

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for a Special Called Meeting/Work Session Monday, August 25, 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 (via telephone); 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** – Chairman lead all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

**Agenda Amendment** - Mrs. Exum motioned to amend the agenda to replace Chief Weeks with Emily Brown, under Reports from Committees & Departments, item V(D), Mr. Larko seconded.

#### **II. CONSENT AGENDA – One Motion for Approval on all Items** **Not items for approval**

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

**A. Georgia 4-H AmeriCorps 2025-2026 – Site Agreement – Extension Office** – The Board tabled this topic until the September 8, 2025 regular business meeting.

**B. Regional Advisory Council for Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities – Appointment Needed** – Program Assistant for the Regional Advisory Council notified Administration of the need for a Board appointment for Brooks County; and requested the Board to appoint a Brooks County resident to serve as representative on the Region 4 Advisory Council (RAC). The Board authorized the appointment to be published in the Quitman Free Press.

**C. Development Authority – Appointments** – The Board tabled this topic until the September 8, 2025 regular business meeting on a motion by Mrs. Exum and seconded by Mr. Larko.

**D. Mower Max** – Administrator Johnson informed the Board of the bad shape the current mower is in and of the need for repair. He will have to look into what it will cost and what the service fee cost will be as he does not know the cost. The mower needs to be replaced but holding off until we get the funding. He will get the trade-in value and present it to the Board at the next meeting.

#### **IV. PRESENTATIONS**

**A. Ameris Bank – Jennifer Reese – SVP, Regional Treasury Sales Officer – Discuss Advantages of Restructuring the County’s Depository Accounts Located at Ameris Bank** -Presented to the Board ways to minimize fees and increase earnings on the county’s bank accounts with Ameris Bank. She has met with the Finance Director several times to discuss the options. The ACH credit origination makes business easy by automatically paying invoices with a one-time setup and avoiding the cost of late checks and wire transfers. Positive Pay reduces the chances of check fraud and ACH monitors electronic transactions to catch fraudulent transactions before they occur. Currently, we have nine Public Fund accounts earning 0%, eight Public Fund accounts earning 1.10%, the total combined average balance in 18 accounts is \$4,211,114.00, and the total annual interest earnings is \$41,424.00. We are currently paying \$13,644.00 in annual fees. The proposed earnings will provide 1.00% Earnings Credit Rate (ECR) if the accounts are placed in a net interest checking composite analysis billing structure; and provide 1.30% earnings on excess funds. The combined average balance in eight accounts will be \$4,211,114.00 with total annual interest earnings of \$28,740.00. The ECR of 1.00% would be used toward the offset of fees and would not have any annual fees. The net earned currently is \$27,780.00; with the proposed fees the net earnings will be \$28,740.00. The Board will put this on September 8<sup>th</sup> regular business agenda a Formal Action item.

**C. SGRC – Proposal – Web-based Digital Map (GIS) for Zoning in Brooks County**– Justin Jacobs, SGRC, Regional GIS Coordinator, presented a proposal for a web-based digital map (GIS) for zoning in Brooks County stating it will be a valuable tool for accessing and presenting development information for the county and its cities in a digital format. The primary purpose of the project is to develop a GIS application that will create a comprehensive web mapping site featuring basic County GIS data, providing County staff with access to GIS information. SGRC is proposing to construct an online, interactive mapping site that will display the GIS layers listed:

- Addresses
- Community Facilities (churches, schools, fire stations, etc.)
- City and County boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Zoning, Character Areas, Future Land Use
- Road centerlines, railways
- Wetland, FIRM
- Soils, contours
- Election layers (voting precincts, polling locations, County Commission districts, School Board districts, City Council districts)

There will be a disclaimer on the website to protect Brooks County. SGRC will provide the services for \$1,000.00; the proposal is valid for six months.

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

**A. Brooks County Finance Department – Janice Jarvis, Finance Director** – Provided Finance Director report for August 2025. The Finance Department staff is continuing to work to close fiscal year 2024-2025. Bank reconciliations have been completed and adjusting journal entries have been made to post activity. On or before September 30, 2025, the FY2024-2025 books will be updated for a final close and we will then be ready to begin the audit process. Now the reconciliations are complete, staff will begin reviewing the general ledger and making final entries to close FYE 2024-2025 financial year. The reported reimbursement received from GEMA was not for Hurricane Helene, it was later determined it was an ARPA broadband grant reimbursement for Windstream.

Per the Board's recent decision not to roll back the Insurance Premium Tax funds, Finance Director will prepare a letter to the Department of Revenue that will be included in the Tax Commissioner's digest package stating that the budgeted IPT funds for the FYE June 30, 2025 fiscal year will be used to off-set Highway and Road expenses in the unincorporated areas of the County and to fund a portion of the Brooks County Fire Department's budgeted expenses. Upon completion, the letter will be submitted to the Tax Commissioner and County Attorney for review and approval.

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

- 911 – August calls for service: 1740
- One new hire

### **Brooks County EMA**

- Hurricane Preparedness meeting held August 18, 2025 at EOC
- Departments attended: Brooks SO, Brooks County Fire Department, Quitman Fire Department, Brooks County Hospital, City of Quitman, Clerk of Courts
- Meeting at Coyocan with Brooks County Family Connections
- Generators at shelters and Annex Building and BOE
- Brooks County EMA will be the main vessel for communications in the event of a disaster
- Starlink should be put in the EOC in two weeks
- Phone meeting with long term recovery and VOAD
- All citizens asked to sign up for Code Red

**C. Brooks County Tax Assessors – Wayne Waldron, Chief Appraiser** – Informed the Board of the upcoming Board Appointment expiring December 31, 2025, for Mr. Melvin DeShazor. To remain in compliance with state statues and continued effective operation of the Board, the position must be filled prior to January 1, 2026. Mr. DeShazor has expressed his desire to continue serving for another three-year term. The Board authorized proceeding with publishing a notice in the Quitman Free Press.

**D. SGMC EMS Services – Emily Brown** – Reported data for EMS services for the month of July 2025. A Supervisor has been added due to increase in call volume and has someone available 24 hours, 7 days a week. The EMT class has been completed; there were eight attendees from Brooks County; 7 passed; and one is awaiting the results. Another class will start next year.

Total Requests for EMS	273	Transports to Northview	6
Total Transports -	189	Transports to Tallahassee Memorial	1
Transports to Archbold	38	Mutual Aid requested by Brooks County	12
Transport to SGMC	82	Mutual Aid requested by Other Counties	4
Transport to Brooks	52		
Transport to Colquitt	6		

**Brooks County Fire Department Report – Chief Weeks** – Chief Weeks was not present but provided a report of activities for the Fire Department from August 2025.

- Received 70 calls for service from July 29 thru August 25, 2025
- Four structure fires, 28 medical calls, one vehicle fire, 11 vehicle accidents, two brush fires, no extrications, three fire alarms, 15 canceled/nothing found, no controlled burns, 2 trees down, there were two electrical equipment issues, for other there was two.

### **Structure Fires**

2838 Dewey Road – this was an investigation; the chicken manure storage barn was destroyed when it was discovered.

330 Forest Lane – a single-story house fire that was started by a gas water heater, the structure had heavy damage in the attic, but the main structure was saved with most of the belongings.

82 Bay Meadow Circle – this was a fully involved storage shed fire, total loss.

2141 Hickory Head Road – this was a double wide mobile home that the front porch caught on fire and extended into the attic and one room. The structure and the belongings were saved.

**Training:** Completed the Fire Officer 1 class and are testing on September 5th. We also did fire suppression training and disoriented firefighter training.

**Updates:** Morven and East Brooks – nothing to report.

**Employee Update:** The full-time firefighter that was hired last month resigned today and we are searching for a replacement. We have removed several part-time firefighters from

our roster because of their failure to work within the last month. We are in the process of hiring more part-timers.

**E. Brooks County Public Works Department Report - Kyle Christian - Project Manager –**  
Provided the Road Department report for August 2025:

- During the month of August, the Road Department received 52 work orders and completed 79 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 new pipes on Edmondson Road and Barlow Lane and repaired potholes on Tallokas Road and Ione Road.
- **District 2:** Built up roads, graded roads, cleaned ditches and culverts. Performed various clean ups on roads. Installed a new pipe on Webster Road. Repaired potholes on several roads.
- **District 3:** Built up roads, graded roads, cleaned ditches and culverts, busted beaver dams, and repaired potholes. We Performed extensive work on Old Thomasville Road and did a driveway extension.
- **District 4:** Built up roads, grade roads, clean ditches and culverts, busted beaver dams, installed road signs, repaired potholes, and added materials where needed for washouts. Also cleaned out the creek channel on Rizer Road and built bulkheads.
- **District 5:** Graded roads repaired and installed signs, beaver dam removals, repaired potholes, cleaned ditches and culverts, and added materials to roads. We harvested 38 loads of sand off Schmoe Road. We also harvested 40 loads of sand off Blair 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.

Mrs. Exum discussed the closure of BCT Gin Road and the Board of Education, not being aware of the closure on the first day of the school year causing confusion. Communication between the Road Department, EMA, and Board of Education's Transportation Department was discussed.

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

- A. FA054-2025** – On the motion made by Mr. Larko, seconded by Mr. Cody, the Board unanimously approved the signatures for the new account at Ameris Bank for the Historical Society.

County Attorney Kemp provided information to the Board on HB 223, and it will be on the agenda for September 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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

- Regular Meeting Agenda Review – September 8, 2025 – The Board reviewed/discussed the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Items added:
- Georgia 4-H Americorps Site Agreement
- Development Authority Board Appointments
- Ameris Bank – Restructure of Depository Accounts
- Solar Committee – Solar Ordinance Update
- HB 223

☐ **Administrator Johnson** - Updates (Community and Commissioners)

### **☐ Commissioners Matters**

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5

## **VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE**

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The Board adjourned the meeting at 5:37pm, 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