

1The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for a Special Called Meeting/Work Session Monday, July 28, 2025, at 4:15 p.m., at the Brooks County Administrative Building, in the Commissioners Meeting Room, located at 610 South Highland Road, Quitman, GA. Commissioners present were: Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman, Mr. James Maxwell, Vice Chairman, Mrs. Myra Exum; Mr. Willie Cody; and Mr. Lee Larko. Others present were Mr. Buddy Johnson, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Ms. Kim Daniels, Human Resources, Ms. Janice Jarvis, Finance Director; and Mr. Jason Kemp, County Attorney, and various residents.

## **SPECIAL CALLED MEETING/WORK SESSION**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

- A. Prayer/Pledge** – Commissioner Cody lead all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

### **II. CONSENT AGENDA – One Motion for Approval on all Items**

- A. Board Approval**
- B. CA027-2025** – Rumbles Copier Renewals (Clerk of Court, Jail, Victim Witness, Sheriff's Office) – Administrator presented copier renewals from Rumbles for Clerk of Court, Jail, Victim Witness, and Sheriff's Office for approval. Mr. Cody made the motion to approve the renewals with Rumbles, Mrs. Exum seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman moved Brooks County Road Department – Kyle Christian, Project Manager up on the agenda from item V (D) under Reports from Committees & Departments due to having to attend another meeting.

**Brooks County Road Department – Kyle Christian, Project Manager** – Provided the Road Department report for July 2025:

During the month of July, the Road Department received 71 work orders and completed 51 work orders. The weather halted most of our pipe installations, but we were able to work on other projects.

- **District 1:** Graded roads, added material where it was needed to fix washouts and build up roads, cleaned ditches and culverts, busted beaver dams, removed fallen trees, and installed new road signs. We installed a new pipe on Howard Road.
- **District 2:** Built up roads, graded roads, cleaned ditches and culverts. We did various clean ups on the roads. Installed a new pipe on Roberts Road.
- **District 3:** Built up roads, graded roads, cleaned ditches and culverts, busted beaver dams, and repaired potholes. Harvested five loads of sand off Price Road.
- **District 4:** Built up roads, grade roads, clean ditches and culverts, busted beaver dams, installed road signs, and added materials where needed for washouts. We installed two driveway pipes on Jamar Trail, one pipe on Hawk, and one pipe on River Run Road. We cleaned out the ditch and canal on Pine Forest Drive and hauled out seven loads of dirt.
- **District 5:** Graded roads repaired and installed signs, beaver dam removals, cleaned ditches and culverts, and added materials to roads. We installed one pipe on Grooverville Road. We harvested 17 loads of sand from Blair Road and four loads of sand from Schmoe Road.

- We continue to clean out ditches and existing pipes as well as installing new pipes where needed and helping water to flow when it rains. We are also harvesting materials so they can be used on other projects. We will continue to keep Brooks County beautiful one road at a time.

Chairman moved Mitch Cothron up on the agenda for Presentations, item IV (A).

**Mitch Cothron – Clay Bank Drive – Request for County to Acquire the Roadway** – Mr. Cothron stated that he is going to build houses on 15 lots in the Clay Bank Subdivision; and would like the Board to consider acquiring ownership of the Clay Bank Drive.

### **III. TOPICS FOR MOTION/DISCUSSION**

#### **A. Becky Rothrock – Tax Commissioner**

- Tax Sale Scheduled for September 2, 2025 – Use of BOC Meeting Room
- Tax Sale – Approval of Receiving Less than Owed on Any Mobile Home that Does Not Sell Tax Commissioner requested Board approval/permission to sell any mobile home that does not sell to try to get as much as she can. This will be on the agenda for the regular business meeting on August 4, 2025.
- Renew Commission Rate Resolution – Mrs. Exum stated the Board should revisit this item each year.
- Discuss Tax Digest/Adoption of Millage Rate – Millage Rate Calendar – Tax Commissioner stated she should have the information needed to update the Board by the regular business August 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Write Off Uncollectable Tax Bills – Several Unknown Property Owners and One (1) Bankruptcy. This topic was placed on hold for further discussion.

**B. Brooks County Public Library** – Mr. Scott Routsong, Director, Brooks County Library, requested the Board's consideration regarding increase funding for the library. The City of Quitman has decreased their funding; in 2019 they provided \$41,000.00. Currently, they are funding \$17,500.00. The Board of Education funds \$60,402.00 yearly and Brooks County \$52,500.00. Mr. Routsong requested an increase from the county and Board of Education (\$75,000.00) and to relieve the city from their funding. He is requesting that the County and Board of Education split the cost 50/50. The State provides \$158,000.00 which is used in conjunction with the supplements from the County, City, and Board of Education. Administrator Johnson stated that the Commissioners would have to approve funds over the budgeted amount. It is not mandated that the County and School must make up for the shortfall. Mr. Johnson suggested the library may need to seek another avenue, such as donations from other sources in the private sector. Mr. Maxwell stated that the County cannot keep picking up the city shortfalls; and made a motion to provide the budgeted amount of \$52,500.00, Mr. Cody seconded the motion stating to keep as is. Mrs. Exum motioned to table it until the August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting for consideration. The motion did not carry. Chairman called for the vote. Mr. Larko and Mrs. Exum voted no. Chairman, Mr. Maxwell, and Mr. Cody voted yes. The vote was 3 to 2.

**C. Coastal Plains CO-OP – Proposal for Fuel Supply** – Representative from Coastal Plains Co-Op presented their proposal for fuel supply for Brooks County. They have provided fuel to the county in the past and would like to get back in Brooks County. The Coastal Plains Farmers Overview presented provided information about the company. They have two locations: Quitman and Barwick. They

serve over 300 members: primarily in Brooks County and serve Thomas, Jefferson, Lowndes, and Echols counties. Provide a variety of products, fertilizer, Ag Chemicals, Fuel, Seed, Farm Supply, and Animal Feed. Provides extremely competitive pricing on off-road diesel, on-road diesel, and non-ethanol unleaded gasoline. The Board was asked to take the proposal into consideration. Administrator Johnson stated he had reached out to the other company; but had not received a response. He is in favor of the local Co-Op for off road motor oil and fuel. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to enter into an agreement with Coastal Plains Co-Op for oil and fuel, Mr. Cody seconded the motion. Mrs. Exum abstained from voting due to a conflict.

**D. Dr. Horne – Opioid Funding Update** – Dr. Horne was not present.

**E. Tower Lease** – The Board was presented the purchase price for the leasehold for cell tower. Administrator Johnson stated he feels we have a better option; there is no room for growth, and it is land locked. The Board has until December to decide whether to purchase. Will place on the August 4<sup>th</sup> agenda for an executive session due to being related to land acquisition.

**F. Applications for Appointments – Development Authority – Two Applicants** - Mr. Jerome Tucker, Executive Director, Brooks County Development Authority, presented two applications for Board of Commissioners approval to fill vacant seats. He has vetted both applications and presented them to the current Development Authority Board members. There are two vacant seats; one appointment is needed from the County and one from the City of Quitman. Mr. Tucker informed the Board of an amendment related to the Development Authority, HB 856, that has been enacted by the General Assembly of Georgia. The Board of Commissioners was unaware of the amendment. The amendment states that seven members will be appointed, two members shall be residents of Brooks County residing within the corporate limits of the City of Quitman, and the remaining five members shall be residents residing anywhere within the geographic boundaries of Brooks County. No action was taken on the Board appointments

**G. Development Authority Budget Appropriations Discussion (Millage Discussion)** - A copy of the 2025 budget for the Development Authority was provided for review and discussion. Mr. Tucker stated they are trying to get their books changed from the annual year to fiscal year; they are trying to coordinate with the Brooks County budget. There was lot of discussion and questions regarding their budget, expenditures and credit card. A copy of their expenses for the last calendar year was requested by Mrs. Exum.

Mr. Larko inquired about multiple budget related issues. Mr. Larko further asked about the status of their bylaws and what the bylaws contained regarding purchasing policies and meeting dates. Mr. Turner, Accountant for Development Authority, was able to say when the meetings were to be held but was unable to answer some questions without reviewing the bylaws. Mr. Larko questioned what process was used to select a contractor for renovations at the DA property. Mr. Turner stated it was voted on by the Board with one abstention. Mr. Larko also inquired about how the vehicle was disposed of. When Mr. Turner began to answer the Chairman intervened with a point of order to keep discussion focused on the agenda item (budget). Mr. Larko stated he would like to call for a public corruption investigation; he feels their actions were not in line with what state statute

compels them to act within. He also requested a copy of their expenses and an itemized credit card statement. After a lengthy discussion, Administrator Johnson recommended setting up a meeting with the Development Authority to get questions answered, and to get numbers from the Tax Commissioner for the millage rate disbursement to the Development Authority. The millage could decrease this year and increase next year. It was agreed upon to set up a meeting for the Board to meet with the Development Authority, County Administrator will get with Mr. Tucker for a date and time.

#### **IV. PRESENTATIONS**

- A. Mitch Cothron – Clay Bank Drive – Request for County to Acquire the Roadway** – This item was moved up on the agenda.

#### **V. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES & DEPARTMENTS**

**A. Brooks County Finance Department – Janice Jarvis, Finance Director** – Provided Finance Director report for July 2025. The Finance Department staff is continuing to work to close fiscal year 2024-2025. On or before September 30, 2025, the FY 2024-2025 books will be updated for a final close and will then be ready to begin the audit process. Most of the prior year's AP invoices have been received and processed; we will continue to process prior year invoices until the books are formally closed at the end of September. We have four departments that are either over budget or in danger of being over budget. Budget amendments/transfers have been created that will bring the department back into compliance. On July 16, 2025, the Board of Commissioners received a direct deposit of \$2,215,319.91 from the Office of the Governor, representing the third reimbursement payment for the cost of damage incurred during Hurricane Helene in September 2024. Prior reimbursement payments total \$337,868.41 bringing the total received to date to \$2,553,188.32.

- **CKH CPAs and Advisors – FY2023-2024 Audit Report** -The CKH Group, Accounting Firm for the County, has completed the annual audit for the year ended June 30, 2024, and was presented by Stephne Kukard and Kyle Heyl. An overview of the audit was provided:
- Independent Auditor's Report included an unmodified opinion, internal control and compliance report. Compliance matters were identified in expenditures exceeding appropriations, significant deficiencies identified, timeliness of financial reporting, audit adjustments, lack of supporting documentation and schedules for grant reporting.
- Overview of Financial Statements – the County's basic financial statements include three components: Government-wide financial statements and Broad overview of all the County's funds. 2) Fund financial statements includes governmental and proprietary funds, and 3) Notes to the financial statements.
- General Fund Budget – overall revenues exceeded budgeted amounts, total expenditures were more than budgeted amounts.
- The major increase in revenue for the 2024 financial year is due to the increase in the grants awarded.
- The major increase in expenses for 2024 financial year is due to the increase in capital project and repair costs.

**B. Brooks County 911/EMA – LaToya Hampton, Director** – Director Hampton provided a report on projects and activities for 911/EMA for July 2025.

- 911 – July calls for service: 2388
- Meeting with the Sheriff with Humane Society
- Lost a Dispatcher but ready to replace, working with HR on applications for replacement.

**Brooks County EMA**

- Good season so far hurricane season. Heat advisory.
- School starts next month will be scheduling meeting with partners about hurricane preparation.
- Still assisting citizens with storm damage from Helene with FEMA and will continue as long as needed. Had Zoning to assist in pictures to send to FEMA.
- Road Department keeping tower cleared and mowed for Mobile Communications repairs
- Completing paperwork for FEMA on Hurricane Irma.
- Received FEMA award for Hurricane Helene.

**C. Brooks County Fire Department Report – Chief Weeks** – Chief Weeks provided an update on activities for the Fire Department from July 2025:

- The Brooks County Fire Department received 69 calls for service from July 1 through July 28, 2025.
- Calls included three structure fires, three vehicle fires, five brush fires, four fire alarms, one controlled burn, one electrical equipment issue, a total of 25 medical calls, nine vehicle accidents, one extrication; 13 canceled/nothing found, one trees were down and three other calls.
- **Structured Fires:**
  - 1607 Blair Road – this is an investigation, the cabin was found destroyed.
  - 117 Oakridge Drive – This was a mobile home fire that started due to a power surge. Quitman Fire Department responded with us.
  - 1214 South Culpepper Street – A structure fire in a two-story house in Quitman, we responded for mutual aid.
- **Training:** We have started Fire Officer 1 Class with 11 students from BCFD and QFD that will test this Friday, water supply class and joint training with QFD.
- **Updates:**
- **Morven:** Spoke with Chief Yates, he reported that Morven has ordered a radio for the 911 Center.
- **East Brooks** – Nothing to report.
- **Employee Update:** we have hired James Weeks as a Shift Captain. He has 10 years' experience in fire service and served in the rank of Captain while working at the State Fire Academy. Absolutely no relation to me; we have never met before this interview.

**D. Brooks County Nutrition Center (Senior Center) – Cassandra Griffin, Coordinator** – the individuals that worked at the Center in the training program that was grant funded, the grant was not renewed, and Mrs. Griffin needs some help with food preparation. The help is needed Monday – Friday from 8:30am – 12:00pm. and she is seeking volunteers for assistance with getting food prep in a timely manner. A suggestion was made that maybe Inmates could assist, temporarily. Another suggestion was to reach out to the Ministerial Association.

## **VI. FORMAL ACTION REQUESTS – Commissioners Discussion with Action**

**A. FA044-2025 – Facilities Agreement Update (Farmers Market) May Table Until Next Meeting, If Necessary** – Administrator Johnson discussed the Farmers Market and seeking input from the Board about the rental fee/cost to use, days and hours of operation, does a vendor need a permit/business license. Ms. Daniels suggested providing separate agreements for county facilities, Farmers Market, Ag Venue, and Courthouse grounds. No action was taken.

**B. FA045-2025 – Bush Hog Scrap Surplus Approval** – Mr. Larko made the motion to approve the Bush Hog Scrap as surplus, Mr. Maxwell seconded.

## **VII. WORK SESSION & NEW BUSINESS**

- Regular Meeting Agenda Review – August 4, 2025 – The Board reviewed/discussed the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Items added:

### ➤ **Administrator Johnson** - Updates (Community and Commissioners)

- New National Opioid Settlement: Alvogen, Amneal, Apotex, Hikma, Indivior, Mylan, Sun, Zydus – we will receive additional information and documentation to sign and return in a few weeks.
- Brooks County DFCS Request – Appointment of the third Applicant, Mrs. Barbara Wilson, to the Board. DFCS allows up to seven (7) members. In the past, they have had a hard time meeting quorum each month.
- Informed the Board that Pavo is conducting their own Planning, no longer using the County.

### ➤ **Commissioners Matters**

- o District 1 –
- o District 2
- o District 3
- o District 4
- o District 5

## **VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE**

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The Board adjourned the meeting at 7:15pm, on the motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Larko.

Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman

Mr. James (Buddy) Johnson, County Administrator

Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk