

**Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Dodge County Board of Commissioners
Monday, December 20, 2021**



Commissioners Present:

Dan McCranie, Chairman
Sharon Cobb Flanagan, District 1
Terry L. Niblett, Vice-Chairman, District 2
Brian Watkins, District 3
Karen Cheek, District 4

Also Present:

John P. Harrington, County Attorney
Conner Bearden, County Manager
Kimberly Smith-Parkerson, County Clerk

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting at the Dodge County Pearl Bates Courthouse Annex at 6:00 p.m. on **Monday, December 06, 2021.**

Chairman McCranie called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to amend the agenda to add an Executive Session for personnel and legal matters after the approval of the minutes. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to amend the agenda for an Executive Session. Commissioner Cheek seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the agenda was amended.

Next, Chairman McCranie led the Pledge of Allegiance. Then, Commissioner Cheek gave a devotion from the Gospel of Luke entitled "Fear Not." Afterward, she led the invocation.

Elected Officials/Department Head

A. Michael Johnson – EMS Update

EMS Director Michael Johnson reported December's cash-per-call at \$345.28. Also, the HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) grant was awarded in the amount of \$48,621.96 based on CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) claims from Jan 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020.

Also, Manager Bearden presented an EMS request for portable radios for the EMS employees. Currently, the department has six radios, and 15 additional radios were requested in the amount of \$13,335. Also, Bearden requested a vehicle radio for the EMS Director's truck, which totaled \$980. The total SPLOST request was for \$14,315. County Manager Bearden reported \$1.7 million available in the 2013 SPLOST.

Commissioner Flanagan approved the request for EMS radios from Georgia Two-Way. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion. All voted favorably, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

December 06, 2021 – Regular Meeting

Commissioner Niblett made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on December 06, 2021, with no additions, corrections, or deletions. Commissioner Watkins seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Executive Session

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:11 p.m. to discuss personnel and legal matters. Commissioner Niblett seconded. All voted agreeably and the motion passed.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to return to regular session at 6:33 p.m. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Old Business

A. Redistricting Map

County Manager Bearden reported the redistricting map, which was drawn by the State's Reapportionment Office, had an error. The map included Dodge State Prison's population in Chester, and as a result, was in violation of the one-person, one-vote act. Therefore, a new map was presented without the prison population.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to proceed with the new redistricting map, without the Dodge State Prison's population, and to have a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. before the first meeting in January. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

B. Personnel Policy Resolution Amendment

County Manager Bearden presented a personnel policy resolution amendment, and explained the following in detail:

- Addition of Social Media Policy
- Structure to the Grievance Policy
- PTO (Personal Time-Off) Implementation (replaces sick and vacation) which stipulates maximum rollover hours at 240
- Critical Care Bank for Immediate Family Care (not allowed as payout)
- Sets Professional Appearance Standards
- Defines Sexual Harassment and Establishes a Sexual Harassment Policy
- Establishes Performance Reviews Annually
- Implements Substance Abuse Policy
- Standardizes Forms
- Updates Seatbelt and Hands-Free Policy as Required by Workers' Comp Insurance

Commissioner Niblett made a motion to approve the personnel policy resolution amendment. Commissioners Flanagan and Watkins seconded. All voted in agreement, and the motion passed.

C. T-SPLOST – Phase I Supplement

Manager Bearden explained that patching for the damage by the County on Eagle Drive Road was bid locally. One bid was received from Graham and Studstill in the amount of \$7,500.00 for 2-inch thick asphalt. Commissioner Watkins made a motion to accept the bid and move forward with the repairs. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The motion passed.

D. Exchange Bank

County Attorney Harrington updated the Board on the late fees for the 2020 ad valorem taxes regarding Exchange Bank. Attorney Harrington couldn't confirm the Tax Commissioner's Office had sent a new bill after the Tax Assessor had processed the appeals. Attorney Harrington's recommendation was to waive the late charges due to the documented lack of communication between the Tax Assessor's Office and the Tax Commissioner's Office. Going forward, Attorney Harrington advised the Tax Assessor's Office to send any changes to the Tax Commissioner's Office, and the Tax Commissioner's Office should issue a new bill.

Commissioner Cheek made a motion to waive the late fees for Exchange Bank. Commissioner Flanagan seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business

A. Approval of Accounts Payable

Commissioner Flanagan questioned the \$95,823.36 payment to Dodge County Hospital on the first page of the check list report. Manager Bearden informed the Board the payment was for jail medical from July 1 to November. The Hospital had never invoiced the County for services rendered. However, Bearden also told the Board, the Sheriff had given the County a check for \$149,000 to offset that payment.

Also, Commissioner Flanagan asked about the \$18,000 paid to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission. Manager Bearden noted the payment was for the Hazard Mitigation Plan. But he expected reimbursement from FEMA in the amount of \$24,000.

After no further questions, Commissioner Flanagan made a motion to approve the Accounts Payable Check List totaling \$240,056.48. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

B. FY 2022 Dodge County Budget

Manager Bearden informed the Board he had received a letter from the Dodge County Eastman Development Authority which informed the County it would no longer need to make payments for the spec building.

Commissioner Niblett made a motion to approve the FY 2022 Dodge County budget. Commissioner Flanagan seconded the motion. All voted agreeably, and the motion passed.

C. New Year's Holiday

County Manager Bearden requested Friday, December 31st be observed as the New Year's Holiday for County employees. Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve the holiday request. Commissioner Cheek seconded the motion. All voted yay, and the motion passed.

D. Dodge County/City of Eastman Work Sessions

Manager Bearden informed the Board that City Council Chairman Buddy Pittman had contacted him last week for joint work sessions between the City and County. He asked the Board to consider dates in March.

E. Board of Public Health Appointment

Commissioner Flanagan made a motion to reappoint Mike Grenade in the term of the Advocate for the Needy, Underprivileged, or Elderly on the Dodge County Board of Health. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion. All voted agreeably, and the reappointment was granted.

F. Recreation Board Appointments

Manager Bearden presented three applications for the Recreation Board – Cody Sheffield, Kenton Haley, and Paula McCain.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to open nominations for Cody Sheffield's position on the Recreation Board. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion. All voted in agreement, and the nomination was opened.

Commissioner Watkins nominated Cody Sheffield. Commissioner Niblett seconded the nomination.

Commissioner Cheek nominated Paula McCain. Commissioner Flanagan seconded the nomination.



With no other nominations, Commissioner Watkins made a motion to close nominations. Commissioner Niblett seconded. All voted in agreement, and the nominations were closed.

In favor of Cody Sheffield, Commissioners Watkins and Niblett raised their right hands. In favor of Paula McCain, Commissioners Flanagan and Cheek raised their right hands. To break the tie, Chairman McCranie voted in favor of Paula McCain. Paula McCain was appointed to the Recreation Board by majority vote.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to open nominations for Kenton Haley's position on the Recreation Board. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion. All voted in agreement, and the nomination was opened.

Commissioner Watkins nominated Kenton Haley. Commissioner Cheek seconded the nomination. With no other nominations, Commissioner Niblett made a motion to close nominations. Commissioner Watkins seconded. All voted in favor, and the nomination was closed. Kenton Haley was appointed by acclamation.

G. Board of Tax Assessors Appointment

Manager Bearden informed the Board that Madison Kirkley turned in a resignation for the Board of Tax Assessors effective December 31, 2021. Due to minimal applications, and some forthcoming, Manager Bearden asked to table the appointment. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to table the appointment. Commissioner Watkins seconded the motion. All voted agreeably, and the appointment was tabled.

H. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Flanagan gave an update on cyber security and available monies for broadband to rural areas.

County Manager Report: Conner Bearden

- Manager Bearden updated the Board regarding the Timber Harvesting website by the Georgia Forestry Commission, which should be fully functional in 19 months.
- Manager Bearden also updated the Board on the jail medical contract. At the Sheriff's request, Bearden consulted with Southern Correctional. Commissioner Cheek volunteered to be on a committee for choosing the jail medical provider/

Public Comments

None presented.

Adjournment

With no further business to address, Commissioner Watkins made a motion to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Commissioner Niblett seconded; all voted in favor, and the meeting adjourned.



Attested:

Kimberly Smith-Parkerson, County Clerk

Approved:

Dan McCranie, Chairman