

**Dodge County Board of Commissioners
Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.**



Commissioners Present:

Chairman Dan McCranie
Sharon Cobb Flanagan, District 1
Kelly Belflower, District 2
Brian Watkins, District 3
Vice-Chair 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 Monday, October 16, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. with Chairman McCranie presiding. He called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Cheek gave a devotion from Psalm 23, entitled "Do You Know the Shepherd?" and led a prayer.

Executive Session

Commissioner Flanagan made a motion to enter an executive session at 6:03 p.m. to discuss legal matters and land acquisition. Commissioner Watkins seconded. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

Commissioner Flanagan made a motion to return to the regular board meeting at 6:42 p.m. Commissioner Cheek seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Elected Officials/Department Heads

Manager Bearden gave the fire report in the absence of Fire Chief Jamey Wilkinson. He reported 64 calls in September with no structure fires.

Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes – October 02, 2023 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Belflower made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes with no amendments. Commissioner Cheek seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Old Business

A. Tax Matter – China Hill Church

Attorney Harrington reported penalties in the tax matter were not due to a mistake from the tax assessor's office but standard late fees. Commissioner Belflower made a motion to follow standard procedures and not waive penalties. Commissioner Flanagan seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business

A. Approval of Accounts Payable

A motion was made by Commissioner Watkins and seconded by Commissioner Belflower to approve the accounts payable report totaling \$115,122.70. All voted in favor and the motion passed.



B. Mental Health Resolution

The Chairman called for consideration of a resolution providing for continued efforts to reform and improve mental health services for the citizens of Georgia.

Commissioner Belflower moved for approval of the resolution with the inclusion of jail initiatives. Commissioner Watkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION URGING THE GOVERNOR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO REFORM AND IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE CITIZENS OF GEORGIA

WHEREAS, being the constitutional level of government closest to their constituents, Georgia counties are on the front lines of responding to mental health issues within the community as well as the development of mental health reform efforts; and

WHEREAS, the Dodge County Board of Commissioners supports efforts designed to provide every citizen in need to have accessible, affordable, and adequate mental health services; and

WHEREAS, the Dodge County Board of Commissioners is grateful for the efforts of Georgia's executive, legislative, and judicial branches in working towards mental health reform in recent years, such as the passage of HB 1013 (2022) and introduction of HB 520 (2023), Chief Justice Boggs's work on jail diversion initiatives, and Governor Kemp's commitment to expanding mental health resources in schools for children and young adults; and

WHEREAS, despite these prior steps and successes, the Dodge County Board of Commissioners recognizes that there is still a tremendous amount of work for the citizens of Dodge County and other citizens across Georgia to receive adequate healthcare for mental health and substance abuse disorders; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Dodge County Board of Commissioners that Dodge County government reaffirms its commitment to reforming and improving mental health services for its citizens and all citizens of the state of Georgia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Dodge County Board of Commissioners specifically urges the Governor and General Assembly to continue efforts in the 2024 Session of the Georgia General Assembly to enhance Georgia citizens' access to vital mental health services, including the provision of state budgetary funding for additional behavioral health crisis centers across the state, additional co-responder units, and other resources to assist those with mental health and substance abuse disorders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners is hereby directed to provide an executed copy of this Resolution to each member of the Dodge County delegation to the Georgia Senate and Georgia House of Representatives and to the Association County Commissioners of Georgia.

C. Board of Assessors Application Notice

County Manager Bearden gave notice that the Board of Assessors would have an appointment expiring December 31, 2023. The opening appointment will be advertised.



Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Flanagan reported attending the Joint Development Authority of Bleckley and Dodge County meeting where a water tower was discussed for the northern part of the county.

Also, Commissioner Flanagan attended the ACCG Legislative Conference where statewide mental health and EMS reimbursements were topics of discussion.

County Manager Report: Conner Bearden

Manager Bearden reported from the road, elections, and courthouse committee meetings. He also updated regarding community events.

Public Comments

John Battle expressed concern about school buses getting bogged down on county roads due to the influx of rain.

Adjournment

With no further business to address, a motion was made by Commissioner Watkins and seconded by Commissioner Belflower to adjourn at 7:06 p.m. All voted in favor, and the meeting adjourned.

Attested:

Approved:

Kimberly Smith-Parkerson, County Clerk

Dan McCranie, Chairman