



**Miller County Government**  
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**Board of Commissioners**



**REGULAR SESSION MEETING**  
**09/09/2024, 6:00 P.M., County Government Complex**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman Ladon Calhoun, Vice Chairman Jeff Cox, Commissioner Niki Nixon, Commissioner Edwards, Commissioner Worsley. Others Present: Douglas Cofty, Faye Whittaker, Austin Lambert, Sheriff Holt, Jennifer Jackson, Andy Moore, Mike Middleton, Jajuan Bowen, members of the community.

Chairman Calhoun called the meeting to order. Regular session 09/09/2024 and called for prayer then the pledge of allegiance.

### **HOUSEKEEPING:**

#### **Approval of Agenda:**

Chairman Calhoun stated we need to approve the Agenda, Chairman Calhoun asked do we need to add anything to the agenda. Chairman Calhoun called for motion to approve. Commissioner Edwards made motion. Vice Chairman Cox seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Chairman Calhoun asked has everybody had a chance to look at the minutes? If no changes need to be made. I need a motion to approve them. Vice Chairman Cox made motion, Commissioner Nixon seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. Commissioner Worsley stated he was not going to vote because he was not present.

#### **Approval of Financial Report:**

Chairman Calhoun stated Financial reports. They look long. If no changes need to be made. I need a motion to approve the financial report. Commissioner Edwards made motion. Commissioner Nixon seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Chairman Calhoun asked Mr. Cofty if he wanted to go ahead and get the business out of the way or do the Appearances. Mr. Cofty stated that is up to the Chairman.

## **APPEARANCES:**

### **Tax Assessors Board – Cody Hamilton**

Chairman Calhoun stated on appearances, the tax assessor board I know that's what everybody here for. You all want to say anything Cody? Mike Middleton stated Cody's going to do it. Mr. Hamilton stated so what I put before to you guys is the assessment order that was issued from the State. A collection order that was issued from the state in 2022 was given to you guys back in 2022 whenever it is issued. Basically if you would turn to page four on that that's kind of the order in which the revenue commissioner sent down, so in order for Miller County to collect taxes and this has nothing to do with the actual Tax Commissioner this is just basically for the board of assessors saying that they're in compliance with the sales ratio study that the department audit does every single year, so what they're saying on that page is if we don't get in compliance within 2024 we can no longer collect taxes, so what the board of assessors has done and you'll see that on your next few pages in 2021 and 2023 we've done sales ratio studies to increase values. We did increase the values to get closer to that 40% that we needed to be at, if you look on the fifth page or the sixth page I'm sorry, the seventh page you'll see when we run the studies for 21 through 23 we are sitting at 40% assessment ratio which is in compliance with the state guidelines. So, on 23 we were in compliance if you flip to page nine, you will see this year when we done a sales ratio study we actually fell to a 39.3 which means we fell below the 40% ratio which is still acceptable with the state of Georgia and if you flip to page 11, you see that we from 24 to current date which is looking at sales for 2024 only, we have fallen to a 39.3 which means that we're still within the acceptable range but it shows that houses are selling for higher than what we have on the assessment and the reason I skipped so many pages in between there is the list of all the houses that are selling and the values that they're selling for was what we have assessed for.

So, to answer a few of the questions I started here in 2015, the county has not had a county revalue done since 1999 when we got here in 2015 we started on a complete revalue which hit in 2016, another one was scheduled to hit in 2019, we did not do one because of COVID in 2019 our sales ratio was at 40.56 which is still acceptable by the state of Georgia. So, in 2022 we did do another revalue which put us at the consent order that you all have in front of you at a 34.9. In 23 the board of assessors updated values and went to a 38.75 which still is in compliance with state law. 2024 before we done any value changes we looked at 23 values versus 24 sales. If we would have done a value increase the sales ratio dropped to a 24.38. So, to address the actual statement that went out yes values increased but on the actual notices box C where it said estimated taxes that information is incorrect because that's using the Mills rates for 2023 which are high and the county has not set the new mil rates for 2024 yet so the mil rate that County sets is by State Statute they have to lower the mil rate, so if I raise values the

County Commission is charged with lowering or rolling back the millage rate is what the state refers to it as. So, if the entire County digest is up 40% they have to lower their mil rate 40% or show just cause why they need to go above that 40%. so, if they go 40.1% above that they got to show where that extra 1% is going, they can't just say okay we're getting all this extra money let's spend it they have to justify that. So, I know they were inundated with phone calls. We were but according to State Statute it says I must use most accessible mil rate possible, that is last year's mil rate. I will sit here and say that the mil rate on that form is absolutely incorrect, it's based upon last year's numbers but it's also based on a lower assessment than what it was last year. So, what we did in my office was we took a regular \$100,000 house increased it by 20%, decreased the mil rate by 20% and the tax bill was only \$20 difference. What you would pay in 23 versus 22 or 24 I'm sorry. Commissioner Worsley stated Cody, most of us got homestead exemption last year, average got around \$600. Mr. Hamilton stated so, that is actually the governor's tax grant credit that he did not issue this year, so we're kind of a double edged. You got a value increase, we're lowering the mil rate but you don't get that Governor's grant this year which.

Commissioner Worsley stated I think people need to be made aware of that that they can get rid of that this year. Mr. Hamilton stated that was anywhere from about \$500 to \$700 depending on value. Ms. Jackson stated only value that's correct anywhere from 400 to \$700 it shows on everybody bill actually what credit amount they got. Mr. Hamilton stated so in your notice it doesn't have that credit on there at all so if you're looking at actually what you wrote the check for last year that's anywhere from \$400 to \$700 cheaper than what's on that notice even with the higher mil rates, so we kind of got two things playing against us is the governor's credit that he gave last year that he's not given again this year plus the values are up showing that the mil rate if I could have got the mil rate numbers and put on the assessment notices everyone would see that it's close to what they paid last year without the governor's discount if that makes sense.

Commissioner Worsley stated Cody if I want to go buy a house just say one side of my house come up for sale I'm willing to pay outrageous price for it, is it fair for it to affect everyone else because I paid a lot more than what our house worth just go I want it. Mr. Hamilton stated it drives the market, you can see on this sheet here if you go down the columns I have this available anybody, I didn't know how many to have, I right beside Austin there's a sign in sheet if you'll put your email address on that I'll be more than glad to email it to you after the meeting so if you look here you'll see sales date sales price and then assess value then you can see the difference so on page six it sold for \$111,000 we have it valued at \$66,000 that's the first line if you skip down a couple lines it sold for 144,000 or 145,000 we have it appraised at 44,000 so it just kind of shows you how high they're selling above the market value or above assessment that they're selling.

Commissioner Worsley stated well I'll put mine up sale tonight if he'll pay me that. Person in audience stated most of us honestly agree with you. Mr. Hamilton stated well my personal resident I bought it in 2015 for \$125,000 this year was appraised at 266,000 that's just how bad how far the Market's went we've got one property sitting on the market I'm curious to see what it does we have an assess for \$49,000 they want \$109,000, I'm curious if it sells for. That house on First Street just sold we have it assessed at \$136,000 just sold for \$255,000. Person from audience asked are these out of towners. Mr. Hamilton stated some are out of town but some of them are in town. Person from audience asked so numbers actually sold prices noted prices. Mr. Hamilton stated no these are actually sold in transfers right so we don't go off of any pre listings, any real estate we go off actual transactions that take place. Person from audience stated properties that had just land on it did not increase as much as property with land and the house, no matter how and I figures it must be the house. Mr. Hamilton stated it is it's up, it's the residential improvement and now it depends on if the land is under conservation use or not if it's under that value is not change because it's locked in Person from audience stated everyone that I got that had a house on regardless of how old that house was shot up. Mr. Hamilton stated so what we what happened is we had everything in the county value at starting cost to build a property at \$50 a square foot to build it we know today you can't build a house for \$50 square foot so we used it to \$80 square foot as a countywide adjustment and then that's what's all the values up in line to where they need to be because if you look at you don't have the report but if you look at today versus just this year alone we're sitting at a 40% ratio which means we have them assessed within range of what they're actually selling for. Commissioner Worsley stated Cody, what kind of effect is this having on the home owners the CUVA and gate card and what kind of effect is that having on those homeowners. Mr. Hamilton stated the gate card has absolutely no effect on property.

Commissioner Worsley stated it don't pay no sale tax. Mr. Hamilton stated but it doesn't have any effect on property assessments. The conservation use does have an impact on it because that's an exemption that is given by the state so you pay less per acre on conservation use property than if it was out of the conservation use for example conservation use property may be assessed at 750 an acre with conservation use without conservation use it may be assessed at \$2,500 an acre and you pay taxes 2500, so with conservation use you say about 70% of the land value that you would normally pay in taxes. Commissioner Worsley stated now a gate card don't have an effect on the property but it does have an effect on what we take in as a county operating budget it has a big effect on this. Mr. Hamilton stated correct your sales tax that you get but, it that has nothing to do with tax. Person from the audience asked so are we going to vote to lower the rates. Mr. Hamilton stated correct, so the school board has already issued a statement, the city has issued a statement and the county has issued a statement that

they are lowering the mil rates and they can contest to that we Chairman Calhoun stated had we haven't had a budget meeting yet so I'm not even going to say what we're going to do but I feel certain that we will lower but so we have to wait on the city and the county, I mean the city and the school board before we can do whatever we're going to do so. Commissioner Worsley stated we have all of our figures together on what we going to do for the budget and what kind of money is on tax digest. Person from the audience stated I mean but y'all can imagine the shock to all of us when we opened our letter. Chairman Calhoun stated well if you look at this I mean but if you look at this right here I mean I think this this is getting it fair, so I mean like I mean there's one house right here I don't have my glasses so y'all bear with me I mean it was we had it valued at \$125,000 and it just sold for \$340,000 so I mean well I mean they're living in the city I mean they are living in the county. Person from the audience stated I get a call every day to buy my land, so you see those people.

Chairman Calhoun stated but they still don't matter if they live in Canada they got to pay taxes but they still got to pay taxes whether regardless if they live in the Soviet Union they got to pay taxes here so. Commissioner Worsley stated but your homes are not going anywhere let's say the fire or storm or something like that home was going to be there I went to a class in Atlanta it's going to be there that's what going to hit you. Mr. Middleton stated but you still make a good point I can speak people are moving in here from other parts of country, they come in here with money and they realize they can buy land cheaper and I'm on the board of assessors, okay and then they call it buddies and it's starting to kind of hit up like Georgia and Central Georgia and Florida I mean got from Texas and I know folks in this county are paying too, the more you got, Texas you got Arizona you got Florida got Mr. Hamilton stated, I will say that we see a lot of we do see a lot of transactions out of state Florida surrounding states around us but we do see that they are living and moving in here that it's not like they're buying them for rental properties or investment purposes they're actually signing up for Homestead and living in if they're working in the area they may be working remote but they are owner occupying the majority of these houses so it's not like that they're selling for investment purposes, rental units or something like that Person from the audience asked how many house are you talking about that's been sold for a lot of money.

Mr. Hamilton stated so between 2021 and 2023, 47 houses sold for over 40% assessment value which means from 2023 to 2204, 24 houses sold from 2024 to date we're looking at 24 houses sold this year as well and these are actual sales that title change hands, now we get a lot more transfers of Estates and that kind of thing that doesn't impact this but these are true fair market sales that where there's no kin no relation or anything like that because we try to kick anything we can out and then of course we're audited every single year that's the reason we got the collection order with

the stipulations that we must correct it by 2024 and the reason I printed the number of years to show the Commissioners that we were low and then we doing our work we needed to do to get it where it is now to be at compliance with the state. Mr. Middleton stated Cody, that number we always look at that low number what 38. Mr. Hamilton stated the lowest number is 36 to 44. Mr. Middleton stated what I'm tell you all, those years we knew we need to go up. We tried to hold the values, we thought the property going to ease up and level down and come back out, that was the prediction okay. That's when we got that consent order to get it right we was hoping that leave back down leave back down that brings our number gets us into compliance but it didn't happen. Person from the audience asked so your target is what, as far as that number so it's 36 what you say between 36 and 40.

Mr. Hamilton stated 40 is the prime number, so to be compliance you have to be between 36 and 44 so you can be over the 40 which means you're over assessing property for actually selling for if you're below 40 you're selling it lower than what you're assessing it lower than what it actually is selling for and that's been our case most of the time that we're below what they're actually selling for. Mr. Middleton stated and the state watches this just as close as we do okay. Mr. Hamilton stated oh we get audited every single year and the only reason we've got the consent order is when we send our digest up to Atlanta to get approved so we can collect taxes if we fell behind for so many years which we did for 2019 and 2022. 20 19 was covid and then 2022 was when this was actually issued they said you can collect taxes but you must get it fixed so if we wouldn't have done what we would what if we would have done what we did this year they would have come in here they would have charged us they would have done it and they would turn around left. The state would have sent their appraisal team in here to do it and then we' have absolutely no so.

Person from the audience stated I think it's still how I feel I know everybody's talking about appealing things and whatever but that's not going to matter it's going to end up with what my board does. I see what my end payment's going to be. Mr. Hamilton stated a few years ago when I first guy here we tried to send out a insert inside the envelope with the assessment notice and we had to turn around and remail everything because you're not allowed to have anything in that envelope other than that assessment notice so we the board of assessors going to put an insert in there saying the mil rate and explain the whole mil rate and using last year's estimated taxes but they would have kicked it out and we would have had to send all new notices again so the only thing I can tell you is to listen out for the public hearings when they start setting the mil rates listen to the school board the city and the county they have to hold public hearings when the mil rates are set once the mil rates are set we will update our tax estimator tool on Q public and then you could use that determining what your property value will be

accessed at. Mr. Middleton stated also say those sales on if you want go see. Mr. Hamilton stated I can't update Q Public's tax estimator until I get the new mil rate. Mr. Middleton stated Cody, one more thing you know talk we do the houses we do the farm land do commercial land every year so the houses what move you kind of sitting there I mean any of that can move and trigger stuff outside our control. Mr. Hamilton stated well we don't see near as many transactions on agriculture or commercial or industrial properties that we do on residential, residential is anything less than 25 acres with a house we see that change hands and move quicker than we do anything else. Mr. Middleton stated but the point I'm making is folks out of town realizing cheap profit here you got to watch that too they can start rolling with big bucks, Person from the audience a from China bought house for \$35,000 and sold it 135,000.

Mr. Middleton stated we have no control over that all we can do is do the sales ratios and what it is what it. Person from the audience asked how long is this re-evaluated, is this every year. Mr. Hamilton stated every three years we get audited every single year now we during the so we look at properties every three years and do adjustments so 2023 which is last year was actually our countywide re-eval when we look at all the properties in the county so between the time we did that and the market hit in 2024 it threw us so far out of line that we had to update values again normally we've never updated values one year turn around done it the exact next year we've always done it in increments but when you're sitting at 2023 when we ended we were at a 38.7 one and that's what sent to the state the state approved it and when we started the whole cycle this year when I run the beginning of the year report we were out of 24 and we had to be at of 40 so that showed us how far away from the 100% we were we were at. Mr. Middleton stated so what we hope is we got our values right now and the folks come in pay that value should be all right next they come in the jack that price up again you go again everybody got well.

Mr. Hamilton stated well that it's buyers buying it but it's also sellers selling it. Person from the audience stated I know there some houses on the market that were and then compare the valuation and you know like the market price was you know 70- 80,000 less but you know the evaluation of that houses are selling you know. Mr. Middleton stated right now to build a house like 134 to 135.00 square foot. Person from the audience stated by that logic the housing market takes a downturn valuation should go down. Mr. Hamilton stated correct, so if the if the just say the bottom falls out and houses start selling for 15% less than what they are now we have to lower values by that so it's not a balancing act but it is a leveling trying to make sure we stay in compliance for state law if a house sells for \$100,000 we should have it assess for \$100,000 we should have it appraise at what it sell for on the market or close to what it sells for and if we see them start selling cheaper than what we have on price of course we lower them. So our

anticipated sales ratio for 2024 is at of 38.4 so if we get in here next year and we start doing all these numbers and we're out of 40 then we know we're good but if we jump up to a 44 or 46 then we're over valuing property we've got to lower so that's the way that judges if you're dead on 40 then you're good anything above 40 you're overvalue anything below 40 you're undervalue so that's the way that's your line 40 is where you want to be at and the closer we are above and below is better for the county as a whole and these audits are given out every single year they come around December and they're given to the school board the county and the city. Any questions? Chairman Calhoun stated any more questions from Cody comments. Mr. Hamilton stated if you have any questions afterwards if you want to call the office you make it the lines are being busy we'll return your call as quickly as possible answer any questions you got. Chairman Calhoun asked when's the last day of appeal.

Mr. Hamilton stated October 15th but what I ask you to do is on that notice if you're not box C box, Box B if you say your house is fairly assessed then there's no need to appeal if you disagree with the actual taxes I remind you that you can't appeal taxes you can only appeal value that's what we have the 100% and the 40% value that we set and that's located. Person from the audience asked can we get someone let Gene Cook to appraise your house and see if you're in line and if his is different happens to be lower. Mr. Hamilton stated you can and you also can refer to your insurance documents and compare our replacement cost new versus their replacement cost new and you see how close they are that that's a way you look at it without having to spend get. Commissioner Nixon stated we should tell we are going to be working on trying to get them right. Chairman Calhoun stated the school board and the city's mil rates and their kind of budget then we'll do our budget and then we'll see what we can do, last year what we go down to Doug. Mr. Cofty stated 1.061% Chairman Calhoun stated the school board came down 2.0% last year. MR. Cofty stated close to it.

Chairman Calhoun stated and we came down one point whatever do yeah so I'm not going to say that we're going to do that but I would hopefully we can come down Commissioner Nixon stated I can reassure you we want it to come down too because we pay taxes too, ours assessed too yeah I got some land too. Chairman Calhoun stated we'll hold two public meetings. Mr. Cofty stated what we got to do is see how many appeals and usually that's a 40-day 45 process so we won't get the numbers for at least 45 days less as 2% how what's the 2% Cody. Mr. Hamilton stated that if the values appealed over 2% then I can't submit a digest. Mr. Cofty stated which means we won't get the numbers even longer so the longer it goes out we won't have the numbers but the quicker we get the numbers we can start running our budgets and see those are and start lowering. Mr. Hamilton stated the value in dispute is 2% for the entire county not just an individual house it's for the entire county digest. Mr. Middleton stated that's



everything on the digest that's not just a house all upset about everything a big number to. Mr. Cofty stated so I'm saying about 45 days we should have the number. Chairman Calhoun stated so we'll advertise that when we have meetings and when they'll be during the middle of the week probably, we'll probably do one in like in the middle of the day and one evening in the evening. Ms. Whittaker stated we have one where we have we'll have two in a day one in the morning and one in the afternoon and then the final one will be the seven days after and it'll be in the evening. Commissioner Worsley stated Cody has there been a lot of people so far. Mr. Hamilton stated I haven't looked at all some off's come in by mail but there's a lot of questions and a lot of them about actual taxes, not about property value everybody agrees a lot of people are agreeing with the actual assessment there's not agreeing with the actual amount of property tax that have and once we explain to them what I've explained to you all this evening they are understanding and praying that the everything goes down. Chairman Calhoun stated so I think it would be our hope that your taxes might go up \$100 or something you know I mean what we spent last year I mean we're we might spend a little more but we're not intending to go up a lot. Mr. Middleton stated but long we all going write that check the governor give us all that is. Chairman Calhoun stated all right, well we appreciate all you all coming and if you all got any questions we'll be around after the meeting and Cody and Mr. Mike everybody we' be glad to answer it if you think anything.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Fueling Center Report:**

Chairman Calhoun stated all right we're going to move on to Old business, Fueling Center report. Mr. Cofty stated so, if you look at it, the school has picked back up, their back in school. There is no problem station. It is running normally. But if you look at it like I said the only increase is the school is pick back up. We're still holding about almost two semis.

### **DNR Shooting Range**

Chairman Calhoun stated all right the update on the shooting range. Mr. Cofty stated the lady finally got back to me, her name is Jennifer and she's taking over for Walter. She said that they are looking for a federal aid coordinator but that it will be federal funds and that she's updated her program manager and also the director of construction. I've had a question from somebody asking me about the county's part of the funds. We won't have to put any money towards it, all we'll have to do is have our excavators and bulldozers and dump trucks. It will be in kind money so there won't be any county money going towards the construction of the range and it's going to be a partnership with DNR. Person from the audience asked about the sheet field, Mr. Cofty stated yes we're going to add skeet shooting, archery, long range rifle. We're actually increasing the yardage of

the existing one, it won't be there, we will actually move it so it's just going to be pretty much we want to give the schools around here. They want to do shooting teams and there's just nowhere for them to do it so we kind of going partner with the DNR to do and it'll be federal dollars. Person from the audience asked so this one will be. Mr. Cofty stated we have to have a 900 square foot radius for the bird shot when they shoot so to make that work in that same area we'll have to move old Donalsonville road down a little bit and then take where the shooting this range is and go down Donalsonville a little bit so it'll be a whole new facility and I just don't know I mean federal dollars could take a year but that's all I got on what about it.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Governmental Systems Contract**

Chairman Calhoun stated on next is governmental systems. Mr. Cofty stated okay so I talked with Ms. Jennifer today, they sent us a contract for renewal and then also right behind it they sent us a letter saying that they were ceasing operations June 2025. So, what we have to do is we have to go ahead and sign this one. This is the same one we always sign but this will be the last one because Ms. Jennifer is interviewing other companies to take over in June of 25. So, all I need is you just to vote to sign that. Chairman Calhoun stated so you just need a motion to sign that new agreement. Commissioner Worsley made motion, Commissioner Nixon seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Cooktown Widening RFP**

Chairman Calhoun stated Cooktown road paving project. Mr. Cofty stated so I went ahead put the bid out on the Georgia procurement website and we only had one bidder which was Oxford, so that's who we normally use but we went ahead and did it you know like we were supposed to that's the only bid so you can go ahead and open it. Chairman Calhoun stated and this is who does all our work anyway usually correct. Commissioner Worsley asked Mr. Moore do you know if they're going try to have any kind of stripping program this year. Mr. Moore stated we've been looking into that and so far they haven't put one out there but they was going to let us know you know just as soon as we hit. We missed the last one we didn't you know we didn't do it here, we'll have to wait see we apply for this the next one. Commissioner Worsley asked about Twilight Church Rd. Mr. Moore stated they did that on their own we didn't have to put any money in it we didn't have a match for it and they picked all the roads that they strip their own we did get striping but they kind of regroup the program where we don't submit roads they pick them so I don't know what the next one's going to be but we got we got roads striped it was just the state picked and chose what roads they wanted to do instead of us do. Chairman Calhoun stated what about, do you remember how much it what the quote

was or the estimate was to. Mr. Moore stated I don't, I don't remember right off top of my head. Chairman Calhoun stated so to do the 4 and 1/2 miles of asphalt resurfacing it's going to be 1,158,795. Mr. Moore stated that's close I mean. Chairman Calhoun stated I thought it was 1.98. Mr. Cofty stated I thought 1.198. Chairman Calhoun stated yeah something like. Mr. Cofty stated that comes in cheaper if that's the case. Chairman Calhoun stated it's a little cheaper. So, we need a motion to approve this. Mr. Cofty stated yes it is coming, we do have matching money for that right we're ready to go. Commissioner Worsley stated yeah Andy got a grant too didn't they. Mr. Cofty stated yes that's part of that. Chairman Calhoun stated all right so I need a motion to go ahead with this as soon as Oxford can get their equipment. Commissioner Edwards made motion, Commissioner Worsley seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Safety Coordinator**

Chairman Calhoun stated, new business safety coordinator Mr. Austin Lambert. Mr. Cofty stated yes so our previous safety coordinator is no longer with us so we always have to have a safety coordinator on staff so Austin went got certified in and safety coordinator one two three and four so we are beyond actually what we need to be certified as so I just need to get the resolution we need to you need to kind of read that resolution that's in there and then we just need to be able need vote be a to sign. Chairman Calhoun asked so you need approval of this? Mr. Cofty stated yes. Chairman Calhoun read now therefore be it resolved that the position of safety coordinator is established for Miller County the safety coordinator for Miller County Georgia will be Austin Lambert safety coordinator one two three and four on this date resolved 9th day of September 2024. I need a motion to approve that motion. Commissioner Cox made motion, Commissioner Nixon seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Department Reports**

Chairman Calhoun stated Department reports. Mr. Cofty stated in your package you have all the department reports in there everything but the EMS report and that will next month start I don't have any other business in the Departments.

Chairman Calhoun stated alright, does anyone have any other business to talk about. Mr. Cofty asked Andy do you have anything. Mr. Moore stated no. Chairman Calhoun state Ms. Jayme would like to give us some economic development update. Ms. Smith stated I just want to give you all some quick updates as you know I'm always available to answer any questions or provide any updates or listen to any ideas you may have but I wanted to give you a residential update the apartment Spring Ridge that's over on the other side of 27, they are at 60% completion we had a local housing team meeting two weeks ago with the developers and Ms. Faye I think you're on that team and remind me because my memories a bit but you weren't there a couple weeks ago so this this won't

be a more information again but they are looking at having the first set of move ins in January there's 44 units there's a mix of one two and three apart of bedrooms and those apartments and there are handicap accessible including audio and visual impairment. Of those 44 units they've already had 102 applicants and it's a rigorous process that takes a couple weeks there is a background check and a credit check and then a rental history so the privately managed Apartments will be a really nice place it's considered Workforce housing and it's incentivized by the Department of Community Affairs and some state tax incentives for the developers. Because the Colquitt team scored so high to land the project here and we were one of the only communities without this type of Workforce Housing Development that's incentivized again by the state, we were awarded \$50,000 to help with some type of community transformation and that's an arduous planning process that includes some community meetings and I brought these to hand out to you.

We'll be having two community engagement meetings to get ideas of how to improve certain services for the city residents so it's not just limited to the apartment residents but we're looking to improve transportation, employment, education and health services to Colquitt residents, so what comes to mind to me is the easiest example is looking at our sidewalk infrastructure and how we might be able to create a more pedestrian friendly walkability around Colquitt so \$50,000 it's a lot but it's not going to go very far if we start talking about sidewalk so the communities invited to those meetings the first is going to be on September 16th from 11: a.m. to 12:00 p.m. that's a Monday so we were hoping that some of the downtown Merchants that are usually open would be able to attend or not open on Mondays we'll be able to attend on that Monday and then there's an evening meeting on September 24th from 6:30 to 7:30 and both of those meetings are going to be at the Colquitt State Theater. Snacks are going to be served and children are welcome they're going to have some little activities for the kids to be entertained and it's just going to be an opportunity to collect some ideas from the public so that's great we're really excited about that opportunity. The city is also engaged in a process with a Regional Commission to do a housing inventory in the city limit so that we know how much and what kind of inventory we have so that folks can be living here in the city um and then that of course is going to enhance our market data to make us more marketable.

Chairman Calhoun asked so you said there was 100 people applied for 44. Are they out of town people? Are they in town people? Do you have any idea. Ms. Smith stated so I only know probably of about 20 folks that I've talked to directly and those have all been from the area, a handful have been actually seniors that are ready to get rid of their two-story large home with a yard and they just they want to condense and not have to mow the grass anymore go up and down flight and stuff so of that 100, not everyone's going to be accepted of course you do have to meet the requirements of that. There has been some

questions in our housing meetings too about and I forget the correct term right now it's been a long day but non US citizens some type of refuge and that's not at all allowed at these apartments you have to show your citizenship matter of fact everyone that's going to be living in the house has to have a birth certificate so that's how that's avoided and any other type of undesirable tenants would be weeded out through that background safety check and the credit check as well. It's going to be privately managed and there's going to be certain protective covenants there um you can't wash a car in parking lot you have to all cars have be pulled in the same way so there's much more than that but it's just going to be a really nice community place and it's back on the tax rolls so from the 1960s it's been held by the Board of Education the city and the county so I appreciate you all being part of this process it's been a long process for the past four years but we're really excited about some new housing and it's going to open up I think a realm of housing for folks that aren't ready to build or to buy a home yet maybe they're just coming back to home Colquitt Miller County from college or something, but they've had that little taste of Independence and they don't want to move back in with Mom and Dad or something. This is just a start and so we're looking at building more rooftops for residential homes and that's a multitude you know single family homes some dents housing but this is just a start it has taken a while but luckily we've had a great collaborative project with us with the developers and the school board and of course the city and the county.

Ms. Smith stated the Legacy subdivision is behind Badcock about 25 acres they're trying to, they're on the agenda tomorrow night at city council and the zoning board they're trying to get a variance for some setbacks to make that a bit denser. Originally was 49 homes and they'd like to include more but we're waiting from feedback from the Regional Commission about that for tomorrow night's meeting. But again, we need housing here because people want to live here and people are moving here from faraway places and again there's people that live here that want to consolidate or maybe they're ready to grow some part of the plan too with the Legacy subdivision is to have some housing seminars on credit coaching just to help empower folks that want to buy a home. There had been some questions previously about the DDA's property holdings and I wanted to report that the DDA owns 13 properties and most of those are infill opportunities so they may not have a structure on them right now but they are prime areas for some type of development whether it be most of them are more commercially suited but if you're interested in that list city council requested that last month when I presented so I'll be more than happy to get that to Doug so he can get it to you as well if you're interested. I also know that Subway has been a rumor for so long but it's actually happening again things take time to get traction and we have been able to work through maneuver the circumstances of covid when all the supply costs went up 100% so the bread oven that's usually X number of dollars was doubled and so the franchise holder

has finally been able to see the prices lower and that interior build outs happening so we pulled permits three weeks ago for that equipment's being delivered and the franchise holder is expecting that Subway will be open to serve our community no later than December. Commissioner Worsley stated where is it going to be at? Ms. Smith stated at 103 North Cuthbert Street. Chairman Calhoun stated the old library. Ms. Smith stated the old library next to the old NAPA building right. So there is construction happening there on the interior, one of the DDA's commercial properties that is in need of some rehab at 104 West Main which is in front of the clock on the north side of the square is for sale. I just wanted to mention that and then any other items related to real estate I'll be happy to talk to you about them in executive session as a whole or individually to help guide some of your decisions and your leadership roles I also wanted to mention that the Downtown Merchants Association is a group of all business owners in Colquitt because the DDA is established by legislative statute and we're so small that all of the commercial business district is part of the Downtown Merchants Association so they'll be getting together on the 16th which is next Monday from 4 to 5pm at the State Theater. And just as a caveat from that I wanted to make sure that I address recent confusion about the DDA scope of work, it's a regional effort to enhance the quality of life in Miller County so I actively work within region 10 and our neighboring communities to ensure that we are doing all that we can to make Colquitt Miller County the best place it can be as you all know it takes time and it takes working through programs and grant opportunities in order to capture those funding mechanisms that allow triggers to happen for incentivizing businesses and just any of those elements that you have to have in order to trigger tax incentives so I just wanted to make sure that was addressed and understood and like I said in the beginning I'm always available to answer questions

Commissioner Nixon asked, can I want to ask a question because I've had people ask me about it the grocery store what's going on with that do you know anything on that. Ms. Smith stated so I was on the periphery of recent conversations that would have been a new build on six acres of green space, it costs a lot of money to build things right now and so previously and I think we brought this up at the County City Workshop there have been two grocers that were very interested in opening here to enhance the grocery store that we already have so separately enhance like we just to provide more alternatives for shoppers because the leakage data and our Market data shows that we're losing at least 30% don't put me on that I'll have to go check my market data but so we're losing a good bit of money that if we could retain it here it would go to our school system through SPLOST and it would come to the county and the city through SPLOST right so Penny sales tax. So, my hope has always been there are two and now there's a third infill opportunity within the city limits that you could walk to on a sidewalk for a grocery store. So I'm working some of those relationships that I had established previously to see what it's going to take because what I was told two years ago is we needed to have more

population so, Chairman Calhoun asked what is the population? Ms. Smith stated in the county right at 6,000 and the in the city it's right at 2,000. One of the variables that does not show up in Colquitt Miller County's Market data is that we have about 900 I think 921 again I'm getting very specifics don't quote me on that it's about 900 folks that come into our county every day to work and then they leave the county border to go home. I've got some other statistics that I can't ramble off the top of my head but if you're interested in knowing who lives here who works here I've got that number and if you want to know who is living here but leaves and opposite of who doesn't live here but works here I can get you that information to so but it's all about building that tax base towards economic enhancement and then there's some placemaking activities, for instance the park there's a really great grant but it's going to take a couple years to actually implement if we are awarded um there's a great grant due next month I've been working with the rec board in order to get those priorities in place so that we can start rebuilding and rehabbing what we have hopefully that would be part of the attraction of coming to Colquitt Miller County to live that we've got a nice green space.

#### **Executive Session**

NONE

Chairman Calhoun stated all right thank you Jayme any other comments anybody else if not I need a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Worsley made motion. Vice Chairman Cox seconded. All in fair. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned.

SIGNATURE PAGE:

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Cristene Edwards, Commissioner – District 1

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Jeff Cox, Commissioner – District 2

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Allen Worsley, Chairman – District 3

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Niki Nixon, Commissioner – District 4

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Ladon Calhoun, Vice Chairman – District 5

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Douglas Cofty, County Manager