

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for a Special Called Meeting/Work Session Friday, February 21, 2025, at 3:00 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 Larko lead all in attendance prayer and pledge of allegiance.

II. CONSENT AGENDA – One Motion for Approval on all Items – NONE

On a motion by Mrs. Exum, seconded by Mr. Larko, the Board unanimously approved to amend the agenda to add Item B Litigation and Item C Personnel to the executive session.

III. TOPICS FOR MOTION/DISCUSSION

- **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Moratorium** – County Attorney, Jason Kemp, presented information to the Board regarding Battery Energy Storage Systems and adopting a temporary moratorium to promote public health, safety, and welfare. He advised the Board there is a lot of information to be considered. A moratorium can be adopted in case the Board is considering adopting an ordinance; that will allow time for fact finding. Mr. Kemp stated they do not have to ban BESS; but can regulate it. Applicants will come before the Board on a case-by-case basis, as that is what most counties are doing. Mrs. Exum suggested reaching out to other counties in the State and seeing what they are doing; we need more information. Mr. Larko made a motion to vote on the BESS Moratorium for six months. Chairman called for a second once, called twice, and called for a second for a third time. The motion died for lack of a second. The Board agreed to discuss and decide at the March 3rd regular meeting.
- **Ordinance to Prohibit the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** – The Board did not vote for the Ordinance to Prohibit Battery Energy Storage Systems. The ordinance will protect the people and property in Brooks County.
- **Alcohol License Application & Fees** – Attorney Kemp provided a copy of the current Alcohol Ordinance and a draft copy of an Ordinance to Amend and

Supplement Section 6, Article II, of the Brooks County Code Related to the Sale of Distilled Spirits in Brooks County. The current ordinance only applies to beer and wine in the package and by the drink. The Board needs to decide how they want to regulate and set the fee. The Applicant will come before the Board when an application is submitted. Mr. Larko made the motion to sponsor the ordinance amending the current code. After discussion, Mr. Larko withdrew his motion. The Board agreed on further discussion and more information.

- **FY2023-2024 Audit/Auditor - Auditor Engagement Letter** - CKH CPAs & Advisors submitted an engagement letter for services for the component units for the FYE June 30, 2024. The letter states they will audit the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, etc., which collectively comprise the basic financial statements, of Brooks County, for the year ended June 30, 2024. Administrator Johnson recommended Attorney Kemp review the Auditor Engagement Letter and bring to the regular meeting on March 3, 2025.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

- ☐ **Monica Myles - U.S. Small Business Administration - Hurricane Helene** -Ms. Monical Myles, Public Affairs Specialist, Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience (ODR&R), U.S. Small Business Administration, appeared to inform and provide information to inform the community that they can still apply for a low-interest rate disaster loan as the result of Hurricane Helene. The deadline was February 7th, but can apply during the SBA's 60-day grace period which ends April 8, 2025. Ms. Myles stated that homeowners, renters, businesses of any size, and Non-Profits in the county can apply for an SBA low-interest rate loan. The maximum loan amount is up to \$500,000 for real property disaster loans for homeowners, \$100,000 for personal property disaster loans for homeowners and renters which includes: furniture, clothing, automobile, etc.

V. FORMAL ACTION REQUESTS - Commissioners Discussion with Action - NONE

VI. WORK SESSION & NEW BUSINESS

- Regular Meeting Agenda Review - March 3, 2025 - The Board reviewed/discussed the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Items added:
 - FY205-2026 Budget Calendar
 - Abandonment Process - Marlo Road
 - Bess Moratorium
- ☐ **Administrator Johnson**
 - **Bridge Discussion - Hickory Head Bridge over Piscola Creek** - Administrator Johnson informed the Board about the bridge at Hickory Head

Road Bridge over Piscola Creek and a quote submitted by Watkins & Associates. Administrator Johnson advised that he is going to request funding assistance from GDOT. If the bridge is not repaired, it will be closed. The quote is in the amount of \$479,948.00.

- **Hammond Road – Crack Issues – Pipe Concerns** – Scruggs is working on this project. They will take out and repave; once that is completed, the pipe concerns will be addressed.
- **Flashing Lights Update** – Project Manager, Kyle Christian, is working on the flashing lights on Johnson Short Road, finding the best option and cost.

☐ **Commissioners Matters**

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

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The meeting was closed to go into executive session at 4:19pm on a motion by Mrs. Exum, Mr. Larko seconded.

- A. Real Estate – no action taken
- B. Litigation Updates – Attorney Kemp updated the Board on pending litigation
- C. Personnel – no action taken

Executive Session adjourned and returned to the special-called meeting, on a motion by Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Larko seconded.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the meeting at 5:06pm, on the motion by Mr. Larko, seconded by Mrs. Exum.

Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman
Mr. James (Buddy) Johnson, County Administrator
Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk