



**Fannin County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Jury Assembly Room
May 23, 2017 6:00 PM**

OPENING REGULAR MEETING:

Chairman Stan Helton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The Invocation was led by Robert Graham and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Earl Johnson.

Chairman Helton explained since the release of the Agenda, there were two items that needed to be added:

- The signing of a Foster Care Month Proclamation. Motion made by Chairman Helton. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee. Item will follow Consent Agenda, becoming item 3c.

- Approving county health insurance which will be effective July 1. Motion made first by Chairman Helton. Second made by Commissioner Johnson. Item will follow Consent Agenda, prior to the Proclamation, becoming item 3b.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Helton noted next item would be approval of the May 9, 2017 minutes. Motion made first by Commissioner Sosebee. Second made by Commissioner Johnson; motion passed by unanimous decision. (Attachment A, 1-3 Pages)

PUBLIC COMMENTARY:

Glenn Holland of Epworth, Ga -- Mr. Holland stated his reason for attending was the tax situation, taxes going up stating his appraisal went up \$80,000. Mr. Holland stated he went to office of Tax Assessor earlier this morning where he was told they were the County, and they can do what they want. Mr. Holland went on to state he requested a copy of the Ordinance for the additional \$5000 that is now being placed on everyone's tax bill for the privilege of having electricity. Mr. Holland stated he feels this should be grandfathered to those who own their property until change of ownership, that it seems ridiculous.

Mr. Holland went on to state he then requested a copy of the paperwork where he was then told it would be 6.25 a sheet and then went to the Commissioner's office where it was 6.10 sheet "And they were a whole lot more helpful" and wonders why the entire building act under the same dollar figure. Mr. Holland stated he was given a paper from the Tax Assessors office as to what the law is, but it did not give any explanation. He feels as a tax payer he should be given the information. Mr. Holland stated he didn't understand where the attitude is in the Tax Assessors department.

Mr. Holland stated he has gone to five offices today and still has no answer; although the staff in the Commissioner's office did everything they could to try and help. Visited numerous websites and still does not have an answer. Mr. Holland stated this added tax has not been advertised or seen anywhere in Fannin County. Mr. Holland said he's yet to get an answer and was told "to come here, so I'm here trying to get an answer."

Chairman Helton stated at the end of Public Commentary, although not normal will try and speak on the subject.

Marcel O'Steen of Blue Ridge, GA -- Ms. O'Steen stated she wanted to speak due to having something nagging at her conscience. She wanted make an apology to Commissioner Johnson as she felt he was irritated with her due to mentioning in her last public commentary a conversation where she requested Commissioner Johnson use his microphone and he responded "why don't you just get a hearing aid?" Ms. O'Steen went on to state he was joking when he made the comment, and she did state that he was joking when she talked of the conversation during the last public commentary. Ms. O'Steen stated Commissioner Johnson did take offense to the comment and she understands why. Following the meeting Commissioner Johnson told her he was not going to talk to her anymore and she in turn yelled at him in public "Mr. Scentsy, Mr. Scentsy". Ms. O'Steen stated she felt bad about doing this and apologized to Commissioner Johnson.

Ms. O'Steen spoke on checks over \$4500, stating this was an issue that was not going away. As mentioned the last time, Mr. Simonds did not have a problem reading the checks out at the meeting and calling them out as it happens. Ms. O'Steen went on to say, she then finds out as this transpires that there are a lot of checks and this could take a good amount of time and could become cumbersome and be boring to some people. Ms. O'Steen stated although this is true for some, there are others who are interested and would like to have this information without having to pay \$35 therefore "the kinder, gentler me, would like to suggest a solution that we could build bridges together."

"A failure to communicate", is what Ms. O'Steen feels is the problem and rather than anyone having to make copies of the checks, redacting the information, allow those interested to view the invoices rather than the checks. Have a public copy file of the invoices to allow public access to see what we pay. Ms. O'Steen stated she was shocked to see that it amounts to a quarter of a million dollars for one period making her more curious as to what is happening with the over \$4500 checks.

Public Commentary closed at 6:12 PM.

Chairman Helton stated he felt he needed to address the issue in regards to the Tax Assessment questions that have recently arose in hopes to offer direction and explain the limitations of the Board of Commissioners. Chairman Helton went on to explain that the BOC appoints the Board of Assessors and the BOC can approve the budget, but other than that, there is a law of separation. Chairman Helton stated the county has been out of compliance since 2009 and has been fined each year due to noncompliance. The new Board of Assessors, when elected, were charged to get it up to the ratio or the State of Georgia would come and take over the function for the county.

Chairman Helton informed attendees of the monthly Tax Assessors meetings that citizens can attend and voice their issues during public commentary; noting the next Tax Assessors meeting would be June 2 at 2:00 p.m. and are held in the Tax Assessors Office.

Chairman Helton referred to a comment made in regards to rudeness stating, "If there is rudeness from that department, I am concerned." Chairman Helton expressed his appreciation for the compliments made in regards to his staff and went on to state as a tax payer, he did have the right to have answers and be answered respectfully.

Commissioner Johnson agreed the importance of the treatment of respectfulness from any department. Commissioner Johnson explained there are so many misconceptions as to what the BOC's responsibilities are; which is only to set the millage rate whereas the Tax Assessor sets values. The only interaction is BOC appoints the Board of Assessors and feels it needs to be continuously reiterated to the citizens there is a separation of duties.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Chairman Helton stated items included under the Consent Agenda are from the May 9 Workshop held to discuss the future needs of the Fannin County EMA, EMS, E-911. Didn't quite get to Public Works and later will discuss later with Chief Thomas. Items agreed upon included:

- Approval, Fannin County EMA 6 Year Projected Plan
 - Vehicles – EMA command/response vehicle
 - Station 1 (New Public Safety Complex) – EMA office furniture; Furnishings for Emergency Operations Center; computers, A/V Equipment; completion of new complex not awarded in initial bid.
 - Misc. – Software and tablets to perform damage assessment and FEMA reporting during and after disaster declaration.
- Approval, Fannin County EMS 6 Year Projected Plan
 - Vehicles – Continue replacing oldest or least dependable ambulance with a new or remounted each year.
 - Station 1 (New Public Safety Complex) – Gear and personnel lockers; furnishings for EMS offices, living area, bedrooms, laundry and kitchen for new station.
 - Equipment (Priority order) – Replace aging cardiac monitors (6); Lucas Devices (CPR Machine) (4); Replace old computers in ambulances; Crash tested patient restraint system (4); Computer for Station 1; Power Lift Stretchers (4)
- Approval, Fannin County E-911 Center SPL/OST Request
 - Dispatch furniture for new facility; Dispatch recorder for phone and radio; 4th Radio console for new facility; 4th Dispatch Computer and monitors for new facility; Radio tower, antennas, cables for new facility

Minutes of the May 9 Workshop were taken and reflect this and other information discussed.

Chairman Helton asked for a motion to approve all items discussed and agreed upon at the May 9 Workshop. Motion made first by Commissioner Johnson. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous decision.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Helton moved on to first new item added to the Agenda (3a) County insurance: Chairman Helton explained Robin Gazaway, Finance Director, has spent a lot of time researching and meeting with various insurance companies. Chairman Helton stated offering good healthcare was very important to be able to hire and keep good employees, therefore he and both Commissioners felt strongly about making this a priority. During the process, schedules were arranged to allow both Commissioners to sit in on meetings. Included in these meetings, in addition to pricing being discussed, services and benefits included were also factors in the decision when narrowed to three providers.

Chairman Helton asked R. Gazaway to approach the podium and present the three quotes provided:

MSI – Has provided for county before, offered through ACCG	\$2,177,879.00
Kevin Painter – Current insurance provider for the county	\$1,803,954.00
Benefit Support Inc. - BCBS	\$1,741,325.00

Chairman Helton asked R. Gazaway based on her discussions with the three, who she recommends. R. Gazaway stated, not only is there a significant cost savings with Benefit Support Inc., she also has experience with this provider fully recommends Benefit Support Inc.

Chairman Helton inquired as to if either of the Commissioners had any questions or input. Commissioner Sosebee stated he had no questions, he had met with all three. Commissioner Johnson stated last year they did not have but one choice and the cost savings is quite significant. Motion made first by Chairman Helton to approve Benefit Support Inc as the county's insurance provider and English and Alford Agent effective July 1. Second made by Commissioner Johnson; motion passed by unanimous decision.

Moving on to the second item added to the Agenda (3b), Foster Care Month Proclamation – Chairman Helton explained he had been trying to do a little more inclusive with Proclamations giving the option of attending the BOC meetings for the signing or having one separately. Chairman Helton went on to state the Proclamation to be signed this evening was on behalf of the Division of Family and Children Services for

Foster Care Month, May – 2017. Chairman Helton spoke about the department and services provided as well as those who are foster parents and what it means to those they foster. Chairman Helton stated, "This Proclamation speaks well to the heart of Fannin County, there is nothing that our county does or is involved with that has greater reward to people". Everyone present on behalf of the Proclamation was invited to join the BOC for the photo.

Chairman Helton explained due to time restraints and the amount of information needing to be discussed, it was decided to hold a separate Workshop to work on the Fire Department 6 year Stations and Equipment Plan. Chairman Helton deferred to Chief Thomas as to how quickly he would like to have the Workshop, he stated within the next month. After a short discussion, the BOC agreed the Workshop would be held before the June 27 Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting at 5:00 pm.

Chairman Helton went on to state the deadline was approaching for the bids on the new Public Safety Complex and would like to schedule and confirm a time for a Called Board Meeting. The date will be Wednesday, May 31. The purpose for the meeting will be to open the bids for the Public Safety Complex. The meeting will begin at 5:15 p.m.

Department Updates:

Marie Woody, Land Development Officer –

M. Woody reported condemnation from last Board Meeting, letter had been sent, on May 27, the 30-day window for clean-up will be up. After that date, bids will be put out for tear down.

The complaint received from last meeting, she had contacted he had made some progress but is minimal and will continue to monitor and keep the Board updated. Chairman Helton asked M. Woody to make sure the owner is aware the BOC is serious.

M. Woody reported there were twelve (12) new homes this month and two (2) new condemnations to present and have BOC to review. (Folders with pictures and property descriptions were given to each BOC member) Garbage coming due on June 1. Step at a time, if not getting results at first then have another discussion and decide at that time.

Chairman Helton referred to the condemnations, requesting M. Woody not reveal names, only property address:

- Mobile Road – Has not contacted, the taxes go to Ringgold, Georgia; property owner is believed to be deceased. M. Woody to send a letter.
- Mineral Bluff Hwy – Have not been contacted; property also believed to belong to heirs. M. Woody to send a letter.

Chairman Helton instructed M. Woody to send a copy of letters are to be sent to the Board of Commissioners.

Larry Thomas, Fire Chief, approached the podium to recommend awarding the bid for the purchase of three (3) Rescue Pumps. Chief Thomas stated he did call a committee of six (6) individuals together who he felt would be able to provide good insight and opinion as to which company they would recommend. Chief Thomas named the four companies who had submitted bids for the three (3) Rescue Pumps:

- Fire Line
- Ten – 8 Fire Equipment
- NAFBCO
- Fouts Brothers Fire Equipment

Chairman Helton inquired as to who Chief Thomas would like to recommend. Fouts Brothers Fire Equipment is who Chief Thomas recommended. Commissioner Sosebee asked if any other equipment or trucks had been purchased from this company prior, Chief Thomas stated they have used for previous purchases and were satisfied.

Chief Thomas stated the purchase price will be \$240,749 (ea.) for a total price of \$722,247 for all three. This bid is over \$24,000 less than the second lowest bid. Commissioner Johnson inquired if this was the lowest bid, Chief Thomas confirmed that it was and that the 180-day delivery time was very appealing as well.

R. Gazaway explained this is already budgeted in the general fund budget and plan to go with local financing at a 2.79% financing with United Community Bank. Motion made first by Chairman Helton, to accept the recommendation to accept the bid with manufacturer out of Georgia, Foust Brothers Fire Equipment. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous decision.

Commissioner Johnson stated before moving on he would like to present two ideas for possible Fannin County Logos. Both were given to Chairman Helton and Commissioner Sosebee to view as well as those in attendance. It was decided to allow those to vote and make final decision. Logo with both the mountain and trees was chosen.

Commissioner Johnson went on to explain the purpose of the logo was in the hopes of branding Fannin County Board of Commissioners and all the Departments who fall under it. The logo will be seen on all department vehicles, shirts, stationary, business cards, etc. The department will be identified by name under the logo. The Board of Commissioners hope is to establish is brand to allow the citizens in the county to immediately distinguish a county vehicle by this logo; whereas in the past, there was no consistency in the use of logos. The branding process will continue beyond the logo and Commissioner Johnson is to be commended for his work in the process of establishing the logo.


EXECUTIVE SESSION:

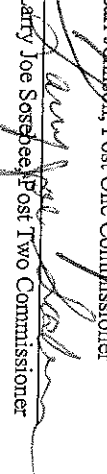
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CLOSING:

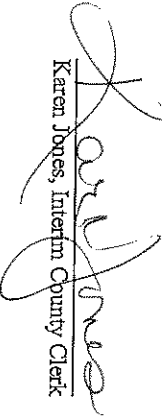
With no further business, Chairman Helton called for a motion to adjourn at 7:08 PM. Commissioner Sosebee made first the motion to adjourn. Motion made second by Commissioner Johnson; motion passed by unanimous decision.


Stan Helton, Chairman


Earl Johnson, Post One Commissioner


Larry Joe Sosebee, Post Two Commissioner

Attest:


Karen Jones, Interim County Clerk