

Called Meeting
Elbert County Board of Commissioners
Thursday, June 27, 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. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Public Comments. Max Black stated last year he pointed out many examples of excessive budgeting. He stated other counties run more efficiently and effectively and less costly. He addressed Animal Control's proposed budget and the medical contract for inmates.

Discussion and consideration of the Proposed FY2025 Budget. Mr. Hulme stated the over-all budget for General Fund is \$15,981,825. Special Revenue Funds are \$5,162,550, Capital Project Funds are \$9,935,840, Enterprise Funds are \$1,798,000. For a total of \$32,878,215. We are estimating an approximately \$200,000 increase in the tax digest. A slight increase in LOST (Local Option Sales Tax) of approximately \$184,000. We will be losing a couple of one-time revenues. Gas and diesel will now be allocated to each department so that we will be able to track the use better. Overall, there is a budget increase of \$224,935, only a 1.4% increase. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the FY2025 budget. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Hulme stated when he accepted the Administrator's position 15 months ago, we were behind in our audits. He said that as of today we are fully DOAA compliant. We are now eligible for grants, which includes LMIG funding of \$1,665,011, with our match of \$223,315 that we will invest back into our county road system. He thanked the staff and department heads for their dedication and commitment. He said it is our goal to stay in compliance with the DOAA so that we can start seeking grants that will help make more improvements to our county.

Discussion and consideration of a request by Chuck Almond to seek bids for a new ambulance. Production estimated at 24 months. Mr. Almond stated he would like to move forward and seek bids for another truck as the estimated production time is 24-months. Funds to come from SPLOST. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the request to seek bids for an ambulance. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and consideration of a request by Chuck Almond to amend the EMS Transfer Policy/Guidelines. Mr. Almond stated that on March 11, 2024 he came before the Board to ratify an administrative policy that was in place that we do a limited number of hospital-to-hospital transfers for Elbert Memorial Hospital that would include six items considered emergencies. He stated that we are to the point now that we cannot do any more inter-facility hospital transfers effective August 12, 2024. He said that while EMS is a licensed ambulance service, their obligation is to answer 911 calls. He went on to say that the paramedic pool is

smaller than ever and we have lost several key paramedics. He also stated that EMH used to be a 52-bed acute care facility, and now is a 25-bed critical access facility; which he informed everyone at that time that the transition would create more transfers. He went on to say that once his department's number of trained paramedics increase and resources are stable, he will consider providing the transfer service again in the future. Commissioner Hunt made the motion to approve the request by Mr. Almond to amend the EMS Transfer Policy. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commission Freeman. The motion passed unanimously.