

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Monthly Workshop and Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday, November 4, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at the Brooks County Office Building. Commissioners present were: Mr. S. L. Jones, Chairman; Mr. Joe Wingate, Vice Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell; Mr. Willie Cody, and Ms. Myra Exum. Others present were: Mr. Justin DeVane, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Mr. Vann Parrott, County Attorney; and various residents.

### **Public Hearing -None**

**Work Session** – Chairman called workshop to order.

### **Reports from Committees/Departments**

- A. **Stephanie Hollifield – Brooks County Extension Office** – Appeared to address concerns and needs; and activities:
- Going out in community; providing positive media information; and creating an Ag Connection blog.
  - Requested a part-time position from contingency funds for 4-H to assist Carol Smith, Brooks County 4-H, Extension Associate, will have additional information by next month.
  - Attending area and annual meetings; and timely production type meetings on a timely basis.
  - Introduced Kim Wyche, UGA Health Navigator, covering Brooks and Thomas Counties to provide workshops for new health care reform.

B. **Mark Deatcher – Public Works** – provided report on repairs and work completed for month of October:

- Reported road signs are being stolen again, 15 signs were replaced due to theft.
- 12 County roads were completely side-armed; 7 driveways repaired.
- Liberty Church Road, Radford Road, BCT Gin Road; and Wheeler Road; all had water ways cleaned; brush; and dead trees.
- The only operational Excavator is inoperable due to tracks being worn beyond limits; researching parts and cost of repairs.
- Introduced the new Shop Foreman, Clayton Roberts.

Board suggested running an ad in Quitman Free Press regarding sign theft for a reward; addressed concerns of major equipment being down; and options to acquire equipment for Road Department.

C. **Ben DeVane – County Surveyor/Engineer**

- Scruggs has completed Old Coffee Road, Magnolia Church Road, as part of the 2013 LMIG projects; Supervisor for Scruggs stated will be back in two weeks.
- CDBG continues to be delayed by DOT; still requesting more erosion control and drainage calculations.

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D. **Mike Dewey – Sheriff** – Not present.

E. **Peggy Wilson – Brooks County Victim Assistance** – Previously, Board approved funding of \$2,000.00 for Children Advocacy Center in Valdosta for new camera

equipment; Valdosta usually provides funding, but due to budget restraints; requested \$2,000 from Brooks County for camera system. The Executive Director, Ms. Main; and Ms. Wright, appeared with Ms. Wilson to have picture taken with Board; and thanked for the support.

F. **Ken Collins – Elections** – Reported early voting was over; 555 voters contacted the office.

- Consolidation of precincts is complete; State has applauded the County's effort.
- Will attend meeting on November 19, 2013 to find out what will be the burden on his office with ethics committee reporting for elected officials will become a part of his office procedures; therefore; requested creation of part-time position since he thinks his office will be inundated with paperwork.

Chairman closed work session to go into the Regular Meeting at 5:54 p.m.

1. **Call to Order**

A. Prayer & Pledge – Mr. Maxwell led all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

A. November 4, 2013 Regular Monthly Meeting - Ms. Exum made the motion to approve the agenda as presented, Mr. Cody seconded. Vote was unanimous.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Exum, the Board unanimously approved the following minutes as presented:

- A. October 7, 2013 Monthly Work Session and Regular Monthly Meeting
- B. October 21, 2013 Special Called Meeting

4. **Appearances**

A. **Gerry Folsom/David Sofferin** – Behavioral Health Services – Ms. Gerry Folsom submitted a request to introduce Mr. David Sofferin to the Board; representing the new Crisis Stabilization Unit in Valdosta. They asked to come and provide information about the unit to the Board and the public. The new Crisis Stabilization Unit will open the first week of January 2014. Southwestern Hospital in Thomasville is closing; they will stop admitting patients after November 15, 2013; and will close December 31, 2013. The new facility is located in the Five Points area in Valdosta; will have 30 beds; of which 24 will be used for crisis stabilization; and will be open 24/7; 365 days a year. Patients from Brooks maybe be taken to new facility in Valdosta. The new Center will also have a mobile crisis team.

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B. **David Dempsey** – Improvements to Eden Lane and Blue Springs Lane

Administration received a request from Mr. Dempsey to address the intersection of Eden Lane and Blue Springs Lane. Mr. Dempsey previously spoke with Administrator concerning access to his property and Eden Lane; as well as other property owners that are isolated from Blue Springs Lane. Mr. Dempsey asked the Board if he could be placed on a list, if County has one, to have a driveway installed; but at the cost of the County. Eden Lane is a private lane, located on property owned by the Langdale Company. It appears no driveway pipe has ever been installed for Eden Lane, and

due to being a private lane, it would require purchase of a driveway pipe. However, he does not feel the other owners or Langdale Company would contribute; and he does not want to pay the cost. After discussion, and advice from County Attorney, Board suggested Mr. Dempsey speak with property owners to share in cost to install the driveway. Mr. Dempsey thanked the Board for allowing his appearance.

## 5. New Business

### A. **Appointments – Brooks, Colquitt, Grady, Mitchell, and Thomas Joint DA**

Request was received from Brooks County Economic Developer, Ms. Tina Herring, to appoint three members to the Brooks, Colquitt, Grady, Mitchell and Thomas County Joint Development Authority. Three members were proposed to the Board: Justin DeVane, Buddy Holwell, and Tina Herring. The JDA meets every quarter; each position will have a staggered term; so each recommendation has a different length to begin until each can be appointed a full term. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to approve the proposed selections to the Joint Development Authority for following terms; and seconded by Mr. Wingate. The vote was unanimous.

Justin DeVane – ending December 31, 2014

Buddy Holwell – ending December 31, 2015

Tina Herring – ending December 31, 2016

B. **Budget Amendment – Fund Position for Elections Office** – Ken Collins, Elections Supervisor, requested a part-time position be created for handling issues related to the new ethics requirements expected to become responsibility of the Elections Office in January 2014. Elections Office is requesting funding assistance from Contingency to create the position; at 29 hours per week. To fund the position beginning January 1, 2014, would require \$260.36 weekly plus taxes for 29 hours. To fund for remainder of current budget year contingency would need to provide \$6,769.36; and total cost yearly is \$13,538.72. On a motion by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Exum, Board tabled this issue until Mr. Collins attend meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup> for more information as to what the procedures/duties will be and how it will effect Elections office. Vote was unanimous.

C. **Budget Amendment – Fund Position for Sheriff's Office** – The County accepted applications until October 31, 2013 for full-time position of Secretary for Sheriff's Department. The original budget was setup for one full-time and one part-time. Currently, the funds for part-time (\$10,000.00) has been removed due to the open

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position; and placed in contingency. Board will need to amend; and place funds back from contingency into Law Administration. The secretary position will pay \$8.34/hr; and to fund starting January 1, 2014, Law Admin budget would need \$5,077.60; and if it starts January 1, 2014, we would not need benefits in budget until FY2015; as the County's probationary period would be effective until July 1, 2014. This would create a full-time and a part-time position at 29 hours. On a motion made by Mr. Maxwell, and seconded by Mr. Cody, the Board unanimously amended the budget and approved the transfer of funds in amount of \$5,077.60 from contingency back to Law Admin to fund the full time Secretary position in the Sheriff's Office.

D. **Appointment to Tax Assessors' Board** – Administrator received a request to begin the process for appointing a new member to the Tax Assessors' Board. Mr. John

Stalvey's appointment expires December 31, 2013; and he has expressed interest in serving another term. Mr. Maxwell made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Stalvey to serve another three-year term on the Tax Assessors' Board, Ms. Exum seconded. Vote was unanimous.

**E. Automatic Aid Fire Agreement with Thomas County** – Administrator and EMA Director has met with Thomas County officials several times to discuss the creation of an automatic aid agreement to serve Pavo and Barwick; which are both located in Thomas County. With recent ISO changes; Brooks County residents no longer receive ISO credit for these stations. Thomas County has offered to enter into an agreement with Brooks for \$14,500 annually. Brooks County would still have to maintain and equip the vehicles; the \$14,500 only provides for the agreement. Brooks County can end the agreement should we become able to provide the service internally. Thomas County is in process of preparing agreement; but had not provided copy to Brooks yet. On the motion made by Mr. Wingate, the Board unanimously approved to enter in an agreement for an annual fee of \$14,500 with Thomas County to serve Pavo and Barwick; the cost will be split between the Fire Departments and the contingency fund: Contingency fund \$4,500, Pavo \$5,000; and \$5,000 Barwick, Mr. Maxwell seconded.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

**A. USDA Agreement for Office Manager in NRCS Office** – Board tabled this issue during the September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting and the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting for more clarity from USDA; which was not received. Administration received a request from LaShawn Dennis, District Conservationist, at the USDA NRCS office serving Brooks and Thomas County, for Brooks County support in funding a full time position at the USDA office in the Ag Building. Ms. Ellen Resta, had been serving as the office manager since January 1, 2013. Her position was funded through USDA by a grant, which expired October. USDA is requesting the County hire Ms. Resta full time and authorized an agreement between the County and USDA to split the cost associated with that position. If the County funds this position, we would have to plan on benefits associated with the position. Ms. Resta used her husband's insurance, but any future staff may choose to take the County benefits. A sample agreement was provided with a 50/50 split agreement, with the County providing at least 25% cash input. Funding for such

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position would have to come from contingency fund. There were too many unanswered questions; and the grant has not been approved to fund the USDA's portion. The Board unanimously agreed not to take any action at that time; but to see if USDA comes forth with more information.

Updated information received for this issue: Received a complete contract from USDA Office. USDA would pay a maximum 50/50 match of \$15,000.00 for the position; the County would have to pay any other expenses exceeding that. Based upon previous salary, the total cost to fill the position would be approximately \$33,000.00; meaning the County would have to supply \$18,000.00. After discussion, Mr. Maxwell made the motion to deny the request to fund a position in the USDA Office; Mr. Wingate seconded. Vote was unanimous.

## **7. County Administrator Notes/Comments**

A. **Abandonment of Pope Road** – Administration received a request from Pat Hastings, who lives on Son Wright Road. Ms. Hastings requested the County consider abandonment of a County right-of-way now or formerly known as Pope Road. The R/W runs west off Son Wright Road, and all adjoining landowners are members of her family. According to Ms. Hastings, the right-of-way has not been maintained in sometime and there is no longer a road sign posted. Administrator is requesting authorization to proceed with abandonment procedure. On a motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Ms. Exum, the Board unanimously authorized proceeding with advertising, and public hearing to abandon Pope Road.

B. **FY2014 CDBG Applications – Proposed Target Areas/Projects** – Southern Georgia Regional Commission provided notification regarding possible applications for FY2014 projects. Administrator made the Board aware of this; and explained the need for typical project areas with concentration of population. Mr. DeVane suggested he and the Board should get together and go look at possible areas that may qualify.

C. **FEMA AFG Fire Grant** – The Board previously approved in July use of SPLOST funds to cover the 5% match required by the FEMA AFG Grant, amount of \$13,955.00. Due to economic times, the SPLOST #5 receipts are going to be lower than expected. Because a majority of other projects planned with SPLOST #5 funds have already been completed, it has been advised the Board consider possibly funding the AFG Grant match from another source. At this time, the only available source is the contingency, or to ask each fire department to use a portion of their funds from the County to offset the cost of the equipment they receive at the 5% cost share.

D. **Fire Equipment – Station 1100 (Radio Equipment)** – Administrator requested use of contingency to purchase radio equipment needed for the new station members and a unit to be mounted in the pumper to be placed at Station 1100 (fka Madison Street

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Tanker Building in Quitman). Total amount for equipment and programming of the new radios is \$4,231.00. On the motion by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, Board unanimously approved \$4,231.00 from contingency to purchase equipment (radio) for the Brooks County Fire Department Station 1100.

#### **8. Commissioners Notes/Comments**

- A. Joe Wingate - District 1 – Commented on getting publicity out regarding GATE.
- B. S. L. Jones, District 2 – Commented to Road Superintendent regarding two drain pipes being covered on Radford Road.
- C. Willie Cody, District 3 – No comment.
- D. Myra Exum, District 4 – No comments.
- E. James Maxwell, District 5 – Commented on Board getting back together to discuss what can be done about acquiring Road Department equipment.

#### **9. Executive Session - None**

#### **10. Adjournment**

Mr. Maxwell made the motion to adjourn regular meeting at 7:02 p.m.; Mr. Wingate seconded.

Mr. Sanford L. Jones, Jr., Chairman  
Mr. Justin DeVane, Administrator  
Ms. Patricia A. Williams, Clerk