

WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD

MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2013 AT 4:30 P.M.

The White County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Monday, January 28, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. in the Grand Jury Room of the White County Courthouse. Present at the meeting were: Chairman Travis Turner, Commissioner Terry Goodger, Commissioner Lyn Holcomb, Commissioner Edwin Nix, Commissioner Craig Bryant, County Manager Michael Melton, Finance Director Vicki Mays, and County Clerk Shanda Murphy.

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Pastor Jeff Groves of The Bridge Church provided the invocation.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to adopt the minutes of the Regular Meeting held January 7, 2013.

Mr. Frank Riley, Executive Director of the Chestatee Chattahoochee Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) presented information to the Board of Commissioners regarding opportunities for 319 Grants (designated for efforts to reduce storm water runoff pollution) in White County. He stated the program was federally funded until a year or so ago when federal funding was discontinued and they became a standalone non-profit. Mr. Riley stated verbal approved had been received on funding for a 319 project on Town Creek in White County – which would focus on steam bank restoration along the Tesnatee Creek. He stated their organization was available to seek funding and administer grants for any of these type projects that the Board of Commissioners were interested in for White County (Equip through NRCS, Disaster Preparedness, Firewise etc.).

Ms. Margaret McLean, Director of Corporate Communications for Babyland General and Ms. Melissa Leitzsey, President of the White County Chamber of Commerce presented details regarding the Georgia Mountains Art & Soul advertising / marketing campaign. Ms. McLean explained that a co-op was developed for the purposes of promoting White County through the organization that receive contributions from the County Hotel / Motel Tax Proceeds. She also expressed the co-op's vision for sponsoring a Georgia Mountains International Game Fair / Downton Abbey Banquet. She stated that additional funding / sponsorship from the County may be requested at a later time.

Mr. Melton explained that the County had been able to purchase a new ambulance using Trauma Commission Grant Funds and since the County did not maintain, own, or operate ambulances in accordance with the County's contract for emergency medical services – the County needed to lease this ambulance to Northeast Georgia Physician's Group, Inc.

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Upon a motion made by Commissioner Nix, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to approve the addendum to the White County Emergency Medical Service Agreement with Northeast Georgia Physicians Group, Inc. as well as the lease agreement for the 2012 ambulance to be used by White County EMS.

A tax release application filed by Ms. Michelle O'Malley was presented to the Board of Commissioners for consideration. This tax release application was in reference to a home located at 122 Charter Hill Cleveland, GA – which was completely destroyed by fire on January 24, 2012. Ms. O'Malley was requesting tax release for the 2012 tax year related to the home which was a total loss due to the fire.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Goodger, seconded by Commissioner Nix there was a unanimous vote to grant the tax release filed by Michelle O'Malley for property located at 122 Charter Hill – with the tax release being applied to the building value only (\$29,350.00) and with the release being calculated at a proration of eleven-twelfth's (11/12) or ninety-two percent (92%) of the tax year; thereby requesting that a revised tax notice be sent to Ms. O'Malley which would reduce the taxes collected on the building value to one-twelfth (1/12) or eight percent (8%) for the 2012 tax year and until the structure is rebuilt.

Chairman Turner stated that Mr. Michael Carter, who had been recently appointment to the Board of Assessors, had resigned due to potential conflicts of interests regarding his business plans.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Nix there was a unanimous vote to appoint Mr. Roy Johnson to the White County Board of Assessors for the remainder of a three (3) year term to expire December 31, 2015 (as previously held by Mr. Michael Carter).

Mr. David Murphy, Director of Public Safety, made a presentation to the Board of Commissioners regarding the White County Volunteer Firefighters (see attached). This report reviewed the number of volunteers on roster since 2009, the training / response records of volunteers who had left the department in 2012, reasons for volunteers leaving the department, and the number of personnel assigned to each station / total incidents for 2012. He explained that White County was in partnership with Oconee County in compiling information from across the State regarding incentives provided to volunteers and he was processing an internal survey as well in order to obtain recommendations on improving the volunteer program. Mr. Murphy noted that volunteer recruitment and retention was on a decline nationwide and there was a drastic difference in incentives offered to participants in this type of program. He stated his current recommendation, based on the information he has gathered during the past thirty (30) days as Public Safety Director, is to increase the per call fee paid to the volunteer firefighters from \$10.00 per call to \$15.00 per call, with this being retroactive to November 1, 2012 when the new compensation cycle begins. Mr. Melton stated that he had reviewed the information presented with Mr. Murphy at length and although there was still a lot of work to be done in evaluating the status of the Fire Department and assessing the Volunteer Program; he thought the increase in per call pay was an immediate action that would benefit the volunteers and the Department.

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Upon a motion made Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to increase the pay per call amount for the volunteer firefighters retroactive to call responses from November 1, 2012.

Commissioner Bryant asked for a status update on the park equipment approved for the Leaf Community Park and about the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) Fire Station location study. Mr. Melton stated the park equipment had been ordered and was in the process of shipping and that he would have some preliminary information from the GMRC on the study by March 1, 2013.

Chairman Turner expressed the Board's appreciation to the volunteers for the service they provide to White County.

Mr. Doug Dockery, Public Works Director, stated the 2005 Grade-All had short circuited and the computers were blown. He was requesting authorization to have the equipment repaired by WW Williams with repairs to cost \$8,564.86. He indicated that funds were available in the current budget for these repairs.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Nix, seconded by Commissioner Bryant there was a unanimous vote to approve repairs to the 2005 Grade-All in the amount of \$8,564.86 by WW Williams.

Ms. Vicki Mays, stated that \$39,000.00 was in the fund balance from FY 2012 in Title I Funds and she would need the Board of Commissioners approval to move those funds into the Road Department Budget for FY 2013. She indicated these funds were restrict for road maintenance and were normally used by the Road Department to purchase gravel.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Holcomb, seconded by Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to approve the movement of the FY 2012 Title I Funds (Roads) from the FY 12 fund balance to the FY 2013 Budget. This amount is approximately \$39,000.00.

Mr. Melton reviewed the three (3) proposals reviewed for design and landscape services for the downtown park project to be located behind the White County Courthouse. Proposals were received from JM Smith (\$33,000.00), Foothills (\$37,405.00), and B&C Studio (\$35,000.00). Mr. Melton and Commissioner Goodger both stated their recommendation would be to award the project to JM Smith Engineering.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Holcomb, seconded by Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to award the contract for Design & Engineering Services for the Downtown Park Project to JM Smith Engineering in the amount of \$33,000.00 to be paid from the Hotel / Motel Tourism Product Development Funds.

Mr. Melton stated that he did not have any update on the status of the conveyance of the Hulsey Road Lift Station to the City of Cleveland. He indicated that he and the County Attorney were still working on this issue with the City of Cleveland.

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Ms. Vicki Mays, Finance Director, presented the monthly financial status report for December 2012 (see attached).

Mr. Tom O'Bryant, Director of Community & Economic Development, provided the Board of Commissioners with an update on the Economic Development brochure being created by the Development Authority in order to inform prospective business of the incentives available in White County which at this time are mostly State provided incentives in addition to the Level 1 Freeport Exemption offered by the County. However, if the need to compete for a business arose there would be a need to come back before the Commissioners in order request local incentives in order to be competitive. Mr. O'Bryant indicated there were funds for the printing of this material in the County Economic Development Budget.

Chairman Turner announced the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Board approved the Intergovernmental Use Agreement with the County for the 1,000 acre property for a period of fifty (50) years. He stated this was an excellent opportunity for the County to have access and utilization of this property; however a great deal of planning is needed before the County can open the property to the public and no funds had been allocated at this time. Commissioner Goodger stated that this opportunity added to White County's future potential. Commissioner Nix stated that the required trout mitigation for the reservoir on the property had been completed by the White County Water Authority.

The Board reminded of the previously requested "dirt road paving priority list" and asked that this information be sent to them as soon as possible. Mr. Dockery stated he needed some guidance from the Board regarding right of way requirements for the paving of the dirt roads. There was discussion regarding not requiring right of way and Mr. Dockery stated it was difficult to pave a road, provide for adequate drainage, and maintain a road if it is paved ditch to ditch.

Chairman Turner opened the floor for citizen participation.

Ms. Debbie Gilbert, White County News asked about the spelling on the new sign at the Tax Commissioners Office.

Mr. Neil McLean asked if it would be possible to utilize the 1,000 acre leased property for the Georgia Mountains International Game Fair, which Ms. McLean spoke of. Chairman Turner stated this was a possibility.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Nix, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting.

The minutes of the January 28, 2013 Regular Meeting is hereby approved as stated this 4th day of March, 2013.

WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

s/Travis C. Turner
Travis C. Turner, Chairman

s/Terry D. Goodger
Terry D. Goodger, District 1

s/Lyn Holcomb
Lyn Holcomb, District 2

s/Edwin Nix
Edwin Nix, District 3

s/Craig Bryant
Craig Bryant, District 4

s/Shanda Murphy
Shanda Murphy, County Clerk