

MINUTES

DECATUR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ROOM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2015

PRESENT: CHAIRMAN DENNIS BRINSON, VICE CHAIRMAN PETE STEPHENS, COMMISSIONERS DR. BUTCH MOSELY, RUSSELL SMITH, RUSTY DAVIS AND GEORGE ANDERSON, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR ALAN THOMAS, COUNTY CLERK BEVERLY KING, COUNTY ATTORNEY BRUCE KIRBO AND NEWS REPORTER POWELL COBB AND BRENNAN LEATHERS.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Brinson called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. After the call to order, Reverend David Warr gave the invocation and all those assembled pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Chairman Brinson announced that the Board of Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing on the Proposed Millage Rate at the first part of this regular scheduled meeting. Chairman Brinson opened the floor for citizens to voice their concerns.

Chairman Brinson recognized Frank Geslak. Mr. Geslak stated that his property taxes have increased 49% since he moved to Decatur County. Mr. Geslak questioned the Board why citizens were not notified of the proposed tax increase when tax notices were sent out in May so that citizens would have the opportunity to make an appeal at that time.

Commissioner Mosely stated the tax increase is to support the recreational authority and indigent fund for the Memorial Hospital. Commissioner Mosely questioned if Mr. Geslak would like for the Hospital to close and there be no recreation for the children.

Chairman Brinson recognized Gary Breedlove. Mr. Breedlove discussed the events that led up to the millage rate increase through the service delivery strategy mediation. Mr. Breedlove stated this proposed millage rate would be a historical increase, stating there has never been one of this size ever in Decatur County.

Vice Chairman Stephens stated in order to decrease taxes, we need to bring industry into Decatur County and in order to do that we need a vital hospital, good recreation and educational programs.

Commissioner Mosely stated in his opinion, Mr. Breedlove done Decatur County a disservice as County Administrator and he is doing a disservice now by complaining about something that he was a major part of.

Chairman Brinson recognized Johnny Medley. Mr. Medley stated that he sympathized with the Board having to make these difficult decisions. Mr. Medley asked that the Board carefully consider the people that are on a fixed income and simply cannot afford a tax increase. Mr. Medley stated he supported the indigent care for the Hospital but said he had people in his community that couldn't walk and this tax increase was supporting a recreational program for people to run.

There being no more comments the Public Hearing was adjourned.

Chairman Brinson called the regular scheduled meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

AMENDMENTS / APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

There were no Special Presentations.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation.

APPROVE MINUTES

Vice Chairman Stephens made a motion to approve the minutes of the Commissioners' meeting held August 25, 2015. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Landfill Update. Chairman Brinson recognized County Administrator Alan Thomas. County Administrator Thomas stated he received a report from Harbin Engineering detailing their remaining capacity for year 2015 at the county landfill. The information provided was cause for a decision that would need to be made in the near future. County Administrator Thomas said it wasn't time to hit the panic button, but it was time to get ahead of the problem. If you run out of space in 1.6 years and it takes you three years to complete cell 5 that means the landfill will run out of space before the next cell is completed. County Administrator Thomas said he planned to return before the Board with further recommendations. The report brought up two choices that the county could consider; selling the landfill or continue operating it. County Administrator Thomas' opinion is the county should continue to operate it.

NEW BUSINESS

Millage Rate for Hospital. Chairman Brinson recognized Memorial Hospital Administrator Billy Walker. Mr. Walker said he appreciated the support from the Board of Commissioners and he knew the Board had to make some difficult decisions. Mr. Walker explained the cost of the Affordable Healthcare Act is being funded by putting it on the backs of the small rural hospitals. It's estimated this will reduce federal funding by around 1.7 million over the next two years. These reductions began in FY2014. Other federal and state funding has been cut as a result of their budgets being cut. The indigent care funding from the state has been cut over 50% in the last few years. The hospital building needs an estimated \$5 million worth of infrastructure improvements on its 55 year old building. The hospital could increase charges but that wouldn't mean it would be collected. Medicare and Medicaid tell the hospital what they will pay. Medicare and Medicaid comprise approximately 66% of the total gross revenues and uninsured patients comprise another 11% of total gross revenues. It appears that as the larger hospitals have purchased the smaller hospitals that services and personnel have been cut. Apparently in other communities where the local hospital has been sold, the buying hospital has often times required the local community to still provide funding for indigent care as part of the sales transaction. Mr. Walker said he hoped in some small way this information might be helpful. Mr. Walker said the Hospital will continue to look for ways to reduce costs and continue to search for funding through available grants.

Chairman Brinson recognized City Councilwoman Glennie Bench. Mrs. Bench thanked the Board on behalf of the City of Bainbridge and the Hospital Authority for their support in funding indigent care for Memorial Hospital. Mrs. Bench explained the importance of supporting and keeping the hospital in Decatur County, stating it was vital to the community in many ways. Mrs. Bench stated the hospital not only provides approximately 1500 jobs, it has a very important economic impact when it comes to marketing businesses to our area.

Consideration of Purchase from Yancey. Chairman Brinson recognized County Administrator Alan Thomas. County Administrator Thomas stated the county had been renting a bulldozer from Yancey Equipment for \$7,400.00 a month at the landfill. Yancey has agreed to apply the money that has been paid through the lease, which is \$37,000.00, toward the purchase price. In addition Yancey agreed to let Decatur County trade in the old bulldozer that no longer works for \$49,420.00. County Administrator Thomas recommended the Board approve taking this bulldozer off the lease program and move toward purchasing it and reducing the payments. Vice Chairman Stephens made a motion to approve this purchase from Yancey. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Decatur County Firefighters Association – Flint River Boat Race. Chairman Brinson

recognized County Administrator Alan Thomas. County Administrator Thomas stated the Decatur County Firefighters Association will be hosting its 5th annual Drag Boat Race at the Earle May Boat Basin September 12th and 13th to help purchase equipment for all of the county's volunteer fire departments. These races are sanctioned and insured by the Outboard Drag Boat Association. This is for informational purposes only and no action is needed from the Board.

Decatur County Election Systems Services Agreement. Chairman Brinson recognized Elections Supervisor Carol Heard. Mrs. Heard asked the Board to approve the purchase of a Ballot on Demand Printer at a cost of \$14,674.00 which is conformed to state standards. The purchase of this printer is included in the budget for Elections. Commissioner Mosely made a motion to approve this purchase. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Chairman Brinson recognized Mayor Edward Reynolds. Mayor Reynolds thanked the Board of Commissioners for their support in the bold decisions that were made during the Service Delivery Strategy mediations. Mayor Reynolds said he strongly believes that the hospital and recreation are vital to economic growth. Mayor Reynolds stated that Decatur County will still have lower taxes with this proposed millage rate increase compared to some of the surrounding areas. Mayor Reynolds closed with saying that nobody is going to take care of us but us.

COMMISSIONERS / ADMINISTRATOR'S REMARKS

County Administrator Thomas said he was proud for the opportunity to work together with the City of Bainbridge by placing a county fire truck at the West Bainbridge Station which will benefit the citizens of Decatur County with better emergency response times.

Commissioner Davis stated this was a tough tax increase but he felt it was for a good and necessary cause.

Commissioner Mosely said he wanted to apologize to anyone he may have offended with his previous comments except for Gary Breedlove which was a major part to blame for this process.

Commissioner Smith thanked Mayor Reynolds and Councilwoman Glennie Bench for attending this meeting and for their comments. Commissioner Smith said he was grateful for the City and County working together in the transfer of the County fire truck to the West Bainbridge Station, stating it would help the citizens with a better response time and with their insurance.

Vice Chairman Stephens thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for their comments. Vice Chairman Stephens said the only way to decrease taxes was to bring new industry to Decatur County and he believed it was vital to have a quality hospital and recreation to attract new industry. Vice Chairman Stephens said it takes money to solve issues. Vice Chairman Stephens stated that he believed money was wasted in the past but assured the citizens that the current Board will not see waste. Chairman Stephens announced that there will be another Public Hearing tonight on the millage rate at 6:30.

Commissioner Anderson commended the Hospital for the excellent treatment he received when he took his daughter to the emergency room recently.

Chairman Brinson stated this whole ordeal was very difficult but he was hopeful that the outcome will result in a better community. Chairman Brinson stated the Board is trying to make the best decisions possible and their overall priority is to keep the vital things necessary to attract businesses to our area.

Commissioner Mosely made a motion to go into executive session to discuss Personnel. Vice Chairman Stephens seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

After the executive session the Commissioners assembled back in the board room. Vice Chairman Stephens made a motion to go into regular session. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Chairman Brinson stated the Board discussed a personnel matter during executive session and no action is to be taken at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting, on motion by Vice Chairman Stephens, was duly adjourned. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously

approved.

Approved: 
Chairman

Attest: 
County Clerk