

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday, February 5, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., in the Commissioners Meeting Room, located at the Brooks County Administration Building, located at 610 South Highland Road, 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 Mrs. Jessica McKinney, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; was not present; Ms. Kim Daniels, Human Resources; Mr. Jason Kemp, County Attorney; and various residents.

1. PUBLIC HEARING – Brooks County Historical Board – Resolution to Designate Washington Street Gym as Historic Property (Sign-in Sheet Provided) – Chairman called the public hearing to order at 5:04pm. Dr. Marie Horne, Chairperson for the Historical Board introduced the Brooks County Historical Board members; and provided some history on the gym. Others that spoke on behalf of the Washington Street Gym: Mr. Gary Christian, Mr. Jerry Gilbert, Mr. Melvin DeShazor, Mr. James Huewitt, Sr., Mrs. Cynthia Huewitt, Ms. Mary Henley, Ms. Merita Tucker, Ms. Lavon Spencer Williams, Ms. Ella Smith, and Chairman Folsom. Mr. Cody also spoke on behalf of the gym. Mr. Maxwell stated the building is owned by the Board of Commissioners just as Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church; and we have a budget allocated since it is a Brooks County property.

Mrs. Exum had questions: inquired as to whether there are any other properties in the county that are planned to be named as historical property? The response was not at this time. Where is the funding coming from for Washington Street Gym? The response was that funding will come from Alumni and other interested parties.

Chairman closed the public hearing at 5:30pm.

2. CALL TO ORDER

Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance – Pastor Huewitt led all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On the motion by Mr. Cody, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board unanimously approved the following minutes as read:

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| A. Regular Monthly Meeting | January 8, 2024 |
| B. Special Called Meeting/Work Session | January 29, 2024 |

4. INVITED GUESTS – (2 MINUTES) - NONE

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

A. Brooks County Fire Department – Chief Weeks – Chief Weeks provided report for January 2024 for activities/projects with the Brooks County Fire Department:

- Responded to total of 77 calls for service, 30 medical calls, 17 canceled or no incident found, 0 structure fire, 0 cooking fire, 9 MVA, 4 trees down, fire/smoke alarms 6, grass or brush fire 11.
- **Training:** Driver training, hazmat training.
- **Update:** No new updates.
- **New Projects:** Currently working on preparing an application for the AFG grant for a 3000-gallon tanker.
- Working on an application for the GFSTC Fireworks Grant for 5 sets of turnout gear.
- **Employee Update:** William Jones is back at work as of February 5, 2024, and doing well.
- Ethan Wade is not expected to have surgery, however because of his fractures, he is not expected to be back at work until sometime in April 2024.
- Trevor Kellogg Yocum will be back on light duty starting February 12, 2024, following knee surgery.
- Hired two new employees, starting February 14.

B. Brooks County Road Department Report – David Kress – Provided report for January 2024:

- Hall Road and BCT Gin Road need to dry out. BCT is below ground level. Will be an ongoing issue until completion of fiber installation on the dirt roads.
- Met with Jesse Bush, 12 Stones Engineering, on a couple of projects.
- Met with Mr. Maxwell to discuss Grooverville Road; will bring in 12 Stones Engineering to assist.
- Trying to change the culture to repair roads instead of putting band aids on issues and how calls are routed.
- Mr. Cody stated Old Thomasville Road need culverts; but it still needs to dry before blading.
- Mr. Kress stated he is doing the best he can with the workforce he has at this time.
- Beaver dams are a problem. Mr. Kress will work with the Administrator to start the scope for the RFP -process.
- Mr. Vann reported that all mowing equipment is operating well and will begin mowing again in March.
- 65 roads have been side-armed, has a three-man crew to continue with side arming.

C. Brooks County 911/EMA – Director LaToya Hampton – Ms. Hampton provided an update for January 2024:

- There were 1,584 calls received for services.
- Continuing the interview process for full-time and part-time employees.
- January 21st through January 24th had warming shelter for Brooks County at the Ag Venue.

- Being careful not to disrupt the scene per FEMA for safety purposes, recommending putting up fumigation tent on Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church.
- No money received from FEMA yet for Hurricane Idalia damages, continuing to work on it.
- Brooks County 911/EMA web page will be posting daily safety tips.
- February 5-9, 2024, is severe weather preparedness week.
- No damage reported in Brooks County.

6. CONSENT AGENDA – NONE

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Magistrate Court – Request for Approval of Full Time Deputy Clerk Position – County Administrator presented information from Ms. Kim Daniels, Human Resources, and her conversation with Judge Crosby, regarding a new hire for a full time Deputy Clerk Position. The salary totaled to be \$19,394.00 to be amended in the current budget for this year. This totals out to be \$18.65 per hour, with a total yearly salary of \$38,788.00, that is at \$13.00 an hour pay rate, but when you add social security, holiday, and insurance that is the total salary of \$38,788.00. Judge Crosby previously stated he had excess funds in his budget of \$6,000.00; which brings the remaining total to \$13,394.00. Administrator McKinney recommended the remaining funds to come from the contingency fund. Mr. Cody inquired about the salary difference and long longevity of the two other Clerks in the office and the comparison of their salaries. They are all at three different levels. Ms. Daniels stated she did mention to Judge Crosby to look at the other salaries when hiring a new person. Mrs. Exum made the motion to approve the new full-time clerk position in Magistrate Court, amend the budget in amount of \$19,394.00 and the balance of funding \$13,394.00 to come from the contingency fund. Chairman called for the vote. Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Larko, Mr. Folsom, and Mrs. Exum voted in favor. Mr. Cody opposed. The vote was 4 to 1.

B. County Auditor – County Administrator recommended this discussion during the next budget and an RFP will need to be prepared; and a timeline has been discussed.

C. 2024 LMIG Funding – Designate Funding Source – The 2024 LMIG has been submitted to GDOT. Provided with a balance of accounts, more balanced information is needed; will update the balance and present it to the Board. Administrator will check the balance of the contingency fund.

D. Fire Department – Funding for Wrecked Fire Truck – The insurance company, Travelers, has offered \$175,000 for the total loss vehicle. No payment will be made for a year. The fire truck purchase will be budgeted in the capital line item in the FY2024-2025 budget.

E. Road Department – Services – James Warren – Mr. Warren submitted a bid for \$1,697,004.04. An expenditure report presented by the County Administrator was

reviewed for expenditures for FY2021, FY2022, FY2023, and the seven months we are in the budget to come up with an average spend for materials. The total average spend totaled to \$375,530.19 minus the bid of \$1,697,004.04 (for labor only) is \$1,321,473.85. The Road department budget is \$1.8 million, minus \$100,000 for right-of-way, total Road Department budget is \$1.7 million budget. The Board needs to approve the difference. Per Mr. Warren, the County should purchase materials to get the needed discounts. He will call for the PO's and we will order and pay for the materials; the county controls the material. Mr. Warren has budgeted for 26 people, previously it was 15, and to keep the employees we currently have; this is needed to keep the roads maintained. Will need an additional \$2,077,000.04 for equipment and 26 employees. There is an estimated 30% increase in materials over the existing budget. The County Administrator offered recommendation to pro rate Mr. Warren's rate for the remainder of the year, Mr. Warren agreed. The County Administrator recommended determining where the remaining balance will come from for the \$137,235.02, in addition to current budget, to keep the budgeted amount intact. The funds will need to come from a mix of SPLOST 6, SPLOST 7 or TSPLOST, depending on funding for the new fire truck and whether it will be financed. If that is the case, it can completely come out of SPLOST 7 or TSPLOST, that is where we will need to get the funding. The \$2,077,000.04 will be budgeted next year. Mrs. Exum made the motion to reject the bid; Mr. Larko seconded. Chairman called for the vote. Mrs. Exum and Mr. Larko opposed. Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Cody, and Chairman voted in favor. The vote was 3 to 2.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Brooks County Historical Board – Resolution to Designate Washington Street Gym as Historic Property – Mr. Maxwell made the motion to approve the designation of Washington Street Gym as Historical Property, Mr. Cody seconded. The County Attorney stated the Board approved an Ordinance to declare Washington Street Gym historical property. The Board will ratify the Certificate of Appropriateness at the next meeting. Chairman called for the vote. Mrs. Exum opposed. Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Cody, Mr. Larko, and Chairman voted in favor. The vote was 4 to 1.

B. EMS Proposal – Chief Ricky Weeks – Chief Weeks presented a proposal for Emergency Medical Services. The Fire Department has evaluated the feasibility of providing emergency medical services to Brooks County and the municipalities within. The principal benefits of EMS proposal are to reduce costs, increase effectiveness, and a depth of resources unmatched within the county. The proposal lays out how the Brooks County Fire Department will incorporate the emergency services without increasing taxes and providing a higher quality of service with more staff. The current EMS services provided by Grady EMS is in amount of \$455,000 annually. The proposal from the Brooks Fire Department for EMS is \$276,000 (maximum) with an initial startup cost \$912,500. Chief Weeks stated that the difference they want to make and the cost we will pay will save the county money. No action was taken.

C. Bid Acoustic for the Ag Building Venue – A bid/proposal was presented by Autowave Acoustic Solutions, for acoustics at the Ag Building Venue. They had a visual

Presentation of the proposal. The bid was in the amount of \$110,330. The objective is to improve the acoustics of the main room at the Henry Carr Venue. The visual presented sound absorption panels on the wall and roof. It will take 6-8 weeks to install from start to finish. They also presented how the acoustics will sound. Mrs. Exum requested a copy of the bid. There was no action taken. The Board stated will put on the work session agenda.

D. Beer & Wine Application – Naiya Patel – Arya 1021, LLC – Pineview Grocery – An application for a Beer & Wine License was submitted by Arya 1021, LLC, to sell beer & wine at Pineview Grocery located at 7272 Madison Hwy, Quitman, GA. The Public Notice has been advertised in the QFP, the background check is complete and received by Brooks County with no issues found. Mr. Larko made the motion to approve the Beer & Wine application for Arya 1021, LLC, Pineview Grocery, Mr. Cody seconded. The Board voted unanimously.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS – (5 MINUTES)

A. John Burton – Speak on Behalf of the Sheriff's Department – Mr. Burton had to leave before speaking.

11. ADMINISTRATION/ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATES

A. County Administrator Updates

- Still waiting on Windstream regarding the pole at the Ag Building. We are waiting on Windstream. There is a problem with finding an entry point.
- Congratulations to Mr. Larko on completing Commissioner courses and being certified.

B. Commissioners Notes/Comments

- **Lee Larko (District 1)** – Regarding the Road Contract bid. Was presumptuous about contracting the Road Department, wishing they would have given Mr. Kress more time to run the department throughout the county and get the department time to straighten up.
- **Patrick Folsom, Chairman (District 2)** – No comment.
- **Willie Cody (District 3)** – No comment.
- **Myra Exum (District 4)** – No comment.
- **James Maxwell, Vice (District 5)** – No comment.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Larko motioned to go out of regular meeting into executive session at 7:36pm, Mr. Cody seconded.

A. Personnel

B. Real Estate

No action was taken.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Maxwell made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:01 p.m.; Mr. Larko seconded.

Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman

Mrs. Jessica J. McKinney, County Administrator