

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday, September 11, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., in the Courtroom at the Brooks County Courthouse, located at 100 East Screven Street, Quitman, GA. Commissioners present were: Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell, Vice Chairman; Ms. Myra Exum; Mr. Willie Cody; and Mr. Lee Larko. Others present were; Ms. Jessica McKinney, County Administrator, Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Ms. Kim Daniels, Human Resources; Mr. Jason Kemp, County Attorney; and various residents.

1. PUBLIC HEARING – NONE

2. CALL TO ORDER - Chairman called the regular meeting to order at 5:05pm.

Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance – County Attorney, Mr. Jason Kemp led all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

Amend Agenda – Chairman requested an amendment to the agenda to discuss an ILA for clean up after Hurricane Idalia. Mr. Maxwell made the motion, Mr. Cody seconded, to approve amending the agenda to add under Consent Agenda, Item A, an ILA between the County and Municipalities for cleanup. Vote was unanimous.

Chairman also requested a motion to amend the agenda to add under Invited Guest, SDR, the company contracted for debris removal after Hurricane Idalia, to provide information on the hurricane clean up. Mrs. Exum made the motion to approve the amendment, Mr. Cody seconded. Vote was unanimous.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On the motion by Mr. Larko, seconded by Mrs. Exum, the Board unanimously approved the following minutes:

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| A. Regular Monthly Meeting | August 7, 2023 |
| B. FY2023-2024 Budget Workshop | August 14, 2023 |
| C. Public Hearing – FY2023-2024 Budget | August 23, 2023 |
| D. Special Called Meeting/FY2023-2024 Budget/Millage | August 31, 2023 |

4. INVITED GUESTS – (5 MINUTES)

A. SDR – Director of Quality Insurance, Mr. John Ward – The County has contracted with SDR, a debris hauling company for cleanup after Hurricane Idalia. There are two companies, one for hauling debris and the other one for monitoring. He commended County Administrator, Ms. McKinney and EMA Director, Ms. LaToya Hampton on a phenomenal job for the community. The cleanup is a slow process. Residents need to get their debris to the right of way. The cleanup process began September 7th and is set up at the Business Industrial Park for vegetated grind, chips will be hauled off when done. Mr. Ward further stated they want to be secure for Brooks County to receive the funds from the State and will bring in more units to get it done. Most of the damage and debris is in the southeastern portion of Brooks County.

5. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES & DEPARTMENTS – (5 MINUTES)

A. Brooks County Fire Department – Chief Weeks – Chief Weeks noted that all reports have not been entered due to the hurricane, so there will be more weather-related calls when everything is sorted for the month. Chief also commented that he was impressed with how everyone worked together after Hurricane Idalia.

Provided the report for August 2023 Fire Department and activities:

- Responded to 77 calls for service, 25 trees down, 111 medical calls, 15 canceled or no incident found, 0 structure fire, 3 vehicle fire, 6 power lines down, 6 fire/smoke alarms, one cooking fire, 2 lightning strikes, 3 grass or debris fire, and 9 motor vehicle accidents.
- Training included Air Management, OPAT, and EVOC.
- The engine bay is up and waiting on the Electrician, Cowart Electric, which was scheduled this week, but due to Hurricane Idalia, will not start immediately.
- Lost one Firefighter this month but is in the process of interviewing for a new hire.
- **Update:** Spoken with Chief Yates, Morven Police, regarding the Morven Fire Department's pull out on September 5th, they are making progress and hope to be ready by the end of month; and they still desire an automatic aid agreement. Chief recommended to work with Morven Fire Department as it will be better for everyone to enter into an Automatic Aid Agreement. He will work on preparing a draft and provide to the Board.

B. Brooks County Road Depart – Amy Hart – Provided report for August 2023, Mrs. Hart advised that the report does not include the hurricane cleanup:

- Graded and ditched 230 roads.
- Installed and repaired 8 culverts and driveways.
- Cleaned out 16 pipes and outfalls.
- Received 35 tree calls and 34 Beaver dams.
- Repaired 5 potholes.
- 32 loads of rock, clay, and sand.
- Mowed and side armed 6 roads.
- Rebuilt Coleman Road that had a huge wash out, it looks good.
- Do not have the resources to perform all duties, only have 10 employees.

C. Brooks County 911/EMA – Director LaToya Hampton – Ms. Hampton thanked everyone for their assistance during the hurricane, Mrs. Exum and husband, Mr. Maxwell for food, Mr. Larko for social media, Mr. Cody assisting with trees, and her go to person, County Administrator, Ms. McKinney. Wherever she was needed, she was there, we came together as a team. Food was provided by Second Harvest and donated by Food Lion; shelter was provided at Brooks County School. Three shelters were provided: Quitman Church of God, Morven Baptist, and the Event Center. There were 2,399 power outages for City of Quitman, Georgia Power 154, and Colquitt EMC 60%. Code Red was launched and went from 797 users to 9559 users,

and the Board of Commissioners, Sheriff's Department, Board of Education, and Brooks EMA launched on their page. The estimate for yards of tree debris to be cleaned up is 135,000. The tree debris company began on last Thursday removing trees, immediate clearing started earlier for public safety.

D. Brooks County Board of Education – Millage Rate – The Board of Education set their millage rate necessary to fund the school systems 2023-2024 budget during a meeting held August 31, 2023 at 9:00am. Brooks County Board of Education unanimously voted to lower the millage rate from 13.50 to 12.703 mills.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. ILA with City and Municipalities – This topic was placed on the agenda for the Board to consider whether they want to enter into an ILA with the Cities of Quitman, Morven, and Barwick. City of Pavo has confirmed they will not enter into an agreement. The cities can piggyback on the County's contract with debris removal. Discussion was whether the cities will be invoiced separately or if the County gets the invoice. Discussion also included if the County apply for reimbursement, should the cities be eligible for funds. The contractor can invoice the cities separately or the County can prepare an MOU, or the County can absorb the cost. Mr. Ward, SDR, stated they can do either, bill them or bill the County or the County can cover it all; whatever the Board choose to do. Brooks County was declared state of emergency on September 10, 2023; but can go back to the event period. The Board voted unanimously to pursue an agreement with cities for debris cleanup where the cities reimburse County for services rendered to the cities under the debris cleanup contract on the motion by Mrs. Exum and seconded by Mr. Maxwell.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Planning Commission – Board Appointment – This topic was previously tabled during the July meeting per Ms. Sherry Davidson, Zoning & Code Enforcement, to run the ad in the Quitman Free Press to give potential candidates an opportunity to submit a resume and be reviewed by Ms. Davidson. There were five resumes received: Mrs. Peggy Howard, Ms. Fannie Gibbs, Mr. Jeff Cummings, Mr. Clifford Burton, and Mr. Gary Christian. Mr. Larko motioned to appoint Mr. Clifford Burton, based on his resume, to the Planning Commission, Mrs. Exum seconded. Chairman called for the vote. Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Cody, and Chairman opposed. The vote was 3 to 2. Chairman called for another motion. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to appoint Mr. Gary Christian to the Planning Commission, Mr. Cody seconded. Chairman called for the vote. Mrs. Exum and Mr. Larko opposed. Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Cody, and Chairman voted yes. The vote was 3 to 2.

B. GDOT – Speed Zone Ordinances – Updating Existing Speed Limits – On the motion by Mr. Maxwell the Board unanimously tabled this item, Mr. Cody seconded.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. SGRC Regional Transit – FY2025 Regional Transit Grant Application – Adopt Authorizing Resolution - Administration received notification from SGRC Regional Transit Regular Monthly Meeting

September 11, 2023

Page 3 of 5

advising that it is time to submit the FY2025 5311 Rural Public Transit grant. SGRC is working to prepare the FY25 Rural Public Transit grant application to submit to GDOT so they can continue to provide regional public transit services on behalf of our counties. Unless the County plans to offer public transit services on their own, they need a resolution from the Board of Commissioners. The grant application submission due date is quickly approaching on September 30, 2023, therefore SGRC is asking the Board to adopt an Authorizing Resolution to support SGRC Regional Public Transit. On the motion by Mr. Maxwell the Board unanimously adopted the Authorizing Resolution to authorize SGRC to submit the FY2025 5311 Rural Public Transit Grant to GDOT to continue to provide regional public transit services, Mr. Cody seconded.

B. Tax Assessors Board – Board Appointment/Reappointment – Chief Tax Appraiser, Mr. Wayne Waldron, submitted a reminder to the Board of an appointment to be filled prior to January 1, 2024. Mr. Ralph Manning's term will expire December 31, 2023; he is willing and eligible to accept another three-year term if appointed by the Board. To be consistent with Board appointments, the Board requested an ad to run for two weeks in the Quitman Free Press for the Tax Assessors Board appointment for any citizens that may be interested in serving.

C. Board of Health – Board Appointment – Six Year Term – Toni Brinson - Ms. Patrina Bowles, Brooks County Board of Health, submitted a request to the Board to consider appointing Ms. Toni Brinson to a six-year term. Ms. Brinson currently serves as the Consumer Advocate of Brooks County Board of Health, completing Dr. Telia Cunningham's term, which expired December 31, 2022; Ms. Brinson has been able to attend a majority of the scheduled or rescheduled meetings since her appointment. If Ms. Brinson is reappointed, her new term will expire December 31, 2028. After discussion, the Board agreed to run an ad in the Quitman Free Press for two weeks for any citizens that may be interested in serving on the Board of Health.

D. GDOT – Request for Comments on GDOT Local Bridge Replacement Park Street Candidate Park Street (CS 650) over Jones Creek Tributary – TIER I - Administration received a letter from GDOT to solicit Brooks County's input concerning the potential replacement of the bridge referenced in the table. The County's response is requested by October 31, 2023, confirming support and financial participation for the replacement of this bridge. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be routed when the preliminary engineering activities begin based on the assigned Fiscal Year. A sample MOA is attached for review and details the financial agreement and responsibilities for both parties. County Attorney, Mr. Jason Kemp advised the Board they do not need to decide, but think about the financial assistance commitment (\$75,000 - \$100,000) as to whether the County has the funds, where will funds come from. After discussion of the area where the bridge is, it was determined that the bridge is in the City of Morven. County Attorney stated that is a comment he will kick back to GDOT.

E. Clear Water Solutions Bid Decision – Road Department Contract for Services – The bid submitted by CWS for the contract for services for the Road Department was opened during the special called meeting held August 31st, in the amount of \$2,140,246.82. The County budget amount is \$1,847,872.31, which is a difference of \$292,374. The question was where the funds will come from. County Administrator advised the Board of their options, 1) vote on the contract only for the budgeted amount and negotiate down to the budget, 2) find the balance of the funds, and 3) reject the bid and start over. The Board put on the table for the current Project Manager not to be a part of the Contract. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to approve the contract with CWS as long as it meets the budget amount, and work to reduce the amount, Mr. Larko seconded. Vote was unanimous. The Board unanimously approved the supplemental motion made by Mrs. Exum that the Project Manager is changed before the County accepts the contract, Mr. Cody seconded.

F. Heritage and Candleglow Project – The Board discussed this project stating it is a hit and miss and left in a mess; do not have the workforce. Have spoken with the Engineer in regard to speaking to Reames about a Change Order to complete the road project. The item was tabled on a motion by Mr. Maxwell until the Work Session; and get the information from the Engineer, Mr. Larko seconded. Vote was unanimous.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS – (5 MINUTES)

10. ADMINISTRATION/ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATES

A. County Administrator Updates - None

B. Commissioners Notes/Comments

- **Lee Larko (District 1)** – No comment.
- **Patrick Folsom, Chairman (District 2)** – Sent out prayers and thoughts acknowledging September 11th and asked for a moment of silence.
- **Willie Cody (District 3)** – Thanked everyone for work during the hurricane.
- **Myra Exum (District 4)** – No comment.
- **James Maxwell, Vice Chairman (District 5)** – Thanked everyone for work during the hurricane.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE

12. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Maxwell made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:50 p.m.; Mrs. Exum seconded.

Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman

Ms. Jessica McKinney, County Administrator

Ms. Patricia A. Williams, Clerk