

Minutes
Elbert County Board of Commissioners
April 8, 2024

Chairman Lee Vaughn called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioner David Hunt, Commissioner Casey Freeman, Commissioner Chris Alexander, Commissioner Mike Scoggins, Commissioner Freddie Jones, County Administrator Allen Hulme, CFO Macie Witcher, County Attorney Bill Daughtry, County Clerk Tamara Butler and media.

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 to add 20a) Discussion and consideration to approve the Victim's Assistance Fund grant and 20b) Discussion and consideration of a Moratorium on Poultry Houses. Commissioner Scoggins made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Adoption of the Minutes of March 11, 2024. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to adopt the minutes of March 11, 2024. Commissioner Scoggins seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Zoning case file: 037 009B. A request by Ted Ankerich to rezone 1.54-Acres from R1-Single Family Residential to A-Agricultural. In addition, 1.54-Acres of Parcel: 037 009 from A-Agricultural to R1-Single Family Residential. This is to allow for a land swap. Located at: Coldwater Rd. Elberton, GA 30635. Motion to approve 5-0. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Zoning case file: 074 030. A request by Joshua Williams to rezone approximately 2.50-Acres from RR-Rural Residential to R1-Single Family Residential. Located at: 1318 Lincolnton Hwy. Elberton, GA 30635. Motion to approve 5-0. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Scoggins seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Zoning case file: 045 007B. A request by Alejandro Covarrubias to rezone from GB-General Business to RR-Rural Residential. Located at: 2550 Indian Hill Rd. Elberton, GA 30635. Motion to approve 5-0. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Zoning case file: 043E 006. A request by Chris Smith to rezone from RR-Rural Residential to A-Agricultural. In addition, parcels: 043E 005, 043E 004, 043E 003, 043D 002 from R1-Single Family Residential to A-Agricultural. This request is to allow for the parcels to be combined. Located at: 1912 Sunrise Ct. Elberton, GA 30635. Motion to approve 5-0. Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

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Zoning case file: 027 005. A request by Jamison White to rezone from A-Agricultural to RR-Rural Residential. Located at: Holmes Rd. Elberton, GA 30635. Motion to approve 5-0.

Commissioner Scoggins made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Zoning case file: 059 025. A request by James Thomas to rezone from RR-Rural Residential to R1-Single Family Residential. This request is to allow for the property to be split. Located at:

2747 Gregg Shoals Dr. Elberton, GA 30635. Motion to approve 5-0. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Zoning case file: 020 063A. A request by Marvin Childs to rezone from R1-Single Family Residential to A-Agricultural. This request is to allow the property to be combined with adjoining property. Located at: 2132 Saddler Rd. Elberton, GA 30635. Motion to approve 5-0.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Reading of a Proclamation celebrating the 100th year anniversary of the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Daughtry read the Proclamation commemorating their 100th year anniversary, citing the many valuable services they provide to the citizens and businesses of Elbert County. Chairman Vaughn presented the plaque to Rebecca Long of the Chamber of Commerce.

Discussion and consideration of a request from Jim-Ree Museum for a donation of \$2,500 to help offset expenses of their annual Juneteenth festival to be held Saturday, June 15, 2024.

Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the \$2,500 donation to the Jim-Ree Museum; funds to come from Hotel/Motel Tax fund. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and consideration of a request from Sheriff Melvin Andrews to purchase two (2) new vehicles. Funds to come from SPLOST. Darren Scarborough addressed the board asking for two (2) vehicles. He stated the prices have increased and by next year they will increase substantially. The two (2) vehicles equipped will be \$112,178. These are Ford Explorers and will be purchased from Wade Ford. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the purchase from Wade Ford. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and consideration to issue a letter of commitment to the City of Elberton to pay up to \$300,000 to extend the sewer main to the new 4-H building. Mr. Hulme stated the sewer main will need to be extended from the elementary school and the SEPA building down Athens Tech Road to get to the new 4-H Center and will include engineering fees, labor and equipment. The City of Elberton is requesting a letter of intent for the project. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the letter of commitment. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

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Discussion and consideration of a request from Jimmy Webb to allow movies/films to be filmed at Bobby Brown Park. Mr. Jimmy Webb addressed the board stating that Georgia is becoming a major player in the movie industry. Lions Gate Films is located in Douglasville and Athena Studios is located in Athens with a \$600 million project on a 45-acre campus. He's asking that we look into registering Elbert County as a film location. He said that it would be ideal to be on the Georgia Film Trail, bringing in tourism, etc.

Discussion and consideration to allow the County Administrator to search for an organization to revise our zoning map to add Ag Intensive zoning. Mr. Hulme stated that Planning & Zoning wanted us to consider Ag-Intensive zoning after going through and looking at our Commercial Poultry House ordinance. He is working on something else that might work out better than Ag-Intensive zoning. The item failed for lack of a motion.

Discussion and consideration of bids from grading contractors for the new 4-H building. Mr. Bobby Howell stated the lowest bid received was from Superior Grinding and Grading for \$66,000. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the bid from Superior Grinding and Grading. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and consideration of the reappointment of Donna Wood as the Democratic Representative to the Board of Elections. Chairman Vaughn stated we found out from the Election Board they needed to look at the by-laws and state law ; therefore, this item will be on next month's agenda.

Discussion and consideration of the updated Drug and Alcohol policy for Elbert County Transit. Mr. Daughtry stated this is a state-mandated policy that the State DOT has imposed on all drivers and employees of Elbert County Transit. The most significant changes have to do with prescription meds. If it is an impairing substance, the employee would have to get a letter from their doctor stating it is safe for them to drive. The second change is if there is reason to request a drug test, then a transit employee would drive the subject to the testing site. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the updated Drug and Alcohol policy for Elbert County Transit. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and consideration of the Federal Fiscal Year 2024 VOCA Grant award for Victim's Assistance. Ms. Witcher stated this is a Federal pass-through grant the County receives each year for Victim's Assistance; and there is no requirement that the County provide matching funds. Commissioner Scoggins made a motion to approve the FY 2024 VOCA Grant. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and consideration of a Moratorium on Poultry houses. Chairman Vaughn stated he realized that the reason for most of the people in attendance was due to what was going on with poultry houses on Limo Road. Planning and Zoning have been discussing what to do and what changes need to be made. There is nothing that can be done about the existing poultry houses on Limo Road; but we can make changes to prevent it from happening in the future. He

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stated the changes they would like to make will take until the July meeting before they are in effect; he recommends putting a moratorium in place to prevent people from rushing in and making applications before the changes can be made. He stated "we do not take a moratorium lightly and have never had one for as long as I can remember". "It is serious, because we are telling one industry what they can and cannot do; and we want it to be as quick as it can. By law we can take up to 6 months, but we only want to go to the July meeting". Commissioner Scoggins made the motion to approve a county-wide moratorium. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Chairman Vaughn asked if there was any more discussion. Mr. Daughy asked if this is not for applications within 2 miles of the city limits, but for any application; which Chairman Vaughn replied, "county-wide, no poultry house applications will be considered until the July meeting". No applications will be accepted; but pending applications will be processed. Commissioner Jones asked for a clarification of what a moratorium is. Chairman Vaughn stated is basically means we need to "take a break" until we get changes made to the ordinance. He went on to say that our current ordinance did not mention anything about being within the city limits. He said we definitely want to implement a 2-mile radius; no one can build a poultry house within 2 miles of the city limits. Mr. Daughy stated we are required by law to be very specific with the purpose that necessitated a moratorium, therefore he stated the purpose as "recent construction and operation of commercial poultry houses in areas of the county with a higher population density, where property owners do not anticipate construction and operation of commercial poultry houses in close proximity to their residences". Chairman Vaughn stated there will be public hearings to hear input from the community before changes are approved. Having received a motion from Commissioner Scoggins and a second from Commissioner Jones to approve the moratorium, the remaining commissioners voted in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

Angela Jones and concerned citizens of Thornton Drive, Whites Chapel Road, Ward Drive, Lena Drive, Limo Road and surrounding areas to address the Board concerning the proposed poultry houses to be built. There were many in attendance to speak about the poultry houses in their neighborhood. Mr. Mac Hughes, Ms. Angela Jones, Ms. Donna Wood and Mr. John Clark all spoke of their concerns and the problems they face.

Finance Report. Ms. Witcher stated are still operating under budget thru March. The General Fund budget expenditures are right under \$39,000 less than this time last year. The 2023 SPLOST is starting to build up with a balance of \$1.1 million thru March. TSPLOST is also building up with a balance of \$1.4 million thru March. Hotel/Motel taxes are still in good shape with a balance of approximately \$22,000.

Public Comments. Mr. Jimmy White from the Jim Ree Museum thanked the board for their support.

Adjournment. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Hunt. The motion passed unanimously.

