

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Monthly Workshop and Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday, September 8, 2014 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; Ms. Myra Exum, Vice Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell; Mr. Willie Cody, and Mr. Joe Wingate. Others present were: Mr. Justin DeVane, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Mr. Vann Parrott, County Attorney; and various residents.

## **PUBLIC HEARING** – SIGN-IN SHEET PROVIDED

### **A. Abandonment of Bethel Church Road & School Road-Administrator**

Aaron Coch, Attorney, representing the Okapilco Farms, appeared in August regarding the County abandonment of Bethel Church Road. The Plantation has spoken to the church deacons about maintaining access to the church and the cemetery, and it seems that both sides would be able to make arrangements. The Board unanimously approved to proceed with abandonment process of Bethel Church Road in August.

Chairman called upon those in favor of the abandonment to speak. Jim Davis, Manager, Okapilco Farms, stated they are making the request to maintain, rebuild, and gravel the road for access in and out of Okapilco Farms and cemetery. He further stated they are trying to make the road passable seven days a week, rain or shine; and are not trying to stop anyone from getting to the cemetery. There will be no gates; just want to maintain to do something good for the church and community.

Mr. Jerry Sapp stated he was approached by and met with Okapilco Farms and Attorneys; and they are doing everything to help the residence; and make better for everyone.

Mr. Kenneth Tyre commented he now understands the Plantation's position; but had a few questions regarding School Road. Who will maintain Bethel Church Road and School Road? He was also concerned about the increase of property and how it will affect his taxes. Administrator informed him his taxes would increase only slightly; the additional amount of land would be only tenths of an acre.

Aaron Coch, Attorney for Okapilco Farms, provided copies of proposed deed for County Attorney and Board review; and stated they are not trying to cut out anyone's access.

Chairman asked for those in opposition to speak. Ms. Vivian Norman, property owner, thanked the Board for allowing opportunity to address her concerns. She stated she lives in the house she grew up in; not far from the church; and closing access to keep from the cemetery is wrong. Ms. Norman further stated to the Board she pray they will take into consideration of what will happen 30 years from now, should the owners change and the current generation is gone. The majority of the citizens against agreed with Ms. Norman.

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Mr. Kenneth Baker also spoke, stating to the Board how important it is for information to be documented and recorded in the minutes; specifics such as, road width and amount of gravel used to keep the road passable.

On a motion by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the public hearing closed at 5:28 p.m.

## **WORK SESSION**

Chairman called workshop to order.

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

**A. Public Works** – Glenn Walker, Road Superintendent, reported on work completed for month of August:

- 40 work orders received, replaced driveways; nine 911 calls for trees down.
- Purchased Mini-Excavator, Trailer; and Boom Mower.

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

- Working with Jeff Bridges, DOT, in preparation of Safety Action Plan (SAP) for 2015; should have within a week.
- Looked at Mount Carmel Church Road, both dry and wet, and same problem exists; need right-of-way. First half of road is the worse section and in front of church. Right-of-way will need to be acquired in order to make repairs; may can do work in certain sections.
- Mr. DeVane stated he agrees with abandonment of Lee Road.
- LMIG survey is done on Giddens Road; and preparing package for bid.
- Has started looking at guard rail placement on bridges again at previous locations and other sites.

**C. Tom Fields – Brooks County Fire Department**

- Fire Chief received a call from ISO and is scheduled to visit Brooks County on October 14<sup>th</sup> to recognize we have a fire department. Hoping that ISO will acknowledge what Brooks County has accomplished and go ahead and conduct the six months review; rather than come back for better rating.
- Brooks County Fire Department is responding to calls; and is fully staffed at two, three, including the Administrator.

**D. Stephanie Hollifield – Extension Office**

- Presented calendar of activities and events.
- Informed Board that olives is the new commodity for Brooks.
- Brooks County Extension is First UGA Extension office to become member of Home Grown
- UGA President Farm tour was a success.
- Introduced new Agent, Ben Shirley from Baker County.

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Mr. Wingate made a motion; Mr. Maxwell seconded, to close work session and go into the Regular Meeting at 5:52 p.m.

**1. Call to Order -**

**A. Prayer & Pledge** – Chairman led all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

A. September 8, 2014 Regular Monthly Meeting – Ms. Exum made the motion to approve the agenda, Mr. Wingate seconded. Vote was unanimous.

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Cody, seconded by Mr. Wingate; the Board unanimously approved the following minutes with an addendum to the minutes of August 14, 2014 to change the name of the bank to establish a line of credit to purchase equipment from Ameris Bank to Colony Bank at 2.75%.

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|---|-----------------|
| A. Monthly Workshop & Regular Monthly Meeting | August 4, 2014  |
| B. Work Session & Special Called Meeting      | August 14, 2014 |
| C. Public Hearing & Special Called Meeting    | August 20, 2014 |

### **4. Appearances**

**A. River Bend Plantation – Road Closure Request – Lee Road** – Administration received a request from Attorney William P. Langdale, Jr., representative for River Bend Plantation, Inc. and Samuel B. Kellett, for Board's consideration to formally abandon Lee Road in south Brooks County between U.S. Highway 333 (Madison Highway) and Cooley Road (CR 84). A traffic study on Lee Road was provided by Genesis Group. After review of the road analysis, it was determined that closure of the road should be considered. With an average of only 1.5 vehicles using the road per day, it is clear the road is seldom used. Mr. Langdale asked the Board to consider running the ad for abandonment. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to proceed with abandonment of Lee Road between U.S. Highway 333 (Madison Highway) and Cooley Road (CR 84); seconded by Mr. Cody. Vote was unanimous.

**B. Eugene Roberts – Concerns Regarding Son Wright Road** – Mr. Roberts addressed the Board concerning issues with Son Wright Road; and requested the Board to take action to make improvements. Maybe problem seems to be the creek crossing at Dry Lake Road. He stated residence have been experiencing problems for last 20 years. County does not have funds to pave the road. The Board acknowledged the problems and agreed something needs to be done. Board authorized Road Superintendent and County Engineer to go out and take a look to see what can be done to assist with improving the road.

**C. Art Hughes – Discuss Costs Associated with Public Transit (5311 Program) – Mr. Art Hughes** appeared to address high costs associated with using the 5311 transit program to travel to and from Morven and Quitman to locations in Valdosta/Lowndes County.

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Mr. Hughes is legally blind and depends on public transportation to make appointments and shopping. He stated the trip could cost him up to \$60.00 round trip; and only a few select programs will help offset costs. He asked the Board to take a look at it; and any help they can provide will be greatly appreciated.

### **5. New Business**

**A. Abandonment of Bethel Church Road & School Road** – Mr. Wingate stated he would like to table the issue to get answers clarified; not enough information as to what the deed contains; whether or not an easement for access can be included in documentation. Mr. Wingate made the motion to table the abandonment; Ms. Exum

seconded. Vote was unanimous. Board recommended the County Attorney and Mr. Coch get together to work on the contents of the deed.

**B. Appointment to South Georgia Community Service Board** - Administration received a letter from the Chairman of the South Georgia Community Service Board, Shamb Purohit, requesting and recommending the appointment of Ms. Gerry Folsom to the Board to serve another three year term. The appointment term will last until 2017. Mr. Wingate made the motion, and Mr. Cody seconded, to unanimously appoint Ms. Gerry Folsom to serve another three year term on the South Georgia Community Service Board until 2017.

**C. Barney Volunteer Fire Station Construction Bid Award** – Bids were accepted for the construction of a volunteer fire station near Barney, on Highway 122. Bids submitted were:

1. Brown Construction	\$69,847
2. Pridgen Construction	\$71,621
3. GFA Construction	\$77,573
4. J. H. Strickland	\$95,040
5. Arkon Construction	\$113,679

The low bidder was Brown Construction of Sparks, GA. The total base bid was \$68,642, with additives of \$1,200 bringing total bid to \$69,847. The motion was made by Mr. Maxwell to accept the bid from Brown Construction in amount of \$69,847, seconded by Mr. Cody; vote was unanimous.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

**A. Sheriff Dewey – Inmate Health Services Update** – During the August meeting, Sheriff Dewey submitted a request regarding the new Inmate Healthcare provider; stating they are not delivering on the promises that were made. Sheriff Dewey would like to recommend termination of the current provider and select a new firm. He had collected three new bids for this service. Administration has spoken with Brooks County Hospital Administrator and sent him a copy of current provider's contract to review to see if he can provide the service. Board advised Sheriff to wait until Administrator get information back from Hospital before looking at bids.

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**Update:** Administrator met with Brooks County Hospital Administrator, Mr. Ken Rhudy. This is new for the Hospital, therefore; he needs more time to put a packet together. Administrator will schedule a meeting with Jail Staff, Sheriff, and Mr. Rhudy.

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

**A. Brooks County Record Newsletter** – [www.brookscountyrecord.com](http://www.brookscountyrecord.com) – Administrator has prepared a newsletter to be provided free to citizens online at

[www.brookscountyrecord.com](http://www.brookscountyrecord.com) and will provide free paper copies at various locations throughout Brooks County. Hopefully, a new edition will be released around every quarter and will be a means to address County business to citizens of Brooks County. Newsletter will be available for pickup, but not limited to at the following locations: Barwick City Hall, Morven City Hall, Pavo City Hall, Quitman City Hall, Tax Commissioner's Office, Clerk's Office at the Courthouse, Board of Commissioner's Office (Administration Office).

**B. Work Session for Economic Development** – A work session is scheduled for Monday, September 15, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss Economic Development and other topics will be added to the agenda.

**8. Commissioners Notes/Comments**

**A. Joe Wingate - District 1** – Commented on the voting precinct in Pavo; and putting action on following up on property purchase.

**B. S. L. Jones, District 2** – Commented regarding River Bend's agreement to move Garrett Road; will deed property and pay cost.

**C. Willie Cody, District 3** – Emphasized County Engineer going out and looking at Son Wright Road to see what can be done as far as maintaining the road; since County cannot pave it.

**D. Myra Exum, District 4** – Asked everyone to keep the Mobley family in their prayers; and vigil to will be held at 8:00 p.m.

**E. James Maxwell, District 5** – Informed Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Ivory of the meeting on Monday to discuss damages referenced in their ante litem notice to County to see if Brooks County is liable.

**9. Executive Session** - None

**10. Adjournment**

Mr. Wingate made a motion to adjourn regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.; Mr. Cody seconded.

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