

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON FEBRUARY 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**

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman 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 was held on January 03, 2023. 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.

Vice-Chairman Hope Harmon made a motion to suspend the Regular Monthly Meeting to enter a Public Hearing. Commissioner Bennie Calloway second the motion, which passed with Vice-Chairman Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

**Public Hearing**

*Special Exception/Substance Abuse & Recovery Center*

Building & Zoning Inspector Jake Hughes stated the use of the property for this proposal should be suitable. There is a reasonable distance to adjacent property that they should not be affected. The proposal does not adversely affect its usability or surrounding property. The economic impact from this proposal is reported to be the addition of available workers for the local workforce. There should not be any increased burden on the existing street, transportation, utilities, or schools. This use of the property do require this special exception to fit into the land use plan.

### **Public comments for the Special Exception**

Program Director Ronald Byers, 216 Wrightsville Avenue, East Dublin, GA., stated he seek the favor to continue to do what they are doing at the Christian Recovery Center. Mr. Byers asked the Commissioners to think about the lives that are being changed and the need for the facility in this area.

Program Manager Greg Ray, 1721 Bowens Mill Hwy, Fitzgerald, GA, stated there is a drug war going on in Fitzgerald. The Christian Recovery Center is more than an alcohol and drug facility, they also house the homeless and mental ill. Mr. Ray said he is asking for help and he is willing to work with Sheriff Cone and anyone else. Their doors are open and they don't have anything to hide. He asked that God shows mercy because they are wanting to stay open.

Allen Conger, Fitzgerald, GA., stated he is one of the employers that have hired some of the men that attend the Christian Recovery Center. He also provided a list of other companies that employ men from the facility. The Commissioners were also given a Christian Recovery Center packet that explains the services provided, cost, and goals.

### **There were no opposing comments.**

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

### **Constitutional Officer:**

Tax Commissioner Barry Foster stated the property tax sell will be held April 4<sup>th</sup> and the Mobile Home tax sale will be held May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Foster said during covid the taxpayers have been faithful by paying their taxes. He noted the number of transactions for vehicle were 23,205 and the number of transactions for property is 10,700. He estimated they received 12,000 calls annually. He said they have been busy at the Tax Commission Office.

### **Department Head Reports:**

Volunteer Fire Department President Allen Conger and Volunteer Fire Department Chief Michael Jay reported Ben Hill County ISO rating has dropped from 6 to 5. They explain the summary of PPC review from their inspection.

DLS Director Keith Morris reported basketball season is finishing. They are hosting some of the tournaments at the Elementary School.

Registration for baseball, T ball, and softball has begun.

### **County Board Reports: NONE**

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

County Manager Michael Dinnerman reported:

- The audit is complete. Hopefully next month Tony Eckler be at next month meeting.
- We are financially healthy.
- He gave an update on the Ed Ward road project and the roundabout project.
- The school flashing lights are on the way.

**Annexation Request: NONE**

**Rezoning Application: NONE**

**Alcohol Application: NONE**

**Appointments: NONE**

### **Old Business:**

#### ***DLS Board Vacancy***

Vice- Chair Hope Harmon nominated Eric Lewis. Nominations were closed.

Vice- Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to appoint Eric Lewis to the DLS Board to replace Jeremy Cox. 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.

### **New Business:**

#### **2022 Budget Amendment Resolution**

Chief Financial Officer Darlow Maxwell explained to the Commissioners this budget amendment is a net zero-dollar reclassification between departments.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to adopt the 2022-07 Budget Amendment Resolution. 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.

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

**Legislative Report: NONE**

**Public Comments: NONE**

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to suspend the Regular Monthly meeting to enter Executive Session for legal. Commissioner Daniel Cowan second 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.

### **Executive Session/Legal**

Executive Session lasted from 6:45 pm until 7:06 pm.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to close Executive Session and re-enter the

Regular Monthly Meeting. Commissioner Bennie Calloway second the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, and Chairman Steve Taylor.

**Commissioner's Remarks: NONE**

**Meeting adjourned.**

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

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