

**Minutes of Public Hearing
Elbert County Board of Commissioners
November 14, 2022**

Discussion and approval of a request by Eric Armour to rezone 6.83 acres from I (Industrial) to GB (General Business). Property located at 1062 Old Middleton Road, Elberton. Map: 042, Parcel: 016

There were no public comments.

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Chairman Lee Vaughn called the meeting to order, Present were Chairman Vaughn, Commissioner David Hunt, Commissioner Casey Freeman, Commissioner Chris Alexander, Commissioner Kenneth Ashworth, Commissioner Freddie Jones, County Administrator Phil Pitts, County Attorney Bill Daughtry, CFO Macie Witcher, County Clerk Tamara Butler.

After the Pledge to the United States flag the invocation was given by Mr. Daughtry.

Adoption of the Agenda. Chairman Vaughn asked for a motion to amend the agenda with the following changes and additions: Move Public Comments to beginning of the meeting and add:
10b) Discussion and Approval of an abatement for the Solar Farm in Bowman
10c) Discussion and Approval to move Animal Control from the Sheriff's Department
10d) Discussion and approval of a grant for the Transit Program
10e) Benisha Koene to address the Board regarding Romney Drive
10f) Discussion and approval of an increase of funds to the Chamber of Commerce from Hotel/Motel tax
10g) Discussion and approval of bids for playground equipment for Bobby Brown Park.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Adoption of the Minutes of October 11, 2022. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to adopt the minutes. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Public Comments. There were no public comments.

Discussion and approval of a request by Eric Armour to rezone 6.83 acres from I (Industrial) to GB (General Business). Property located at 1062 Old Middleton Road, Elberton. Map: 042, Parcel: 016. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve this rezone request. Planning and Zoning approved this application. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and approval of bids for installation of drywall at the new Fire Department building. Mr. Bobby Howell stated only one (1) bid was received. That bid was from DTP Drywall, Inc. for \$23,500. Since this bid fell under \$25,000, there is no vote required.

Discussion and approval of bids for the old Health Department building, the old 4-H building and the land across from the old 4-H building. Mr. Howell stated one (1) bid was received for each of the properties. For the old 4-H building, Becky Hitchcock with the Elberton 12-County Fair put in a bid for \$100,100. For the 3.88 acres across from the old 4-H building; Ms. Hitchcock also put in a bid for \$30,100. For the old Health Department building; Williamson Sintyl put in a bid for \$6,056. Mr. Daughtry stated for the old Health Department building; we can approve subject to approval from the City Council with them receiving one-half and us receiving one-half of the amount. On the old 4-H building, the buyer would have to give the tenants (The American Legion) 60-day notice unless she wants to keep them as tenants. Mr. Howell and Chairman Vaughn stated Ms. Hitchcock has advised us that they can stay and we can continue to store items for the 4-H program in the building. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the bids received for the properties. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement between Elbert County, The City of Elberton and the City of Bowman for the distribution of the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) for the next ten (10) years beginning January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2032. The current distribution percentages are Elbert County 66%, Elberton 29% and Bowman 5%. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve this IGA. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and consideration by the Board regarding use of the Uncommitted Balance of the ARPA Funds. Commissioner Jones asked that this item be tabled until the December meeting; as he thinks some people did not know “when to speak up” regarding the issue of these funds. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion to table the item. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and approval of a request by Chuck Almond to discuss renewal process to request bids for a Debris Management Plan (disaster debris removal proposal). Mr. Pitts stated that Mr. Almond has asked for approval to go ahead with seeking bids and will put out by our Emergency Management Agency directly. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and Approval of an abatement for the Solar Farm in Bowman. Chairman Vaughn stated that the Development Authority has approved a Solar Abatement request by the new solar farm in Bowman. He stated that it is a much improved from the first solar abatement that was done a couple of years ago. Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and Approval to move Animal Control from the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Allen Hulme read from a proposal he made if Animal Control were to move from under the Sheriff's Department supervision. It is his understanding that most issues have been resolved. Some items from his proposal are to make it a separate department, have a dedicated phone line for that facility, have a job description and operating procedures in place, accept volunteer workers and partner with Granite Country Animal Partners and work closely with the Elbert County Health Department. As of this date; the facility is still shut-down by the State until all issues are resolved. Chairman Vaughn asked for a motion to move Animal Control under the supervision of the County Administrator's office and Code Enforcement. Commissioner Hunt made the motion; Commissioner

Jones seconded the motion. The motion failed by 3-2; with Commissioner Freeman, Commissioner Alexander and Commissioner Ashworth opposing.

Discussion and approval of the 2024 Grant Application for the Section 5311 Program Formula Funds for Rural Transit. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve this grant application. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Benisha Koene to address the Board regarding Romney Drive. Ms. Koene stated that she was not aware of the road being changed to Romney Drive; until she came home and a new sign was up. She stated that her residence is the only one on that road. Chairman Vaughn stated that Mr. Daughtry would do some research and he or Mr. Pitts would be in contact with her.

Discussion and approval of an increase of funds to the Chamber of Commerce from Hotel/Motel tax. Mr. Daughtry stated we have been requested to provide additional financial funding for the Chamber of Commerce. We have provided them with 40% of our hotel/motel tax collections. They have requested an additional 10% which would amount to an increase of \$1500 to \$1700 per year. The City of Elberton has also agreed to increase their funding. Commissioner Alexander asked that we get a financial report from them quarterly. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve this additional funding to the Chamber. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and approval of bids for playground equipment for Bobby Brown Park. Chairman Vaughn stated the park staff has raised a considerable amount of money in the last few years to put in a playground area. Chairman Vaughn asked for a motion to allow Mr. Howell to put out bids for playground equipment and installation; and any remaining amount that would be needed to finish the project will come from the Hotel/Motel tax fund. Commissioner Alexander made the motion. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Finance Report. Ms. Witcher stated General Fund was under budget. General Fund revenues were \$338,160 more than last month. SPLOST AND TSPLOST are in good shape.

Adjournment. Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.