

MINUTES  
ELBERT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MONDAY, AUGUST 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2013

Chairman Tommy Lyon called the meeting to order. Present were Chairman Lyon, Vice-Chair Horace Harper, Commissioner Harold Reynolds, Commissioner Chris Alexander, Commissioner Kenneth Ashworth, Commissioner Freddie Jones, County Attorney Bill Daughtry, County Clerk Judy Vaughn, County CFO Phil Pitts and County Administrator Bob Thomas.

After the Pledge to the United States Flag the invocation was given by Commissioner Jones.

**Adoption of agenda.** Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0. Chairman Lyon then called for a motion to amend the agenda by adding "Approval of a Resolution allowing Barrow County to become a member of the Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia" under 13A. Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to approve the amendment to the agenda. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**Adoption of minutes.** Commissioner Reynolds made a motion to adopt the minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**Rev. John Barnette to address the Board of Commissioners regarding the Granite City Cook-off.** The cook-off will be held on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. This will be the 6<sup>th</sup> year for the cook-off. Rev. Barnette is looking for participants or sponsors. Chairman Lyon told Rev. Barnette that the commissioners will make a personal donation of \$15 each, as they have in the past.

**Approval of a resolution to re-appoint the following members to the Elbert County Planning Commission: Thomas Jackson, Rodney Daniel, Robert Whitworth and Earl Davis.** These appointments will be for four year terms, and each member is in agreement to continue to serve on the Planning Commission Board. Commissioner Harper made a motion to approve the re-appointment of these four members. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**Approval of Jeff Dickerson to serve on the Elbert County Fire Board.** This recommendation is brought to the Commission Board by the Elbert County Fire Board. If approved, Mr. Dickerson will start serving on the Fire Board August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the appointment of Jeff Dickerson to the Elbert County Fire Board. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**Recognition of the new Class 4/9 rating for the Elbert County Fire Department.** County Administrator Bob Thomas stated that the Elbert County Fire Departments (all volunteers) have worked for years to achieve this rating. They have put in many hours after their normal work days. Chief Rick Mewborne has worked closely with the ISO to complete each step that was required to attain a PPC of 4/9. This rating plays an important part in the underwriting process of insurance companies. All of Elbert County property owners should get lower insurance prices because of this 4/9 rating. This new rating places Elbert County in the top ten per cent of the United States. Athens Tech is working with surrounding County Fire Chiefs to set up a training program for those interested in becoming a fireman/firewoman.

There will be a scheduled weekend for the participating fire chiefs to help teach this training program.

**Review and approval of a land swap with Concord Methodist Church on Harmony Road.** The property involved in the swap is across the road from Concord Methodist Church. The Clarks Junction Fire Department does not have legal access from Harmony Road. This land swap will allow that. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the land swap with Concord Methodist Church. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**First Reading and review of a “Social Media Policy” to be incorporated with the Elbert County Personnel Policy.** County Administrator Bob Thomas requested County Attorney Bill Daughtry to come up with this type policy for Elbert County. Many employees are using various types of social networking while on the job. This is prohibited while on the job, and by having this policy in place, we can legally enforce what our employees are allowed to do while they are working. Only if directed by a Department Head can an Elbert County employee post anything through the County. A Second Reading of this policy will be on the September agenda.

**Discussion regarding the use of the Armory Auditorium, additional needs of the facility and a possible funding application from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).** The second phase of work on the Rock Gym is close to completion. At this point, the Rock Gym is turned over to Elbert County. Mr. Thomas has been approached by several people with options for use of the Gym. He is especially interested in his meeting with some individuals representing Savannah River Productions, Inc. They want to have seven or eight plays in the Rock Gym. Some of these plays will include dinner. In order to have plays in the Rock Gym, we will have to invest in curtains, seating and a sound system. There will be about \$30,000 left over after the construction is complete. There is a grant we can apply for through the Appalachian Regional Commission to help with this venture. It will be a 30/70 match, with Elbert County having to cover the 30%, and for this we can use the \$30,000. There is a pre-application that has to be submitted by August 15<sup>th</sup>, and Mr. Thomas is requesting approval to move forward with the pre-application. Commissioner Jones made a motion to give Mr. Thomas permission to submit the pre-application to ARC. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**Discussion and approval of funding for Economic Development and a proposal for financing a spec building.** There are no buildings available in Elbert County at this time for any prospective industry to move here. The lack of good jobs is the main reason so many young people are not settling in Elbert County. They are moving to other areas to live and work. Chairman Lyon stated that we have to promote Elbert County by providing something that will attract them back to their hometown. He said that Caterpillar is locating in Athens, and they are to have some “feeder” stores in surrounding counties. They want these other stores to be within fifty miles of Athens. Also, DOT is committed to complete Hwy. 72 from Athens to Elberton. If we can get a building built, there is a good possibility of one of those stores being in Elbert County. The City of Elberton is backing the Hailo building, and cannot help with another one. The only option we have of raising the money for a spec building is by increasing the millage by one mill. Before the millage can be adjusted, we have to hold three (3) public hearings to allow the public the opportunity to speak on this issue. Chairman Lyon is asking for a motion for approval to hold three public hearings. Commissioner Harper made a motion to approve holding the three public hearings to get the public’s feedback on this issue. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**Discussion about “Information Meetings” scheduled at the Elbert County Fire Departments in August and September.** These meetings are for the public and will be for discussion on any topic that is brought up. Chairman Tommy Lyon, County Administrator Bob Thomas and any commissioners that can attend will be there to answer questions and discuss what is currently going on in Elbert County. The scheduled meetings are listed below:

August 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Bowman Fire Department
August 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Sweet City Fire Department
August 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Rock Branch Fire Department
September 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Centerville Fire Department
September 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Fortsonia Fire Department
September 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Ruckersville Fire Department
September 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Longstreet Fire Department
October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2013	6:30 – 7:30	Headquarters Building – Mahoney St.

**Approval and adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Participation of Barrow County in the Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia.** Each county participating in the Joint Development Authority has to adopt a resolution to allow another county to begin participation. It is in the best interest of every county to have more participation. The more counties that belong to the Joint Development Authority give us a stronger voice as a whole. Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the participation of Barrow County in the Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

**Financial Report given by CFO Phil Pitts.** Mr. Pitts informed the Board that one of our auditors, Dan Walker, was present for today’s meeting. Mr. Pitts further stated that they are diligently working on the audit. E-911 continues to look good – a little better than break even at this time. Solid Waste continues to be a challenge. There has not been a lot of revenue in the first month of our new year. Fines have been good, and charges for services have remained about the same. We are down in property tax collections, which is usual this time of year. Phil is continuing to work on ways to improve the audit process to be of help to the auditors.

**Public comments on agenda items.**

Jerry Hewell addressed the Board and asked that they consider hiring security when they rent the Rock Gym.

**Adjournment.** Commissioner Harper made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.