

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for a Special Called Meeting on Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at the Brooks County Office Building. Commissioners present were: Mr. James Maxwell, Chairman; Mr. Patrick Folsom, Vice Chairman; and Ms. Myra Exum. Mr. Rhett Rowe and Mr. Willie Cody were not present. Others present were: Ms. Jessica McKinney, Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Mr. Jason Kemp, County Attorney (via teleconference); and various residents.

**Note: Although this is an open meeting, we are encouraging those who wish to attend, elect to do so via our teleconference alternative in an effort to support COVID-19 precautions and social distancing. For those who wish to join teleconference a number was provided to dial in from their phone.**

**A. Call to Order** – Chairman called the meeting to order.

**1. Road Consultant Contract** – The Consultant for the Road Department, Jim Owens, signed a six months lease for the County. The lease is due for renewal. The Board need to decide if they want to renew the lease due to not having hired a Road Superintendent yet. Administrator stated approximately 30 applications have been received. The period to accept applications ends April 1, 2020. The applicants are in close proximity to what the County is looking for, are experienced; and have CDL. Administrator recommended to at least renew/extend Mr. Owens' contract for six months or by the end of the year; which would be sufficient time to hire a Road Superintendent.

Ms. Exum suggested extending the contract for six months; and not bind the County until the end of the year. Mr. Cody suggested to keep what have now due to the COVID-19. Mr. Folsom stated all suggestions were valid points. Mr. Rowe suggested six months extension.

Chairman informed the Board that Mr. Owens is requesting an increase in salary, from \$4,000 per month to \$5,000 per month; with a \$500 stipend for gas; the total increase for the extension would be \$5,500. Mr. Folsom made the motion to increase salary to \$5,000 per month with the \$500 per month for gas until December 31, 2020; and if a Road Superintendent is hired; the County does not have to extend the salary, Mr. Cody seconded. Chairman called for the vote. Mr. Folsom, Mr. Cody voted in favor. Ms. Exum and Mr. Rowe voted no. The vote was 2 to 2. Mr. Maxwell voted in favor. The vote was 3 to 2, to extend the Road Consultant Contract until the end of the year, December 31, 2020 with a salary increase to \$5,000 and \$500 for gas per month, total of \$5,500.

**2. COVID-19**

**a. Attendance Policy Amendment** – Administrator provided a revision to the Brooks County Employee Handbook that will address sick employees who report to work with Contagious Symptoms and/or a Contagious Condition.

**b. Policy Proposal** – Brooks County Planned Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic for County Employees was presented by Administrator to the Board. The policy outlined plan objectives, determining mitigation strategy, process for activating the County's plan (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3). It further outlined: Workforce involvement, workplace exposure, key business functions, workplace policies, infection control measures, separate sick employees, personal preparedness, encourage social distancing; anticipate absenteeism; and communication protocol.

**c. Proposed Plan of Action** – 10-day Quarantine of all Non-Essential County Personnel (Effective 11:59 p.m. March 20, 2020 until April 5, 2020)

- No gathering of more than 10 people
- Avoid eating in restaurants and bars
- Limit discretionary travel

**Administrator recommended plan of action:**

Effective at 11:59 p.m., Friday March 20, 2020, all non-essential County personnel will be released for a Brooks County Board of Commissioners Mandatory 10-day (business), quarantine period. The quarantine will require all identified employees to practice social distancing, remove themselves from all social events during this time, and limit their public exposure time remaining predominately at home with only necessary or emergent reason to leave. For all personnel who are released to quarantine, the order is supported under the State of Emergency and COVID-19 Precautions Guidelines. Personnel will be paid their regular salary/hourly for all business days of the mandatory quarantine. For any personnel that is reported/witnessed to not follow mandated quarantine guidelines, paid time off could be denied.

**Recommended Departments/Staff for Closure and Quarantine**

- Tax Commissioners (all County paid frontline staff)
- Tax Assessors (all County paid frontline staff)
- Elections (all County paid frontline staff)
- Victim Assistance (all County paid frontline staff, utilization of Director in EOC if needed)
- Zoning/Inspections (utilization of Mr. Ingram in EOC if needed)
- Courthouse Operations (per Judge/Clerk direction)
- Senior Center

**Maintain an Essential Personnel Only Level of Staffing** – In order to prevent our operations from failing and to protect the integrity of financial and contractual deadlines, payroll, vendor payments, emergency services support, and judicial operations, we will need to withhold essential personnel. These operations will continue either in the EOC or within the Administrative Office only, behind secure closed doors. Operating hours will be normal operating hours Monday-Friday. Essential staff will be required to clock in and out on all days they report to work as well as submit a daily email to the County Administrator of duties completed for reimbursement tracking

purposes. For every hour essential staff works during the designated business dates of the mandated quarantine, the employee will receive a matched hour of paid time off as compensation for their mandated time to keep the County running.

- County Administrator
- County Clerk
- Payroll Clerk
- Account Payables Clerk
- EMA/911 Operations Center
- Fire Department (Paid/Volunteer)
- Sheriff Department: Uniform Patrol/CID (per Sheriff direction)
- All Department Heads/Directors as identified to assist in EOC (Zoning/Victims Assistance/Solid Waste, etc.)
- Road Department (Consultant/Mechanic/5 identified Operators; remaining operators on call)
- Custodial Staff (on-call)

**Activate our EOC (Level 3 – Disaster/Full Activation)** – This will be essential in securing all of our Emergency Support Personnel in one location for operations and communications pertaining specifically to the mitigation of COVID-19 spread. Personnel to report to EOC daily during the County Mandated quarantine period will have access to all communications being delivered and news releases being made. Arrangements are being made to have phone lines transferred to the EOC to ensure full support across all departments impacted.

**Identified Personnel to Retain at the EOC for Support**

- County Administrator (split time)
- Sheriff
- Director of EMA
- Chief of Fire Department
- Road Department Consultant
- Identified Department Heads for operations support (phone and email)

County Administrator has secured resources to allow for all meetings to move to teleconference platform until social distancing is no longer recommended.

**d. Resolution – Declaring Public Health State of Emergency**

In response to the State of Georgia's declaration of a Public Health State of Emergency on March 14, 2020. Brooks County officials were notified on March 17, 2020 of a fourth presumptive positive case of COVID-19 within Lowndes County area. Due to the confirmed cases of COVID-19 in an immediately surrounding county of which Brooks County citizens frequent for work and resources, all County offices, and facilities be closed effective at 11:59 p.m., Friday March 20, 2020 through Sunday, April 5, 2020, under the authority granted in the Official Ordinance No. 2009-05 of Brooks County. On

the motion by Mr. Folsom, seconded by Mr. Cody, the Board unanimously authorized the Chairman to sign Resolution 20-R-03 Declaring Public Health State of Emergency.

Mr. Cody made the motion to approve to implement the COVID-19 Immediate Response Brooks County Recommended Plan of Action, Mr. Folsom seconded. Vote was unanimous.

The Board approved to implement the Brooks County Planned Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic for County Employees on the motion by Ms. Exum, Mr. Folsom seconded. Vote was unanimous.

**Adjournment** - Ms. Exum made the motion to adjourn special called meeting at 5:58 p.m.; Mr. Cody seconded.

Mr. James Maxwell, Chairman  
Ms. Jessica McKinney, Administrator  
Ms. Patricia A. Williams, Clerk