

Minutes

Dodge County Board of Commissioners

July 6, 2015

Present: Dan McCranie, Chairman
William T. Howell, Vice-Chairman, District 1 Commissioner
Terry Niblett, District 2 Commissioner
Brian Watkins, District 3 Commissioner
Karen Cheek, District 4 Commissioner

Also Present: John Harrington, County Attorney
Bobby Peacock, County Manager
Nancy Gail Rogers, County Clerk

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, July 6, 2015, in Suite 101 of the Dodge County Courthouse Annex. Vice-Chairman Howell addressed those assembled and said Chairman McCranie was on his way and the start of the meeting would be delayed.

Upon his arrival Chairman McCranie called the meeting to order and apologized for his tardiness. After he led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag, Commissioner Cheek gave a devotional and Commissioner Watkins led in prayer.

Elected Officials/ Department Heads

Chairman McCranie recognized Charles Williams, Interim President of the Eastman/Dodge County Chamber of Commerce, who addressed the board with good news of receiving a check for the current rent of the spec building. He also asked the board to consider funding for the financially strapped library system. He proposed that the city and county fund the Development Authority to purchase the Mercer building at a cost of approximately \$1,250 per month each. He said a replacement for Mercer University was being sought and he would keep the board abreast of any developments. Commissioner Niblett asked if a tenant was found would that reduce the county's payment to the Development Authority. Williams said that any payments would pass through to the city and county at one hundred percent (100%). Commissioner Cheek asked for how long and Williams replied for ten (10) years or until a suitable tenant was found. He also said the Memorandum of Understanding stated that if the property is sold anything over the cost would be divided proportionately between the city and county. Commissioner Howell made a motion to fund the purchase through the Development Authority with participation from the City of Eastman with the library system being the recipient of the funds. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to approve.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman McCranie called for any additions, corrections, or deletions to the minutes of the regular meeting held on June 15, 2015, and presented to the board in printed form.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve seconded by Commissioner Niblett. All voted in favor of approval.

Old Business

A. Hospital Board Appointments

Chairman McCranie made a motion to table the hospital board appointments until the next meeting. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to table.

B. Patrick Sapp

Sapp told the board that he wanted to address the dumpster issue on the north side of the county between Friendship Methodist Church and Antioch Baptist Church. He referred to a warranty deed with restrictive covenants executed by his great grandfather and said he was asking for a vote on the relocation of the dumpsters. County Attorney Harrington said the restrictive covenants allowed the property to be used for other county purposes and that left the matter open to interpretation. Sapp contended that he wanted a vote and answer on the matter within thirty (30) days. He also suggested the county needed private management of trash collection.

C. Karen Cheek

Commissioner Cheek addressed the Confederate flag issue and her sincere belief that it was created and dedicated to honor those in a terrible conflict and the simple purpose was to pay homage to those who participated in this war. She said the focus of the board should be on jobs, hunger, the dropout rate, teenage pregnancy and not this reoccurring issue. She said it was her desire that the people of Dodge County decide and that may be a moot point given that Georgia law says you can't take down the flag. She made a motion to let the people decide the issue of flying the flag on the 2016 ballot. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion in order for discussion and asked the county attorney if it was a legal maneuver. Attorney Harrington said the flying of the flag was subordinate to the laws of the State of Georgia. Chairman McCranie called for a vote with Commissioner Cheek voting yes and Commissioners Howell, Watkins, and Niblett voting no.

New Business

A. Approval of Accounts Payable

Chairman McCranie asked if there were any questions concerning the Accounts Payable checklist. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to approve seconded by Commissioner Howell. The vote was unanimous to approve.

B. HOGARC Aging Advisory Committee Appointments

Chairman McCranie referred to a letter received asking for the reappointment of Calvin Yawn and Prentis Thomas, Jr. effective July 1, 2015. County Manager Peacock said he had talked with Yawn and he was willing to serve. Commissioner Watkins asked when the term expired and Peacock answered June 30, 2015. Commissioner Watkins made a motion to table until the next meeting to see if there was interest in serving. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion and all voted in favor of the motion.

C. Family and Children Services Board Appointment

Chairman McCranie referred to another letter from the Department of Family and Children Services stating the term of board member Robin Peacock expired June 30, 2015 and a successor should be appointed within ninety (90) days. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to table seconded by Commissioner Cheek. All voted in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Reports

There were no reports from the Commissioners.

County Manager Report

The county manager had nothing to report and there were no questions.

Public Comments

John Battle commented on his opposition to the Confederate memorial and flag.

Doris Adams commented on the recent tragedy in Charleston, South Carolina.

Patrick Sapp stated he was directing his comments to Commissioners Niblett and Howell and he would like a response within thirty (30) days.

Harry A. Hand, Sr. commented on his opposition to the Confederate flag.

Kenneth Crooms made comments in support of the Confederate flag.

Oliver Hodge commented on the accused shooter in Charleston, South Carolina and his support of the Confederate flag.

Adjourn

Commissioner Howell made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Commissioner Niblett. The vote was unanimous to adjourn.