

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday, October 5, 2021 at 5:00 p.m., in the Courtroom located at the Brooks County Courthouse, located at 100 East Screven Street, Quitman, GA. Commissioners present were: Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman, Mr. James Maxwell, Vice Chairman; Mr. Willie Cody; and Ms. Myra Exum. Others present were: Mrs. Jessica McKinney, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Ms. Kim Daniels, Human Resources; Mr. James Burchett, County Attorney; and various residents.

Public Hearings – NONE

1. CALL TO ORDER

Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman called the Regular Meeting to order; and asked Mr. Jerry Bass to lead all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On the motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Cody, the Board approved the agenda for October 4, 2021. Vote was unanimous.

3. Approval of Minutes

On the motion by Mr. Cody, seconded by Ms. Exum, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the following meetings:

- Regular Monthly Meeting September 13, 2021

4. APPEARANCES

A. Stephanie Mata – Development Authority – Ms. Mata requested to appear to address the Board and community about the Development Authority. She stated the Development Authority develops industry and economic growth. Economic development entices investment in Brooks County; and Brooks County invests in economic development. The pandemic caused change in the way of doing business. Ms. Mata informed that last year the Development Authority Board voted to invest in the community. Businesses were closing due to COVID-19; the Economic Development Education Grant saved jobs by assisting businesses; and new businesses were opened.

B. Jim Owens – Road Department – Updated the Board on Road Department activities/projects:

- JMAR Loop – Working with the water company, meeting was scheduled; then cancelled; and is rescheduled to meet next week. Need to get ROWs where pipes will run as single main.
- 2020 LMIG – Scruggs is onsite; almost complete with Hamlin Road; using asphalt and base material. The Road Department assists by cutting slopes ahead of Scruggs. Next will be Snow Road to Coffee Road, down Moultrie Highway east, then to Branch Road; one mile northeast on Tallokas Road. Following will be Burton Road (two sections); on to Quail Run (has bad pot holes); and then Brookview.
- Employees are working hard; and getting support from the community.
- Hired three new employees; two has started employment.

C. Fire Department – Chief Catlett – Updated the Board on Fire Department activities/projects:

- Thanked for bringing him on board and hope to serve Brooks County well.
- Commented on Staff and Fire Fighters making it easier.
- Has met with Fire Station Chiefs/Leaders and will start training requirements
- Interviews are going well; hope to have nine Fire Fighters by November 2021.
- One more truck to repair before pump testing begins.
- Hose testing starts next week.
- Station No. 10 is being brought up to standard; and developing Standard Operation Procedures.
- Will be participating in Fire Safety Week at Brooks County Schools.

D. Family Connection/Census Updates – Ms. Erin Blanton, Family Connection, appeared to update the Board on the 2020 Census.

- Percent change in total population is 10.6%; which was the prediction.
- Brooks County percent change is 0.4, population increased by 58 residents. 2010 total population was 16,243; the 2020 population is 16,301.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. ARP Funds for Salary Disbursement (Requesting Motion) – County Administrator informed the Board of tight restrictions on ARP Funds, unlike the CARES Act. There is a lot still unknown on how to spend ARP funds; we do not want to spend on something not qualified; and may have to reimburse. Administrator stated she knows the funds can be spent on revenue generated projects. Funds are being held fully intact in the bank account created until legislature defines how to spend or what to spend the funds on. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to continue holding ARP funds in the account until it has been defined as to how they can be spent or what the funds may be spent on; seconded by Mr. Cody. Vote was unanimous.

B. County Property Use Agreement and Fees (Requesting Motion) – Administration prepared and presented to the Board the policy for the use of County property and fees for use. The policies are meant to be a guideline for the public use of available County owned building in Brooks County. The available Buildings and Facilities are: Ag Building Auditorium, Ag Annex Building, Courthouse Grounds (does not include Gazebo); and Farmers Market. Mr. Maxwell commented that maybe the Chamber of Commerce should give the Gazebo to Brooks County so it can be under one government. The Gazebo is owned by the Chamber of Commerce and Courthouse Grounds belong to Brooks County. After further discussion, the Property Use Agreement and Fees was tabled on the motion by Ms. Exum, seconded by Mr. Maxwell. Vote was unanimous.

C. Change Order for Dixie Road Paving (Requesting Motion) – Due to safety concerns; and condition of Dixie Road, the Board unanimously approved the 2020 LMIG Change Order to pave 4.1 miles of Dixie Road in the amount of \$615,000.00; and funds will come from TSPLOST; on a motion made by Mr. Cody, seconded by Mr. Maxwell.

D. Broadband Provider (Requesting Motion) – During the September meeting, Hargray and Windstream appeared to present their proposal to the Board for broadband services. Windstream estimates a total cost of \$21.900 million for funding the projec; Brooks County would need to request \$13.9 million in state funding; and Windstream will add \$8 million out of their pocket. On motion by Ms. Exum, seconded by Mr. Cody, Board approved to partner with Windstream for Broadband provider of Brooks County; and Brooks County will apply for funding to assist with broadband. Vote was unanimous.

E. Resolution – EZ 911 Lease Purchase Resolution – Administration received the Lease Purchase Agreement for financing EZ911 Software from Government Capital Corporation. The cost of the software is \$325,417.00; the monthly payment for five years will be \$5,860.49, and payments will begin July 2022. The software was budgeted in the 911 FY2021-2022 Budget. County Attorneys have reviewed the Agreement and addressed their concerns; Attorney for Government Capital Corporation has responded to those concerns. A Resolution for the purchase is required to be submitted with the Agreement. The motion was made by Ms. Exum to approve Resolution 21-R-10 for purchase of EZ911 software pending Administration's negotiation with Government Capital Corporation; seconded by Mr. Cody. Vote was unanimous.

F. Resolution – Brooks Transit/SGRC – Each year Brooks County submits the grant application for 5311 Rural Public Transit Program; the Board previously approved to allow SGRC to handle the 5311 Rural Public Transit grant for Brooks County. The Authorizing Resolution has to be adopted/approved by the Board in order for SGRC to submit the grant application to GDOT on Brooks County's behalf. On the motion by Mr. Cody, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board unanimously approved Resolution 21-R-9; Authorizing Resolution for the FY2022-2023 5311 Rural Public Transit Grant Application to be submitted to GDOT by SGRC.

G. Side Arm Rental/Contracting – Funding – Due to lack of information, this item was tabled for more information on the motion by Ms. Exum, and seconded Mr. Cody. Vote was unanimous.

H. Appointment – Tax Assessors Board – Chief Appraiser, Wayne Waldron, submitted a request to re-appoint Dr. Gerald Golden to the Tax Assessor Board; his term expires December 31, 2021. Mr. Waldron explained that Dr. Golden will serve on the Board until a certified replacement is found. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to reappoint Dr. Gerald Golden to the Tax Assessor Board; Mr. Cody seconded. Vote was unanimous.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Personnel Handbook/Policy – Administrator has provided the Board a copy of the Personnel Handbook/Policy; and it has also been on the agenda for six months for Board approval. Ms. McKinney stated she is hoping the Board will vote to approve. Mr. Cody made the motion to approve the revised Personnel Handbook/Policy for Brooks County, Mr. Maxwell seconded. Vote was unanimous.

B. Solar Moratorium – The Resolution Adopting a Temporary Moratorium on Acceptance of Applications for Commercial Solar Farms for a Period of Six Months expires December 3, 2021. County Attorney has prepared a draft of a Model Solar Ordinance for the Board review and a decision. Ms. Exum made a motion to table this item and discuss during the monthly work session; Mr. Cody seconded. Vote was unanimous.

C. Salary Study Results – Administrator presented the results of the Salary Study for Brooks County stating that 80% of employees are under paid; and recommended those employees be brought up to where they need to be. The cost will be \$167,721.07; and will come from CARES Act funding. Once that portion is completed, salary increases will be based on review of performance, not COLA. Administrator recommended \$500.00 bonus to employees for paid staff for now; and keep reserve to compensate volunteers later. On the motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Cody; the Board unanimously approved the Salary Study Results; Administrator's recommendation of \$500.00 bonus pay for paid employees; reserve funding to compensate volunteers later; and funding will come from CARES Act fund.

7. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR NOTES/COMMENTS

A. Brooks County Project List Review/Updates (Attached) – The project list was attached for review; and will be attached to the agenda each meeting for review to be continuously reviewed and updated.

B. Wrecker Rotation Policy Review – County Administrator prepared the Wrecker Rotation Policy for Board review and input.

C. 911 Dispatch/EMA Director Position – County Administrator informed the Board 11 applications have been submitted for the position of 911 Dispatch/EMA Director. Interviews will start this week.

D. Time Keeping System – The Time Keeping System will be installed October 10th -11th. This will eliminate paper time sheets and errors.

E. Office/Holiday Hours – Administrator advised the Board she will update them on the holiday schedule.

Mr. Kevin Barker, Barker Construction, was present to answer questions/concerns regarding the construction of the New Ag Building. He explained the delays caused by rain, material shortage due to COVID-19; which was an unfortunate situation. They are moving ahead; interior and drywall should be within next two weeks. Cabinets and the floors should be completed by November or early December. USDA potentially to move in January 2022; and by March 2022 the old Ag Building will be torn down.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE

9. Commissioners Notes/Comments

- **Patrick Folsom, District 2** – Board of Education invites everyone to the grand opening of the Art Center.
- **Willie Cody, District 3** – No comment.
- **Myra Exum, District 4** – No comment.
- **James Maxwell, District 5** – No comment.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Maxwell made the motion to adjourn regular meeting at 7:03 p.m.; Mr. Cody seconded.

Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman
Mrs. Jessica J. McKinney, County Administrator
Ms. Patricia A. Williams, Clerk