinnerman	County Manager
Donna Prather	County Clerk

Commissioner John Mooney was absent.

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

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes that were held on February 02, 2021. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer:

Tax Commissioner Barry Foster reported:

- 2020 tax bill collection rate is 95%
- 25 out of 33 properties were sold at the tax sale that was held April 6th
- Mobile home tax sale is scheduled for June 1st

Department Head Reports: NONE

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report:

County Manager Michael Dinnerman reported qPublic has been activated. A lot of citizens appreciate this free service because it allows them to search for property record information and generate tax cards.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Appointments: NONE

Old Business: NONE

New Business:

FY 21 Third Party Operator Contract Amendment # 2

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the FY 21 Third Party Operator Contract Amendment # 2 that consist of swapping back to a cost reimbursement method for this contract period only. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Ben Hill County & City of Fitzgerald 2021 Comprehensive Plan Draft

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to authorize the Chairman to sign all documents to transmit the Comprehensive Plan draft to Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Behavior Health & Developmental Disabilities Board Vacancy

Chairman Steve Taylor asked the Commissioners to start thinking of someone to appoint to the Behavior Health & Developmental Disabilities Board that will be an advocate for our area.

South Georgia Community Services Board Reappointment

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to reappoint Connie Graham to the South Georgia Community Services Board. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Landfill Authority Reappointment

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to reappoint Tim Kegebein to the Landfill Authority Board. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Judicial Alternatives of Georgia (JAG) Contracts/Probate Court, Magistrate Court, & Superior Court

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to renew the JAG contracts and authorize the Chairman to sign all documents. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Public Defender FY 21-22 Contract

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to renew the Public Defender FY 21-22 contract and authorize the Chairman to sign all documents. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

2021 Budget Amendment Resolution

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to adopt the 2021 Budget Amendment Resolution in the amount of \$52,123 for Joint Services Humane Society and Animal Control. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Surplus Property Resolution/Sheriff

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to adopt the Surplus Property Resolution. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Agenda Changes and/or add on:

Legislative Report:

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon reported, at 95 pages, SB 202 includes numerous changes to state election law that will impact counties' administration of elections, including the below provisions that were part of ACCG's 2021 Policy Agenda:

- Establish an absentee ballot application receipt deadline at 11 days before an election.
- Authorize counties to begin processing and scanning absentee ballots on the third Monday before an election.
- Authorize counties to reduce the 1/250 ratio of voting machines per registered voter in non-general elections.
- Authorize poll workers to serve in an adjoining county to where they live or work.

The legislation also includes several provisions which ACCG opposed or expressed concerns:

- Mandating that ballots be printed on new, encrypted security paper.
- ACCG asked that this requirement be conditioned on the state providing funding.
- Numerous reporting requirements that will require additional staff and costs.
- ACCG asked that these requirements be reduced, particularly on election night.
- Requiring a second Saturday of advance voting.
- ACCG asked that the second Saturday be optional for counties.
- Limited Absentee Ballot Drop Box Options
- ACCG asked for counties to have the option to deploy drop boxes, as well as where they could be placed.

The FY 2022 Budget Conference Committee added \$1.5 million for ballot security which will help offset the cost to counties for the new requirement of SB 202 for next year.

County Manager Michael Dinnerman stated the Technology Fee Bill has passed for Probate Court only and is on the Governor's desk for his signature.

Public Comments: NONE

Executive Session

Commissioner's Remarks:

Chairman Steve Taylor reminded the Commissioners of the vacancies on the Hospital Authority Board. He stated they need to submit three names per vacancy.

Meeting adjourned

_____ Steve Taylor, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk