

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON FEBRUARY 08, 2022 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
Pamela Turner	Acting 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

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

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting that was held on January 04, 2022. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer:

Tax Commissioner Barry Foster reported:

- 400 Delinquent letters were mailed out; 170 have responded.
- The computer that import information and print checks is down. Tony Eckler, the County Auditor, can't complete the audit and he can't print checks. Scott Spivey looked at the computer and determined it was corrupted.

Department Head Reports: NONE

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report:

- Mr. Dinnerman is working with Kimberly Hobbs, Southern Region Commission, on a EBA Grant for the Ed Ward Road and Perry House Road Project. If awarded, the grant will pay for 80% of the project.

- The Commissioners will act on the inflation letter that was submitted to GDOT requesting additional funds regarding the Evergreen Resurfacing TIA Project.

Annexation Request:

The City of Fitzgerald sent a notification that they received an annexation request from Lindy Dorminy Bengston to rezone property located at Benjamin H Hill Drive SW (Tidal Wave Auto Spa) from G-B County to G-B City.

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Appointments: NONE

Old Business: NONE

New Business:

Alcohol Beverage Permit Waiver Letter/Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber Foundation/Ratify

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to ratify the Alcohol Beverage Permit Waiver Letter. 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.

2021 Budget Amendment Resolution

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the 2021-02 Budget Amendment Resolution. 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.

Title VI Plan

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to adopt the revised Ben Hill Transit Title VI Plan. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Chairman Steve Taylor, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Qualifying Fees Resolution

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to ratify the Qualifying Fee 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 on the motion.

Greg Lewis dba G L Transport RLF Loan

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the RLF Loan for Greg Lewis in the amount of \$23,000, 3.75% interest, and loan term 48 months. 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.

Board of Assessors Reappointment/Wesley Mitchell

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to reappoint Wesley Mitchell to the Board of Assessors. 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 on the motion.

Forestry Board Appointments

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to appoint Wesley Mitchell and reappoint Tim Kegebein, Milton Hopkins, Bill Luke, and Chip Dorminy to Ben Hill County Forestry Board for a five-year term. 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.

DFAC Board Appointments

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to reappoint Dianne Bullard and Joyce Jenkins to the Ben Hill County Department of Family & Children Services 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.

Evergreen Resurfacing TIA Project Letter

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the letter written to GDOT requesting inflation be applied for the Evergreen Resurfacing TIA Project. 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.

Retirement Plan Resolution

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to adopt the 401 (A) Plan Adoption Agreement Resolution effective as of January 1, 2022 . 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.

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the 401 (A) Define Contribution Plan for Ben Hill County Employees. Commissioner John Mooney 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:

Mr. Willie Jackson, 431 Evergreen Road, stated his wife had an accident and he called E911. When EMS didn't arrive, he called back. He was told they didn't have an ambulance available. Mr. Jackson call Irwin County to come assist him but they wouldn't come because of Ben Hill contract with Grady. Mr. Jackson called a friend to assist him in rescuing his wife from an embankment.

County Manager Michael Dinnerman stated the reason why they didn't come was both ambulances were out on other calls. Grady not showing up had nothing to do with the contract.

Mr. Jackson asked, what can we do for better service for the citizens of Ben Hill County?

Mr. Dinnerman stated Grady is experiencing a staffing shortage and it is hard to find staffing. He is currently working on the issues with Grady. Chairman Taylor stated they are constantly discussing this issue to find a solution. Currently, we just don't have the staff.

Mr. Jackson asked if there was an issue with the mutual aid and Grady because there has been multiple complaints regarding service.

Alvin Dorn, 566 Bowens Mill Hwy, asked who was his County Commissioner? Mr. Dorn stated he travel Joshlyn Road and don't believe it has been paved since he been in Ben Hill County the last 25 years.

Mr. Dinnerman stated, there are some roads on the list to be resurfaced. He has to check the list to see if Joshlyn Road was on there and he would get back with Mr. Dorn.

Mr. Dorn said, he understand it takes time. Mr. Dinnerman said, they have to pave the worst roads first.

Commissioner John Mooney asked how many miles is Joshlyn Road and is the cost \$125,000 per mile?

Mr. Dorn also asked about the round about by the Lynnwood School. Mr. Dinnerman replied that is a DOT Project.

State of the County 2022

On behalf of the Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners I would like to share with you the position of your county government. This position is the result of continuous review, reassessment, and challenges both internally and externally. The state of Ben Hill County in 2022 is healthy with a strong financial reserve, functional policies and procedures, and upgraded resources. I prefer not to bore you with various stats or accomplishments over the past year, but rather share three areas that I feel truly represent the State of the County: Committed, compliant, and community.

Ben Hill County is committed to provide services, both those required and expected, to our community. This is accomplished through sound financial practices, relevant organizational policies, and updated resources and assets. Manager Michael Dinnerman continues to work diligently and search for ways to improve Ben Hill County's ability to provide effective and efficient services to her citizens while being good stewards of the tax payor's money. The commission is willing to be open to changes as well as evaluate and promote updated policies which advance the health and foundation of this government. This is evident in the fact that the County's reserve continues to grow which is in phase with a best practice policy for managing an organization. A sound financial best practice policy includes a strong reserve. A reserve is necessary to offset an unforeseen or catastrophic event, thereby protecting our county.

Our committed organization is made possible through the strong team effort throughout the county government organization. Recognizing the increasing complexity and scope of providing and funding county government services, we realize it takes everyone from citizens speaking during public comments to the constitutional officers operating their respective departments. Our manager, administrative staff, constitutional officers, judges, department managers, employees, and commissioners work hard toward the goal of making our community the best it can be. Over the past several years we have faced significant challenges from hurricanes to healthcare issues, and our team has met each challenge.

We as a commission recognize that in everything we do, or every decision we make, we must be focused on investing in the people of our community. Our people are our greatest resource for our future. We build our future based on the foundation we establish now, because we understand a strong foundation will stand the test of time. We are committed to making the effort to move beyond the current or existing state. We commit to you that we will continuously strive to improve because status quo is not acceptable.

Compliance refers to the willingness to follow a prescribed plan. We place a great deal of emphasis on creating updated and relevant policies and procedures. It is important this entity not only has this game plan to follow consistently for day-to-day operations, but also for the compliance of others to follow in the implementing of short term and long-term goals. We continue to evaluate our programs and look to advance and upgrade them to maintain this compliance.

We are in the process of maintaining and upgrading our information technology assets and policies. This area is becoming more of a focus on smaller governments and we cannot afford to be behind the curve with obsolete computers and inconsistent policies. We are also constantly evaluating and upgrading equipment and vehicles which allow for our employees to deliver safe, efficient, and adequate services while maintaining their safety. Another aspect is the importance we put on maintaining compliance through continuing to provide and promote education and training for our employees.

Community is the third area, but I feel it is the most important. It was listed last so if there is only one idea that is remembered it will be this one. Community relates to not only the greater Ben Hill Community, but it speaks to the smaller communities within.

Whether it is an individual community of friends, faith-based groups, governments, or co-workers, each community is essential to the greater good of the Ben Hill Community.

As a government we have the responsibility of working to improve community with our citizens, industries, and local governments. There have been times in the past that each of these areas have been fractured. I feel like we have made advancements to improve these relationships and will continue to pursue improvements. I am encouraged to work with my friend, Mayor Jason Holt in promoting community among our entities which can only bring about a stronger Ben Hill Community.

On a final note please allow me to discuss another important community to me. That is the employees of Ben Hill County and the Ben Hill County Commission. I can assure you that each and every one serves each of you with the goal of making our little place in South Georgia the best place for you and me. Each is dedicated to improving the way we serve you. Sometimes one may not want to be out clearing roads in the middle of the night in a storm, but they do.

One may prefer to not have to put themselves in a potential life-threatening position, but because they wear a badge they do. Some would rather not have to inform you that property values have changed, or a bill is due, or you have been summoned to jury duty, but they do. They do this because they love Ben Hill Community.

I have referred to the 254 square miles area bordered by the boundaries of Ben Hill County and including the City of Fitzgerald as Ben Hill Community for several years. We are that greater community. I look forward to continuing to promote a better community each day.

God Bless you, God bless Ben Hill Community, and God bless America.

Steve Taylor, Chairman Ben Hill County
Board of Commissioners

Executive Session

Commissioner's Remarks: NONE

Meeting adjourned

_____ Steve Taylor, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk