



Miller County

Board of Commissioners

179 S. Cuthbert St.
Colquitt, Ga 39837



REGULAR SESSION MEETING
09/13/2021, 6:00 P.M., Courthouse Courtroom
MINUTES

Present: Chairman Kreg Freeman, Vice-Chairman Ladon Calhoun, Commissioner Allen Worsley, Commissioner Edwards and Commissioner Niki Nixon. Others Present: Faye Whittaker, Debbie Henry, Doug Cofty, Leroy Bush, Andy Moore, Austin Lambert, Jayme Smith, Jennifer Jackson, Jerry Calhoun, Josh Suggs, Alixus Sisson, Pam Smith, Jajuan Bowen, Keith Bowen

Chairman Freeman calls the meeting to order. Regular session 09/13/2021 and called for a moment of silent prayer then the pledge of allegiance.

HOUSEKEEPING:

Chairman Freeman asked if there were any additions to the agenda, then called for a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Worsley made the motion with Vice Chairman Calhoun seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Freeman as if all commissioners read the minutes from previous meeting and if they looked in order. No objections, Chairman Freeman called for a motion to approve minutes. Commissioner Nixon made motion to approve minutes with Vice Chairman Calhoun seconding the motion, Commissioner Edwards abstained due to not having time to read the minutes, motion carried.

FINANCIALS:

Chairman Freeman asked the board did they review the accounts payable and if there was anything that needed discussing. Chairman Freeman called for motion to approve accounts payable. Commissioner Worsley made motion to approve. Vice Chairman Calhoun seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Freeman asked the board if the financial reports looked in order and if anyone had any questions. Chairman Freeman called for a motion to approve financial reports. Commissioner Worsley made motion to approve with Vice Chairman Calhoun seconding the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

APPEARANCES:

Krista Ticktin - ARTS COUNCIL - Krista thanked the board for allowing her to address the board. She then gave a history of the Arts Council. She stated she was there tonight to request a portion of the ARPA funds received from the federal government. She then went into the financial status of the arts council and stated that COVID has hurt their business. She stated they have been running in the red for the last 18 months. She stated their loses were in the \$250,000.00 range. She there informed the

board that they own several apartments that were damaged during the hurricane, and they didn't have the funds to repair the apartments. Chairman Freeman asked the board if they had looked over the information. Chairman Freeman stated that if the board was agreeable that if the board provided half the fund to repair the apartments could they raise the other half to go ahead and fix the apartments so they could state collecting revenue from the rent. The board stated they wanted until the next meet to decide what to do. Item was tabled until October meeting.

Gabe Spence - NOBLES AND DANIELS ROADS - Doug Cofty informed the board that Gabe was stuck in Ozark and had called to state he was not going to make the meeting but wanted the board to know that there were issues with Daniels and Nobles roads, He stated that when it rained or irrigations the roads became very bad and hard to drive on. Mr. Cofty informed the board that Gabe had said a Mr. Tedder had a stroke recently and was concerned that if he had another stroke, it would be hard for the ambulances to get down to him. Vice Chairman asked which road was Daniels, Commissioner Worsley stated both roads were off Enterprise Rd. Mr. Cofty also told the board that Gabe stated that the road department had scraped the private lane he owned and there was a pipe that was damaged and that he was afraid it was going to cut his tire. Commissioner Worsley stated it was a private lane and we shouldn't be scarping a private road it was do as a curtesy. Mr. Cofty stated he agreed if it is not a county owned road, we should not be scaping it. Chairman Freeman stated we would investigate the situation with the roads.

Judge Josh Suggs and Jerry Calhoun - CREATION OF ELECTIONS BOARD -, Mr. Suggs addressed the board and informed them that he was requesting the board to create a board of elections. He stated that he was receiving a large amount of open record requests and that he was having to deal with a lot more work. He stated that Georgia was the new Ohio and that the elections would become a lot more political. He stated weapons permits was up even though he was dealing with COVID. He stated all his numbers in other areas are up. He stated an Elected official should not be running their own election and that there were only about 20 counties left in Georgia that had it in the probate court. He then stated that he included documents from White County that showed the bill that they recently created. He stated that the new way the board of commissioners would hire the Elections supervisor and create the Elections board. The board decided to study on the White County bill and asked Judge Suggs when we wanted to meet again to get things done. Vice Chairman Calhoun asked if he needed to hire someone by January. The board asked Mr. Calhoun if he was going stay on. He stated he would like to. Judge Suggs stated they would not have to buy any equipment because they already had it. Vice Chairman Calhoun asked what would happen to the board of registers, Mr. Calhoun stated the Elections board would replace that board.

Jayne Smith - DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PROJECT – Ms. Smith addressed the board and gave a history of the Downtown Development Authority then handed out a document titled Colquitt Downtown Development consideration. She informed the board that it was created through the Georgia Downtown Renaissance Project. Ms. Smith then went through the document and a slideshow showing the potential ideas for the revitalization of Colquitt and the downtown area which included the courthouse. Ms. Smith presented a very informative slideshow. Chairman Freeman then asked her what role the county was going to play in this. She stated she wanted the board to know that it had happened and wanted to show the concepts and how Colquitt could be and that she was seeking Grant funds and that she would need a

resolution of support from time to time. Chairman Freeman then ask Ms. Smith to stay a minute to discuss the Downtown Development Authority's lawsuit against the contractor who came in and did very bad work through Colquitt and Miller County. The Contractor had been hired by the previous Clerk to also do work on the Courthouse Annex. Ms. Smith stated that the roof at the Tarrer Inn was leaking and last year the DDA voted to retain the services of Watson a Spence law firm out of Albany to pursue legal action against the contractor. She stated she reached out to Doug a few weeks back wanting to county to know what was going on. She stated that the pitch roofs on both the Tarrer Inn and the Courthouse Annex was out of code for the historic registry and that the roofs had to go back to a flat roof to stop deifying the historic registry. Vice Chairman asked how long we had to fix the roofs before they pulled the listing. And asked if we told them we were working toward fixing would it put that on hold. Ms. Smith stated she knew the Courthouse Annex had mold and the contractor did not do a good job and wanted to see if the County joined the suit it would strengthen the lawsuit against the contractor.

OLD BUSINESS:

COUNTY OFFICE MOVE - Chairman asked Doug Cofty to give an update on the move. Mr. Cofty stated that the move was kind of on hold. He stated that the Spring Creek health had cleared out their offices and that we were waiting for the Tax Assessors office to find a place to move their records. The Tax Assessors records had to be climate controlled with double lock and key and we were currently having issues finding a place. Commissioner Worsley asked if they had room at the Tax Assessors office to move the documents. Mr. Cofty stated he didn't think so. Chairman Freeman asked the board if they thought it would be ok to store the files in a climate control storage building until we could figure things out. They agreed and stated whatever got the office moved the fastest.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT SUPLUS LIST: Chairman Freeman asked the board if they wanted to go ahead and run the updated Sheriff department's surplus list in the newspaper and if they had any questions. The board looked over the list. Commissioner Worsley stated he knew that most of that was junk and to go ahead and run it in the paper. Chairman Freeman called for a motion to run the list in the paper. Commissioner Worsley made the motion with Vice Chairman Calhoun seconded it, all in favor, motion carried.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT LAWSUIT: Doug Cofty stated that there have not been any updates.

FUELING STATION: Doug Cofty gave an updated on the progress of the construction. He stated that the tank was in place and that they were finishing up concrete and electricity. He then stated it would be 2 weeks before the sub-contractor returned to finish the install but that we needed to go ahead and decide on the fuel vendor situation.

Mr. Cofty stated that we would need at least 1000 gallons in each tank to purge the lines when the tank was complete. Mr. Cofty gave a run down on the 3 contract bids from Total Petroleum, Petroleum Products and Grist Oil. Mr. Cofty also gave the board an option of purchasing the electronic monitoring equipment and then just bidding out the fuel on an as needed basis. Chairman Freeman asked how the electronic monitoring worked. Mr. Cofty informed the board how the equipment worked and that it would email or notify the office when the fuel level was low. Vice Chairman Calhoun asked when we need to make the decision by, Mr. Cofty stated as soon as possible.

Vice Chairman Calhoun stated he wanted the county to buy our own electronic monitoring equipment and then bid out the fuel. Vice Chairman Calhoun made a motion to purchase the monitoring equipment, Commissioner Worsley seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried. Chairman Freeman then gave an update on the shelter. It would be added but that the tank could not be covered due to the pumps being inside the tanks and if they went bad the pumps would have to be pulled from the top with a crane. The shelter will be 20X50 and cover the area where the vehicles would be fueled.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOBILE HOME DECAL RESOLUTION: Chairman Freeman asked for information. Doug Cofty stated that this was new legislation passed by the General Assembly that allowed each county to opt out of requiring mobile home decals. Mr. Cofty stated that the county would not lose any money and that we would save a little bit because the Tax Commissioner would not have to buy the decals each year. Mr. Cofty also stated it would free up the Tax Assessor because they would not have to go out and inspect for decals. Chairman Freeman asked Ms. Jackson any delinquent taxes would go through her office just like if it was a house, she stated correct. Chairman Freeman asked the board if they had any question. He then asked if they wanted to move forward with the resolution to delete the requirement for decals. Commissioner Worsley made the motion to create the resolution. Commissioner Nixon seconded the motion, all in favor. Motion carried.

COVID POLICY: Doug Cofty informed the board we do not have a policy and that this was the policy that was circulating through most of the county offices in the state. Most counties were requiring an employee who was out with COVID to use their personal time and if the employee was short, other employees could donate time. The board all agreed with the policy. Commissioner Worsley made motion to adopt. Commissioner Nixon seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

PURCHASE ORDERS – CREDIT CARD POLICY (DRAFT) Chairman Freeman stated he looked over the policy and that the only thing he did not see was the detailed itemized receipt. Vice Chairman asked did he want the itemized receipt added. Chairman Freeman stated he wanted that added because if you buy food, it should state what you buy. Chairman Freeman also stated that he wanted the Pos issued from the County office. Commissioner Worsley stated that the Sheriff was not going to go along with it and that he was going to fight us on anything we did. Faye Whittaker stated that the Sheriff's department has already called some vendors and changed the billing address which could delay the bills being paid. Commissioner Worsley stated he wanted to make sure we were within our right to do that. Commissioner Edwards also stated she wanted to make sure we were right because we didn't need a lawsuit. Commissioner Worsley stated he felt that is what the Sheriff was going to do. Chairman Freeman stated he did not have an issue with the vendors sending them a copy of the bill but that the commissioners office needed the bill so it could be paid. He stated the Sheriff was not the taxing authority. Vice Chairman Calhoun asked could we get something from the county attorney ruling on the matter. Commissioner Nixon also would like the county attorney to respond. Chairman Freeman stated he had spoken to the county attorney and the sheriff can do his own PO system, but he cannot disrupt the business at the county office, the bills are being paid at the county office and that he

can set up his own PO system there. Chairman Freeman stated that the sheriff was trying to change things that have been going on for the last 30 years and there was no sense in it. Chairman Freeman told the board we would get an official statement from the county attorney if that was what they wanted. Commissioner Edwards stated she would like that. Chairman Freeman stated he would get an official statement from the auditor as well. Ms. Whittaker stated she spoke to the Auditor and yes, we did have to have itemized receipts, if the receipt was lost that the department head was to write a letter stating it was an approved purchase. She stated the Sheriff's department was not cooperating with that and we shouldn't ask them for it under 20.00 that the auditor stated we were nickel and diming them. The auditor stated he did not say that at any time and that he did not care if it was 50 cents, he wanted a receipt. Commissioner Worsley stated that everyone needed to realize that we all are responsible for the taxpayer's money... every penny of it. Chairman Freeman stated that is exactly what he was just speaking about, you are opening the door to something to get mishandled, he stated we would hold up on the PO thing until a written statement from the lawyer and auditor. Chairman Freeman stated we need to adopt the credit card policy with the minor changes of adding the itemized receipts. All commissioners agreed as long as it was within their guidelines to do so. Commissioner Nixon stated everywhere she's ever been you had to have an itemized receipt. It is also the State's policy to have itemized receipts. Chairman Freeman stated they needed to adopt the credit card policy and revisit the POs later. Commissioner Worsley stated that again we must be accountable, everyone must turn in receipts and balance the books. Chairman Freeman agreed and stated we needed to adopt the credit card policy and if we need to make changes we will. He stated we will get a ruling from the county attorney and auditor on the Pos. Vice Chairman Calhoun made a motion to adopt the credit card policy second by Commissioner Nixon. Commissioner Edwards wanted to read it further. 3 votes in favor, motion carried.

CONSERVATION EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT – Debbie Henry. Chairman Freeman stated it was the annual agreement that we sign. Debbie Henry told the commissioners how the office worked and that the county always pays the 7,000.00. Commissioner Worsley made motion to approve, Vice Chairman Calhoun seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

COUNTY OWNED RADIO TOWER – INTERGOVERNMENT AGREEMENT – Chairman Freeman stated that we had some problems with the county owned radio tower. He stated that the tower has not been maintained like it should have for the last few years and for a matter of fact probably never. He stated that the tower needed to be lit because it was Survival Flight Helicopter. He then stated we received a letter. Doug Cofty then explained that we received a letter from Survival Flight, or more so the Sheriff did but we were tagged in on it. Survival Flight stated they were having a big inspection from the FAA or another organization in October. The rule on the tower is that it is under the height for lighting but that it is next to an airport, and they consider a heliport an airport, so it has to be lit and painted. Vice Chairman Calhoun stated that sounded expensive. Mr. Cofty stated its between 30,000 and 40,000 dollars. Chairman Freeman showed a quote that was 32,000.00 to get the tower back up to code. Chairman Freeman wen through the list of repairs needed. He then stated the County had the opportunity to get on a new tower that the City of Colquitt is building. He stated that all the communications would be ungraded to 1 single antenna and that the City was going to put the tower and antenna up but that the City needed to put the tower on part of the county's land behind the City Hall. Commissioner Worsley asked where the

tower would be put, and Chairman Freeman stated near the old hand ball court wall. Commissioner Worsley stated he was fine with it as long as they fence it in so no children could get in there and get hurt. All commissioners agree it is a good deal. Commissioner Worsley asked the cost to remove the old tower and Chairman Freeman stated we are waiting on the quote. He also stated that the County would have first right of refusal to purchase the tower if the city ever sold it. Commissioner Worsley made motion to proceed with City tower, Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion, all in favor. Motion carried.

MILLER COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY APPOINTMENT – Chairman Freeman stated that there were several members that needed to be reappointed and several members added. Rick LaGuardia and Vice Chairman Calhoun agreed to serve on the board. Several other people have showed interest in it. Motion made by Commissioner Worsley to reappoint old members, seconded by Commissioner Nixon, all in favor. Motion carried. Commissioner Worsley made motion to appoint Rick LaGuardia, Marty Tabb, Jeff Adkinson, Israel Houston and Ladon Calhoun, Commissioner Nixon seconded, all in favor. Motion carried.

SIGN LOAN AGREEMENT WITH FIRST STATE BANK FOR FUEL STATION –

Commissioner Worsley made motion to allow Chairman Freeman to sign the agreement, Vice Chairman Calhoun seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

OPEN NEW BANK ACCOUNT FOR ARPA FUNDS – Faye Whittaker explained to the board that the money was in the account that held the Hurricane Michael money but that the federal government wanted it in a new account that has never had any funds in it. Vice Chairman Calhoun made motion to open account, Commissioner Worsley seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Board of Commissioners go into executive session. Before they go Leroy Bush asks why the board never appoints blacks to the boards. Chairman Freeman states the hospital board has Carolyn King serving on it. Chairman Freeman states that the names submitted to the board were done so by the old members of the Development board and the Development Authority attorney. Mr. Bush states no black people. Chairman Freeman tells Mr. Bush that it has nothing to do with black or white. Chairman Freeman states that everything does not have to be a racial issue. Mr. Bush tells Chairman Freeman everything they do is racist.

Chairman Freeman asks for motion to go into executive session, Motion made by Commissioner Worsley.

Board returns from executive session with no action taken.

Chairman Freeman asks for a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Worsley makes motion, Vice Chairman seconded, all in favor. Motion carried