

MINUTES
ELBERT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 2011

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

After the Pledge to the United States Flag, the Invocation was given by Chairman Lyon.

Adoption of agenda. Commissioner Jones made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 4-0. (Commissioner Eaves not in attendance)

Adoption of minutes for monthly meeting November 14th, 2011. Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to adopt the minutes as read. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 4-0. (Commissioner Eaves not in attendance.)

Recognition of Commissioner Kenneth Ashworth and Commissioner Freddie Jones for having successfully completed training to become certified commissioners through the Association of County Commissioners. Chairman Lyon presented Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Ashworth with a plaque recognizing their achievement in becoming a certified county commissioner. He also noted that Commissioner Reynolds needs only one more class to complete his training.

Representative Tom McCall and Senator Bill Jackson to appear before the Board to discuss the State of Georgia's legislative session starting in January, 2012. Senator Jackson was unable to attend the meeting. Representative McCall addressed the Board and informed them that legislative sessions start the second Monday in January. They have forty (40) days to pass a balanced budget. They have had to cut the budget, as we all know, but people still expect the same services, which is pretty much impossible. He feels that there will not be any salary increases next year. They are looking at doing away with the State portion of taxes on manufacturing. There are many more issues to be discussed. The T-SPLOST is still on the primary ballot, but it could be put off to the November ballot. This takes a regional vote; not state-wide. Tax reform is still up in the air, because of the way it has been presented by the State. The Criminal Justice Department feels that people who committed minor offenses should not stay locked up. There are too many people in State prisons. There is an Education Reform Package being worked on, but at this time it is not clear how much change there could be. He encouraged all in attendance to visit the Capitol and him.

Chip Rousey to appear before the Board to discuss Solid Waste. Mr. Rousey opposes a new landfill, just as he opposed the incinerator two years ago. He said that we still have time left to take our garbage elsewhere, and he feels that we should continue to do this as long as we can. He asked the Board not to do a "Host Agreement". He also feels that Mr. Thomas, Commissioner Eaves and Chairman Lyon should not be on the committee because of conflicts. He thinks ordinary citizens should be involved with this. Chairman Lyon told Mr. Rousey that the Host Agreement comes in the beginning, then public hearings have to be held and last a

vote is taken at a commission meeting. County Attorney Bill Daughtry told Mr. Rousey that the committee will ask that meetings be held with the public in attendance.

Presentation of a proclamation honoring all Elbert County Fire Fighters and their contribution to the citizens of our county. Mr. Thomas read the proclamation and presented it to Chris Alexander, who is a Fire Board member. We are very lucky to have such good and dedicated fire fighters.

Representatives of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Ricky Rich and Spencer Moore, to appear before the Board. Spencer Moore, Department Director of the Governor's Office, addressed the Board. The purpose of his visit was to recognize Sheriff Barry Haston for excellence in traffic safety on behalf of the governor's office. In October Sheriff Haston went to Chicago to accept the award for third place in traffic safety in the United States, as well as Brazil and Canada.

Approval of expenditures from SPLOST Funds for equipment on the four new Sheriff's vehicles that were purchased in September, 2011. The equipment bought was to equip the four new cars in order to put them on the road. The purchase of new cars was voted on by the people of Elbert County to be paid for with SPLOST funds. Chairman Lyon asked the Sheriff to include the equipment needed for the car along with the vehicle purchase next time. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the equipment purchase. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0. (Commissioner Eaves had arrived by this time.)

Request from Brenda and Tracy Graham to close a small portion of Fork Creek Circle cut-through road. They own both sides of the roadway. This portion of Fork Creek Road is a cut-through between Fork Creek and Allen White Road. It is used as a shortcut. The County does not have right-of-way on this cut-through, but we have prescriptive easement. We will have to advertise and hold a public hearing before closing this road. Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to proceed with advertising. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Revision to increase the architectural services contract with Lord-Aeck-Sargent for \$24,450 because of an increase in grant money awarded for the Elbert County Conference Center. An additional \$300,000 was awarded, and the State Fire Marshall has required a wheelchair lift to be added to the project. We will be revising the current contract to include a wheelchair ramp. Elbert County is only the sponsor for this project. We have spent no funds on this project. Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to amend the contract to include the amount of \$24,450 for the architectural services. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Request to amend Claude Ray Ford's personal property tax returns for 2009 and 2010. The revision is due to an error in inventory tax calculation. In 2007, Claude Ray had \$168,000 inventory return. In 2008, there was no return. In none is filed, it reverts back to the previous year. In 2009, there was a different auditor, and showed an inventory return of over \$1,000,000 – which was wrong. This was an error by the CPA. None was filed in 2010. They want this amended to \$130,811. There will be no refund; still more to collect. Commissioner Eaves made a motion to amend the property tax returns for 2009 and 2010 for Claude Ray Ford. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Bid opening and approval of the purchase of two vehicles for the Senior Center to be used to distribute “Meals on Wheels” lunch. Money will come from SPLOST Funds. The Senior Center was awarded \$40,000 for vehicles and equipment. Mrs. Rebecca Stephens, Center Director, got three bids on Hondas from three different dealers, and the lowest bid was \$42,000 (\$21,000 each) from Phil Hughes Honda. The Senior Center will pay the \$2,000 difference. County Administrator Bob Thomas recommends the low bid from Phil Hughes Honda. Commissioner Harper made a motion to approve Mr. Thomas recommendation. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Bid opening and approval to purchase a new ambulance for the EMS Department. Money will come from SPLOST Funds. EMS Director Chuck Almond sent out four proposals to bid. He received one back. He sent out two packages: Package 1 was for F350 Ford and a 3500 Chevrolet. Package 2 is for International and Freightliner. They would both need 45 to 60 days to complete. The larger trucks are much more expensive. The bid he received is for an ambulance similar to the ones he has now. It was received from Emergency Vehicle Sales in the amount of \$119,993, and he would like approval to accept this bid in order to stay in line with what he has. Mr. Almond is also requesting approval to apply for a Trauma Fund Grant in the amount of \$72,000, which can be used on this vehicle. Commissioner Jones made a motion to accept the bid from EVS in the amount of \$119,993 and to approve Mr. Almond applying for the Trauma Fund Grant to help defray the cost of the ambulance. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Appoint two commissioners, county attorney and county administrator to review and meet with Sweet City Landfill, LLC on a proposed Hose Agreement for a potential landfill in Elbert County.

Commissioner Reynolds made a motion to table this decision on appointments to the January, 2012, meeting. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Approval of a 2012 Beer and Wine License for Scenic View Country Club, 1325 Bowman Hwy. All requirements have been met in order to approve this license. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approval the license for Scenic View Country Club. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Request for an unfunded intern position for Spring Semester of 2012 thru ACCG Georgia County Internship Program. He/she will be used for updating county website, revising/updating employee policy manual, record retention and management program, public information programs for county departments on Elberton Net. Mr. Thomas informed the Board this is a ten week program with 20 to 25 hours each week. Before any further discussion, Commissioner Eaves requested going into Executive Session on this item, due to a phone call he received. Chairman Lyon asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session after the Public Comments. Commissioner Eaves made a motion to include an Executive Session. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion Carried 5-0.

Approval of the following appointments to the Board of Tax Assessors:

Mr. Jim Purcell 4 years
Mr. Horace Baker 3 years

Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to approve these two appointments. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion regarding RR crossings in Elbert County and the excessive blockage of these crossings by train cars. There are times when train cars block crossings for two to three hours. This prevents citizens from getting to their homes in some cases. Thirty to forty-five minutes is not uncommon at all. The railroad is controlled by Federal laws, which take precedence over any others. This makes it hard or almost impossible for us to do anything. The only thing we can do is get the name of a contact person that will try to work with us on this problem.

Schedule two public hearings in January, 2012, for review of proposed Zoning

Ordinance. It is important that we have these two hearings and get zoning in place. This has been worked on for a long time. Mr. Thomas suggested holding one hearing on January 19th, 2012, and the other on February 2nd, 2012. They should be held around 6:00 p.m. in order to allow the public to attend. The February meeting could be held in Bowman.

Finance Report given by CFO Phil Pitts. At this time, we are 1.6% under budget. The Road Dept. is up some, but some of those expenses can be paid from SPLOST. Mr. Pitts will get with Mr. Thomas to go over the expenditures and see where they can make changes. Charges for services are in good shape. At the end of December, we will get a good 6 mos. view on where we stand on property taxes. The auditors hope to have the audit ending 6/30/11 completed by the end of the year.

Public comments. Tracey Rousey wanted to thank the Board for taking the time to compile a committee for the proposed landfill discussions. She wants to see both sides come up with a Host Agreement. She also thinks this decision should be put on a ballot for the citizens to make. Chip Rousey addressed the Board and commented that the Sheriff's Department seems to be patrolling better in the area where he owns property.

Executive Session for personnel (On Item 18). Commissioner Jones made a motion to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Eaves seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Harper made a motion to come out of Executive Session and return to General Session.

Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

There was no action taken. Please revert back to Item 18 for completion.

Request for an unfunded intern position for Spring Semester of 2012 thru ACCG Georgia County Internship Program. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the intern position. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

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