



**Miller County Government**  
304 W. Pine Street  
Colquitt, Georgia 39837  
P: 229.758.4104 | F: 229.758.2229  
**Board of Commisioners**



Present: Chairman Ladon Calhoun, Vice Chairman Jeff Cox, Commissioner Edwards, Commissioner Bowen  
Others Present: Faye Whittaker, Douglas Cofty, Andy Moore, , Austin Lambert, Kevin Calhoun  
Sheriff Clenney, Whitney Butler, Buzz Grimsley, Ron Rowe.

6:00 P.M. – Welcome & Call to Order. Prayer and pledge of allegiance

### **Housekeeping**

#### **Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Calhoun stated all right, we need to add FLOST intergovernmental to the agenda. if we do not have any additions to the agenda we need to get approval. Vice Chairman Cox made motion to approve. Commissioner Bowen seconded it. All in favor, motion carried.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Calhoun stated next is minutes. Everybody have them. If everything's in order. Need a motion to approve. Commissioner Bowen made motion. Vice Chairman Cox seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

#### **Approval of Financial Reports**

Chairman Calhoun stated Financial reports. Everything looks all right. We need a motion to approve. Motion. Second. I second. All in favor?

#### **Appearances**

##### **Ron Rowe**

Chairman Calhoun stated Ron Rowe with ACCG, You want come on up? Mr. Rowe stated behind here. Where the best place you want me to be? Chairman Calhoun stated this is a temporary for us. So, anywhere you want to stand. Right here's good with me then. I'm Ron. I work with ACCG retirement services and I've serviced the retirement plan for middle county employees in the county and been

talking with the county manager a good bit about the plan and what it means and how it works and what it does for the employees. That's the main thing is the benefit that is being offered to the employees and what they get out of it. You have two plans here. One's a defined benefit plan or a pension as they call it. the old term as a pension that has a 65 year old. 65 is the age you have to be to be able to be eligible to retire. 65 with at least 5 years with the county. There is an early option at 60 with at least 10 years, but it comes with a drastic reduction in the benefit. It's about half of the benefit amount at 60. So, there's really no early options in the plan. So, as a I'm not suggesting one way or the other, just let you know what it is. is what some options are and what some of your neighboring counties have as far as I think you all compete for the same employees, you know, within a certain range here and we service all of the counties around here. So, looking at that, we spoke about what other counties are doing and some have what they call an unreduced early option where somebody is a long-term employee because you may hire somebody in at 20, 22, 23 years old. Well, they'd have to work here 45 years to be eligible to start a benefit versus some plans have unreduced early, which is maybe 55 or maybe 60 with some years of service attached to that. Those are things that if you were inclined to look at them, we'd be glad to provide some information on. There's also I'm going to say the last 30 years or so what we see a lot of places doing is the other plan you have is what they call a 457 457b technically in the IRS code. You probably hear 401k more than anything. 401k is private industry. I tell people like Proctor and Gamble, McDonald's, etc. You have a 401k. Then there's 403bs, which is churches, schools, not for profits. You'll see that. And that 457B is governmental work. It just says where you all work. There are little nuances to them, but it's really, hey, that number tells me where I work.

Somebody comes up to me and says, hey, I have a 457. What? Oh, you work for a government agency somewhere. Well, your 457 is 100% voluntary. So, your employees that participate do so with no incentive. They know that what we talk about when we are educating employees about retirement is social security. We talk about income replacement ratios. How much money do you need to have coming in from different sources to be able to choose whether to work or not? And we talk about social security and I know social security is a controversial subject. If we don't have some changes before 2034, we're talking 70 75% of the obligations being met. So if no changes happen, somebody's benefit is going to be cut 25 30%. Because that's what the trust fund can handle. But we talk about that currently. The facts on the benefit statement say that if you work 35 years in the system and your full retirement age, most of your workforce was born 1960 or after now. So full retirement age for the for those individuals are 67. So if you work 35 years, make it a 67 and start your benefit according to the social security statement you'll get, it's going to replace about 40% of your salary. Well, we know that's not enough to live on. We talk about your defined benefit plan or your pension. Most government employees going to work somewhere if they stay in your place of employment, born here, raised here, work here, etc. That and that's not unusual. the 16th of this month I'll have 40 years in government work. So I mean that's just what we do and most of them's around 30 years though when they get ready to retire and your plan that gives them about 30%. So you're looking around 70% income replacement and a lot of people would look at that and say hey that's not too bad but nobody here wants a 30% pay cut today and you're not going to want it when you get there. Yeah. So, we look at the

457 as that third part that supplements or bridges the gap or adds to it, whatever it may be, is it's a supplemental plan to put with those other two that you provide the pension, you provide the opportunity for 457 and the employee has to participate on their own to try to make up the difference there. Some do very well, some don't participate at all, etc. So what we're seeing across the state is a lot of what we call hybrid plans. You have basically it's a little different but you have your defined benefit plan in place and then you incentivize your employees to say for themselves by doing some type of small match. I say small that's very subjective. Everybody's got a different budget. Everybody has a different set of employees. Everybody got different salaries. Small is very subjective. But we designed these plans that says, you know what, if you stay with us 30 years between the defined benefit plan and if you participate in this with the match, you'll wind up with about a 60% income replacement. If you decide not to stay with us, that plan's portable. Has a vesting schedule, which means they got to stay long enough to be vested. But that plan is 100% portable. We know that people across our country aren't saving enough for retirement. We know that. The statistics show that everywhere. That's not a huge, oh my gosh, everybody knows that. What are employers doing to try to recruit and retain employees? This is what some combination of this is what we're seeing. The hybrid plan is becoming more popular because if they stay, they get defined benefit. That's a guaranteed check for life. they can't outlive defined contribution the 401 40457 type environment. This is pretty much a cash bucket that says you manage this and if you manage it right, you put these two together then you've hit your income replacement ratio. Just want to talk about that. So going back and saying there are options in your pension plan to look at and say hey you know we probably haven't reviewed this in a long time. Let let's sit down and look at the options. How do we recruit and retain our employees? What can we do for those long-term employees? Again budgetary talk, design talk, etc.

The other is a hybrid that fit us. Does a different DB fit us? does both what does and I think that's part of the conversation that county manager and I have been having is let's look at our plan since we haven't looked at it in a while and just say hey let's review this and see what's out there you may need zero changes but I think the process of going through the review sitting down going through the review is a great process to look and see what options are out there do we need to make a change do we not need to make a change and I realize I always start those out with let's look at everything. You'll say somebody's going to say this, I like that. Well, that turns into how much does that cost? Is there any cost? Because some things don't cost. Most things do. It's just a matter of how you allocate funds. So, I think that's really what I'm here to talk about is that we I would love to make some time to sit down and review the plan. I know we can't have a forum but for you to plan at you all's leisure and say this is what you have this is what is available what's the combination if any changes what would you like to see we could work that up and let you know what it looks like we really don't have a lot of people in that 457 compared to the number of employees you have you have a very low participation rate and because it's not matched by do that. That that's the main issue is there's no incentive to other than the pure education of hey you know what you really do need to save money. Nobody else is going to take care of you. The county's already taking care of you a lot with the pension plan. I just people say well it's only that listen there's no cost to the employee. You come to work and you get the pension plan. What a benefit. But there's no incentive to make that other gap full. And people don't realize that one

day mentally, physically, or both. They won't be able to do what they do today. Unfortunately, sometimes it's also, hey, thank you for your service. We don't we don't need you to work here anymore. Those days come. What are you going to do when that day gets there? Well, if you're not 67, if you're not 62, even if you're not, what are you going to do? Well, you got to have something that bridges you to the next job or bridges you into retirement and without a plan. No, I tell this all the time. I said, you would never ever get up in the morning, wake your family up and say, "Hey, let's go get in the in the truck or the car and let's go." Where are we going? I don't know. Let's just go. Well, how long are we going to be gone? I don't know. Let's just go. Nobody does that. Everybody has a plan. If you go on vacation, you already know where you going, where you staying, what you're doing. We don't look at our financial life that way. And I think this is part of what we need to educate employees on and provide something the tools to them to say, "Hey, let's get you across the line because it's really not happening across our country right now. It really isn't. I mean, you can throw all the numbers out there you want to. We're as a country, we're in debt. As individuals, we're in debt." You know, we talk about the student loan debt being 1.7 trillion. Credit card debts over a trillion now. We spend money. We're good at spending money. Best in the world. I think we spend all hours and then we go get somebody else's and spend it. But we're not good at saving money. And I believe there's a balance. Enjoy your life. You only have one. Enjoy it. But when you get older, whatever that age is to you, I like people to have a choice. to say, "Hey, I don't have to." It's kind of like when I hear parents say, "Because I said so. I didn't like that then. I don't like it now." So, get a choice. But when you get there, you should be able to do what you choose to do versus what are you doing is what are you doing tomorrow? I have to go to work. Yeah, we have to for a while, but sooner or later it should be what are we doing? No, I can't do that. I'm going to go to work tomorrow. There's a choice. Life's always better when you have choices. And I tell employees this a lot.

Retirement doesn't happen overnight. And I can't stand putting ages on it, but that's what the plans are. I tell people because I I'm from South Georgia, lived here so far all my life. So, I say it this way. Retirement's like a crockpot. You got to put it over there and forget about it. Every once in a while, you all cook with a crock pot. Everybody does. Sometime every once in a while, you'll say, "I need to go check on it. You lift that lid, taste it, maybe add some seasoning to it." That's where we tell employees over time, just because you started this amount, that doesn't mean that's the amount you need to stay at. Every once in a while, you got to add a little seasoning to the pot. And over time it starts smelling good. That profit and it's got to be close time to eat. When you look at that retirement account, you get 45, 50, 55. You start seeing the difference. You're like, "Hey, it am not going to be long before we eat." That's what I try to equate it to because that's everybody expects it to be like that microwave. And I tell people just go buy a scratch off. You got the same choice. You're probably not going to win. And if you try to microwave retirement, it am not going to win. you know, it's just the way it is. So, we try to again review the plans, see what's best for your employee base and your budget and your community, what is best that fits you, and let's design it that way. There it may be perfect, but I don't think we've had a review in a long time. Any questions about anything? I will look forward to hopefully a meeting, but that's up to you all. Just let me know. Yeah, I'm sorry. We can have a workshop here. Yeah, we can do whatever they want to. I mean, that's I just I'm at your point. We just get with you and Yeah, I visit every

three months and so Faye's got the schedule on the calendar, but I'm just I don't mind coming any other time, of course. I mean, I live about an hour and 15 minutes from here, so it's not that big a deal. But yeah, just get Doug to reach out and we'll be glad to put whatever you want to together. Thank you.

## **Old Business**

### **EDF Solar Ordinance**

Chairman Calhoun stated let's do the EDF light year. Mr. Cofty stated so, I talked with Matias at EDF and he had asked me about the if you guys looked over at the ordinances and I told him that on the ordinances, you know, we also sent the attorney that he had got back to me. He is wanting to do a workshop with the board. Him and I guess another what's the other guy's name? Rain Cotton. Those are the ones that we met. They want to come down and just do a workshop with you guys and that way everybody talk about the ordinance together and then talk about the MOU because I also told them that you know it takes a little time to get the you know to talk about the tax abatements and stuff like that. So what would be a good time if you all want to do it next month in October. I can set I can set up a date to do that and get them down here. We'll do that. But anyway, I just I just told me it took you all a while that you I gave to you all just you all just review it. So that's what we're all about. Chairman Calhoun stated you going to schedule a meeting? Mr. Cofty stated yes. I'll look at the schedule and then we'll have it over here. In fact, I was going to tell you all this will probably be the only time we'll have it at the courthouse this meeting. We're going to try to start meeting over at the city, the new city theater. It's a little bit better and we'll try to get that because we can't move these tables anymore. So I'm going to start working on scheduling that, you know, every meeting. Yeah. And I'll try to get that over there, too. Or we can have it over there at Debbie's conference center. That's probably good idea to have there.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Building Updates**

Chairman Calhoun stated Building updates. Mr. Cofty stated so, we finished construction on the courthouse. The two tax assessor offices will be moved to this side of the courthouse. We have I guess you'd say 99% completed the move from the other building to the new building and we're just going to wait for the get the tax assessors moved. That's what we're still waiting on. But other than that, we're going to start cleaning up the back. I need to talk Andy about that. And then we've already made a plan to go ahead and put that crush and run in the front to go ahead and make that parking. Chairman Calhoun stated tell everybody since it's on TV where the new address and Mr. Cofty stated so the new county commission address is going to be 111 North First Street. It's the old tax assessor building right across from Bernard. Chairman Calhoun stated any questions on that.

## **Shooting Range**

Chairman Calhoun stated shooting range update. Mr. Cofty stated so we met with DNR, I'd say about two weeks ago now, and they confirmed that the money had been put into the budget to go ahead and start redoing the shooting range. Mr. Keith, you were there, and I think Ladon, you were there, weren't you? So, the first the first round of money, they're going to take it and remediate the berm to go and knock them down, get all the lead out. I think they said it was like a three to five year process that they were supposed to do, but I think it's going on what 20 years that they haven't cleaned up. So, they're going to take that first batch and get that cleaned up. And then I think they talked about maybe five rifle range, five pistol range, archery, trap shoot, and skeet shoot. They were moving forward. Actually, the lady did email me saying they were moving forward with the environmental study to find out if there was that was it brown salamander if it was out there they would have to move it to a different location but it's on track and you know it moves slowly and you I think they're understanding now you know you heard where they said that they came back out they got it. So that's it on that. Chairman Calhoun stated any questions on that?

## **5311 Transit Resolution**

Chairman Calhoun stated all right, 5311 regional transit. Mr. Cofty stated this is a resolution that we sign every year is to allow them to provide to get the grants for that transit bus that goes around. So I just need you to you all to approve it so we can sign need a motion to sign the resolution for transit Commissioner Nixon made motion, Vice Chairman Cox seconded, all in favor. Motion carried.

## **FLOST Intergovernmental Agreement**

Chairman Calhoun stated the FLOST intergovernmental agreement. Mr. Cofty stated you know, we met with the city what last Monday or last Tuesday and you all tend both agreed to go ahead and pass that lost intergovernmental agreement. So, we just need to formally vote to go ahead and have it on record. Chairman Calhoun stated so, we need a motion to approve. Commissioner Bowen made motion, Commissioner Nixon second. All in favor. Motion carried.

## **Departments**

### **Fueling Center**

Chairman Calhoun stated fueling station. Mr. Cofty stated if you look at it, we're pretty much we exceeded two semi- loads a month now. We're working on three. So it is going up. The school's back in full swing. So that's pretty good. We hadn't had any problems with that

## Road Department

Chairman Calhoun stated anyone else. Mr. Cofty stated Andy, you want to kind of I know we talked about that side arm mower and I sent out the pictures. Mr. Moore stated yeah, the side arm mower that we're running. It's probably 16 to 17 years old. It's got a lot of wear on it. A new one. I priced a new one. It's \$17,250. We found the one that you all got pictures of online. Looks really good to me. And the guy said he would sell it for 6750. And the paint's still under the deck of and I'd like to see if we might could get that one to maybe not exactly replace the one we got. It's still running, but when we get this next trip around the county mowing, I'd like to take one of them tractors and put to it. Maybe we could run two of them and get some of the weeds knocked down on the dirt roads. And then when the other one quits, we'll still have one that we can continue running. The mower looks really good to me, you know, and the one we got is no iron. It's just getting weak and old and it, you know, kind of does a rough little job out there every day. So, you know, that's up to you all. If you all want to think about buying that one, we'll buy it, go get it, bring it home, and put it to use. Vice Chairman Cox stated is that it? Mr. Moore stated yeah. If you haven't seen it, Commissioner Bowen stated where's that one located at, Andy? Mr. Moore stated it's over in the edge of Alabama. I don't know the name of the little town. It's, you know, it's a couple hour drive to go get it, but the man said he had plenty of stuff to load it. What I like about it is when you actually look through the pictures when he's got one of the deck up and the paint's not even wore out from under the deck. And Mr. Keith was talking about it. That's probably the original set of blades is this under, you know. I mean, the mower looks like it's in really good shape. And we had some more pictures where he had them stored in a barn, you know. Mr. Cofty stated did you say he also owns an equipment company? Mr. Moore stated yeah, he's he buys and sells some equipment, you know. He had, you know, some other things that was online, but that's the only thing we was looking at was that. And the only other thing I had is we applied for grant money to do striping. We wanted to put up a good many of those flashing signs at some of the bad intersections.

We've looked at several places to get those signs from, but we found one that was signs are going to be about \$4,000 cheaper than where we had been looking. But what I'd like to do is get two and go get them two put up. Make sure we, you know, got them up. They working well. They like everybody, you know, everybody likes them because it's a good bit of money that we going to spend when we buy them all. And I'd rather noted, you know, we got this is going to work for us before we go spend. We've already got that. Ms. Whittaker stated we've already got that money. Mr. Moore stated yeah, the money's here. And we going to have to do some showing, you know, before we paint the edge line. So, we got some work to do on that. But the signs, they're kind of costly. So, I'd like to get two and let's get them up, get them working, you know, before we go spend a pile of money because they may not, you know, we may need to go somewhere else and get them. They may not work good or just don't know a lot about them until we try. If that's okay with you all, you know, I think you have to order two when you get them. So, we get two, get them up and look at them. If everybody likes and we'll, you know, move forward with the rest of that's all I got. Chairman Calhoun stated we got the money. Ms. Whittaker stated we got the check. Chairman Calhoun stated I'm talking about for the mower. Ms. Whittaker stated oh, for the mower. The 6,000. Now, I would suggest just taking that out of TSPLOST

and not financing that little amount because you pay interest on it. Mr. Moore stated just hooks to a three-point hitch on the tractor. Mr. Keith's actually seen it run here recently. It. I think he can tell you that, you know, we go down a road with it on a road that just has weeds on it. It makes the road look a lot better. And I run it a lot ahead of the limb cutters and they don't have to cut the weeds. You know, the weeds is already gone and they come through and make a lot better time on the road. Chairman Calhoun stated and I like during the winter time when you're not mowing right away. Mr. Moore stated yeah. I run one I'm running one all the time. Chairman Calhoun stated you would hook this up and you and utilize your help to do this. Mr. Moore stated yeah, we're going to run this. We What I'll do is the old one I'll let it rest a little. We'll run this one all year long and during the winter I'll hook that one up. Let one of the mowing guys, you know, really we we'll run two or we'll run two as much as we can. But most time I can't until the winter time. But the one we running is kind of getting, you know, a little wear to it to where it's been giving us a little problem and it's going to get where, you know, I don't know how much I can keep it running. You know, it needs to run every day. It makes a big difference. Like right now, we had all that rain and it just blew up weeds and you know, that's a lot of what's hanging over in your road. That little mower, we did it did some roads out there in his district recently that it was like night and day on that road you know and it was just weeds limb cutter some of them don't even need the limb cutter to even go down it after you cut weeds but you know that's you all will continue to run one I got it's just it's just getting a lot of wear to it you know it wears out it's wearing out. Vice Chairman Cox stated I make a motor to it purchase it, Commissioner Bowen seconded it. All in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Moore stated thank you. I won't go tomorrow probably, but I'll right. And it really makes a big difference on the roads like in jail district. I rode down Casey Carter Road the other day. All the trees is cut back. But the weeds is and when it rains, they lay over in the road. If we run that machine down in that road, it'll be back 35 40 foot wide. Makes a big difference on a lot of We put out a lot of fires where we get calls about limb cutters. We take that and go put out a lot of fires with it. The one I like about it, it's cheaper to run than a limb cutter, too. It moves faster, you know, and it makes the limb cutter move a little faster because he can go in on a road where that's been done and all he's got to do is cut over top. just done cut 6ft high down.

What about the signs? You all good with just getting two and let's get them up. Mr. Cofty stated try put them on the most dangerous road stop intersection. Mr. Moore stated well, you got Griggs Lucille you got out there on 310 there at once bridge. I mean we got some bad intersections but we got some that we was going to put double signs on one on both sides of the road. We had some we was going to put just a single sign on. So, I figured we'd take a road that was going to do the single and just put one, you know, put one up. Let's see if we can get it up, get it operating, get it, you know, in in operating condition and see if everybody likes them because they're different. You know, Mr. Keith was talking about heads of them that were LED around them and, you know, there's all different kinds of them. I want to make sure everybody's happy with them because that's right at \$30,000 we going to spend on them. So I kind of like to put one up, make sure it's working and everybody likes, you know, before we spend pile of money on something that don't work. Mr. Cofty stated that's grant money. Ms. Whittaker stated yeah, it's not coming out budget. Mr. Moore stated yeah, that's coming out of the grant money and we got the money. Chairman Calhoun stated do you have anything? Ms. Butler with e911 stated no,

sir. Not unless you have any questions for me. Commissioner Bown stated one thing Ladon, you mentioned about wanting to advertise to the community when we got the grant. So, it sounds like we've actually got the money now so we can start promoting where the signs are supposed to be put at. Mr. Moore state we're going to look at Seminole County. They got a rotivator and they've got it hooked up. They talked to Miss Keith about it this week and we're going to clip some shoulders and see if that machine, you know, that's a 3,000 \$4,000 machine that'll go along and churn up all that excess dirt and grass and we're going to get with them. I think they had talked to Miss Keith last week about how they had hooked up and we going to go look at that and we got a list of roads to do the striping on, but we'll update that. We'll run that by you all. If you all got a road you want to throw in there, look at all that before we concrete that what we going to strip. But then we need to cut the edge lines, you know, clip shoulders on the edge line where they can paint that white line. I'm assuming we want to do what we've been doing, center line, white line, and raised pavement markers. I think all the signs are really in decent shape and we can get a lot of stripes put down on the road, you know, if we just do striping if that's, you know, what you all want to do. Sounds good to me. And we'll wait on the rain and we'll get started clipping some of them because they're a little dry right now. Yeah. Actually, you could start a good fire with that motivator and that them sparks flying off the asphalt in that dry grass.

### **Sheriff's Office**

None

### **DOT Road update**

Chairman Calhoun stated you got anything? Ms. Smith stated Mr. Chair, would you all like to have copies of the DOT traffic modification? Mr. Moore stated we went back to running three mowing tractors today. The grass kind of got a little bit ahead of us, so I put a third one back out there today. We're going to run that third one as much as we can and try to cover some roads and get grass knocked down. We had a few breakdowns that kind of set us back so we don't try to run all three of us. Ms. Smith stated we will need a county, the DOT will need a county resolution when we when we get to that point of plans. The city council has already approved it. We did have an engagement meeting tonight just to talk through any of the community's concerns or questions. DOT was here. Mr. Power was here. Thanks for Jeff attending. Anybody have any questions to get in touch with me questions? Chairman Calhoun stated any questions if not we need a motion to go into executive session for Personnel and Real Estate. Vice Chairman made motion, Commissioner Nixon seconded, all in favor motion carried.

### **Executive Session**

### **Personnel and Real Estate**

We had motion to come out of executive session and a second and everybody was in favor so we came out and so no other business I need a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nixon made motion to adjourn, Vice Chairman Cox seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting is adjourned.

## SIGNATURES

---

Cristene Edwards, Commissioner – District 1

---

Jeff Cox, Vice Chairman – District 2

---

Keith Bowen, Commissioner – District 3

---

Niki Nixon, Commissioner – District 4

---

Ladon Calhoun, Chairman – District 5

---

Douglas Cofty, County Manager