

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON JULY 09, 2024 AT 6:00 PM IN THE  
BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
LOCATED AT 321 DEWEY MCGLAMRY ROAD

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.

**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, Commissioner John Mooney, 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 June 06, 2024. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to suspend the Regular Monthly Meeting to enter into a Public Hearing to discuss a Rezoning Application. 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 Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Chairman Steve Taylor asked the Commissioners if they had a conflict regarding the rezoning request. Each answered no.

**Public Hearing**

Rezoning Application/582 Jacksonville Hwy/From GF (General Farming) to WLI (Wholesale Light Industrial)

Building & Zoning Administrator Jake Hughes stated, Juan Sanchez petitioned the Board to rezone the said property located at 582 Jacksonville Hwy from GF (General Farming) to WLI (Wholesale Light Industrial).

Mr. Hughes recommends approval of the petition by Juan Sanchez to rezone the listed property parcel from GF zone to WLI zone. The property is currently not in use but was previously used as a diesel mechanics shop for many years. The rezoning request will change the current zoning from General Farming to Wholesale Light Industrial, this change better fits the proposed use for the parcel, and better reflects the previous use of the parcel.

Tax Commissioner Barry Foster asked if the information regarding property taxes can be added to the process to ensure the property taxes are current. Chairman Taylor stated that was a great idea and they would work on including tax information on the application.

There were no public comments.

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

**Constitutional Officer: NONE**

**Department Head Reports: NONE**

**County Board Reports: NONE**

**County Manager's Report:**

County Manager Michael Dinnerman reported:

- The Ed Ward Road project has been accepted by EDA. The bid opening is scheduled for August 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm.
- The Monitor Project is moving forward. The City has to sign off on the plans.
- Work is continuing on Flint Road.
- He is still taking application for the County Manager position. The Commissioners asked Mr. Dinnerman to narrow the application down to 4 or 5 applicants and check those references. Then bring that information back to the Board for review.

**Annexation Request/Notification:**

148 Newcomer Trail/From R-15 County to R-15 City

**De-annexation Request:**

152 David Drive plus vacant lots on either side of the property

Building & Zoning Administrator Jake Hughes states that currently, he doesn't have enough information for either request to make a decision. Mr. Hughes is going to draft a letter to the City regarding the issues because these are neighboring properties.

Sharon Layton, 152 David Lane, stated 148 Newcomer Trail wants to connect to the city sewer because of consistent sewer problems. She and her husband do not want to stand in their neighbor's way regarding his request.

**Rezoning Application:** 582 Jacksonville Hwy/from GF (General Farming) to WLI (Wholesale Light Industrial)

County Attorney Nick Kinsley recommended moving the motion to approve the rezoning

application to next month so the unpaid taxes on the property can be addressed.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to table the rezoning application until August meeting to address the unpaid taxes on the property. 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 Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

**Alcohol Application: NONE**

**Appointments**

**Old Business: NONE**

**New Business:**

*Board of Tax Assessors Resolution/ Reappoint Randy Hughes*

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to reappoint Randy Hughes to the Board of Assessors. 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 Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

*Landfill Authority*

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

*Health Insurance Renewal/ Ratify*

Courtney Howell, Partners Benefit Group, submitted a cost comparison spreadsheet and explained the difference in all the options. Angle increased the health insurance premium by 1.03%, which was a better rate than the current coverage with Anthem.

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon made a motion to ratify the vote to choose Angle as the health insurance provider. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

*Millage Rate Determination*

Chief Appraiser Joyce Merritt explained how the rollback and the unchanged millage rate was calculated. The roll back millage rate is 14.2570 and the current millage rate is 14.6870. Ms. Merritt stated the increase is due to the valuation calculated formula and inflation.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the 14.6870 millage rate, to advertise the Five-Year History, the notice of property tax increase that includes the Public Hearings set for July 24th at 10:00 am and 6:15 pm; August 6th at 6:15 pm, and the press release announcing a proposed property tax increase. Vice-Chair Hope Harmon seconded

the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Vice-Chair Hope Harmon, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Chairman Steve Taylor all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan opposed the motion.

*Road Closure*

The Commissioners received a request from Beth Peterson, 144 Adamson Road, to close the dirt portion of Westwood Drive to the public due to the dumping of trash and furniture on their private property. She stated in the letter the dirt road was meant to be private and not for public use.

County Attorney Nick Kinsley submitted the necessary procedures if the Commissioners decided to close the dirt portion of Westwood Drive Road.

Chairman Steve Taylor instructed Building & Zoning Administrator Jake Hughes to contact the School, Emergency, Fire, and the Westwood residences to see if closing the road would pose any issues. He was also instructed to give Beth Peterson the proper documents to start the process of closing the road.

*Consolidation Letter/ City of Fitzgerald*

Chairman Taylor stated he would like for the Board to authorize him to send a letter to the City of Fitzgerald asking for a consolidation study to be done by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to authorize the Chairman to send a letter to the City of Fitzgerald asking for a consolidation study to be done by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Commissioner John Mooney second the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Chairman Steve Taylor.

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon opposed the motion

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

**Legislative Report: NONE**

**Public Comments: NONE**

**Executive Session**

**Commissioners Remarks**

**Meeting adjourned**

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

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