

The McDuffie County Board of Commissioners held a regular Commissioner Meeting Wednesday, February 3, 2010, 10:00 AM, Grand Jury Room, McDuffie County Courthouse.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Charles. Newton IV, Chairman
Sammie Wilson Sr., Vice Chairman
Paul W. McCorkle, Commissioner
Wm. "Bill" M. Jopling, Commissioner

COUNTY REPRESENTATION:

Don Norton, County Manger
Annette Finley, County Clerk
Eric Reisinger, Public Works Director
Phyllis Wheeler, Superintendent of Elections
Bob Howard, Director of Recreation
Don Clauson, Director of Solid Waste
Linda Thurmond, Chief Tax Appraiser
Sandra Whitaker, Tax Commissioner

MEDIA:

WTHO Radio Station
McDuffie Progress Newspaper
McDuffie Mirror Newspaper

OTHERS:

Two (2) other citizens were in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Newton called the meeting to order, acknowledged a quorum of commissioners present and welcomed everyone in attendance.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Reverend John Smalley, Pastor of the Vanderhorst CME Church in Thomson and also a City of Thomson Councilman offered the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVALS

Agenda (Current)

A motion to approve the current Agenda was made by Wilson, seconded by Jopling and passed unanimously.

NOTE: Minutes of the previous regular Commission Meeting held on January 16, 2010 had not been finalized as the County Clerk had been out sick and were not ready for approval by the Board. The Clerk is now back to work and the minutes are scheduled to be placed on the Agenda for the meeting to be held on February 16, 2010.

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Announcement: 2010 ACCG Legislative Conference, Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Feb. 8 & 9, 2010
2. ACCG is discussing at the 2010 Legislature next week the matter of possible \$300,000 tax shortfalls due to a change in the timber taxation laws.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Further Discussion of Additional Elections Position or Contract Services or Alternate Arrangement-Budget Amendment: Chairman Newton asked Ms. Phyllis Wheeler to Present this item for additional discussion.

Phyllis stated that six (6) other counties with working board members had been contacted only to see they used the state contract services and to "no avail" because they are all supervised by the probate judge with a board of registrars (5 or more working board members). The Commissioners like the idea of having "working board members". Phyllis is now asking that the Board of Commissioners to

- 1) amend the Election Office budget by approximately \$25,000 to fulfill the 2010 Services Contract OR to
- 2) approve the same amount for an election office position rather than for the Service Contract. This person would attend training and certification to perform the remaining contract services not already performed by the director as well as serving as the Mail Ballot Clerk during elections cycles and Files/Forms Clerk at other times

with other

An alternative of having a "shared employee", such as one of the current employees in the Human Development Office seemed to be the best approach at this time.

-2-

The Board informed Ms. Wheeler that details are yet to be worked out for this situation and they would get back with her as soon as possible.

2. Tax Assessor's Office – Justification of Hiring Employee during "Hiring Freeze": Chairman Newton asked Linda Thurmond, Chief Tax Appraiser, to address this issue.

Linda emphasized this is not a new position in her budget but one that had become vacant after the former Chief Appraiser left and she was promoted with several

others following. The actual cost would be ground level for the position Grade 9A was already approved in 2010 budget \$20,906.50. To not fill this position would cause a hardship on the office and she wants to begin advertising for such position in the newspaper.

After a lengthy discussion among the Board members, Don Norton and Linda, it was the consensus that the Board would lift the hiring freeze as soon as possible but some employees through certain training programs would be preferred now if available.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ER & ACO Report – January 2010: Chairman Newton asked Tax Commissioner Sandra Whitaker to present this report.

Sandra stated that the report for January 2010 reflects a decrease in the amount of \$17,404.03 for changes to the Property Tax Digest. Property Tax decrease is due to some 2007 & 2008 Appeals settled, mostly requiring refunds be issued, the 2009 values had to be adjusted to reflect the 2008 values as per appeals.

There were no changes whatsoever in the Mobile Home Digest for the M&O McDuffie County.

After discussion, a motion to accept the report as presented was made by Wilson, seconded by McCorkle and passed unanimously.

2. Further Discussion Concerning Government Center Construction Issues: Commissioner Newton asked Commissioner Paul McCorkle to address these issues.

Paul stated that he had received the “Drywall Re-Bid” forms as requested and thanked Jud Bryant and Tommy Goodyear both for furnishing this information. Additional discussion was held regarding local trucks hauling dirt to and from the City/County Government site. This was clarified and satisfactory to all.

3. CSRA RC Area Agency on Aging Grant: Chairman Newton asked Bob Howard, Director of Recreation, to present this matter.

Bob asked that the CSRA Regional Commission Fiscal Year 2011 Aging Grant in the amount of \$22,000 which is an annual fully refundable grant be accepted in order to continue to fund our Aging program if awarded.

After discussion, a motion was made by McCorkle, seconded by Jopling to accept and endorse the grant; motion was passed unanimously.

4. County Commission Office – Justification of Hiring Employee during “Hiring Freeze”: Chairman Newton asked County Manager Don Norton to present this matter.

Don asked to obtain approval to fill position of County Clerk during “hiring freeze” stating that Mrs. Finely had announced her retirement effective March 31, 2010. Having a certain amount of overlap time to transition from the current county clerk and the new county clerk is very important. Because the new county clerk would very

-3-

probably begin at a somewhat lower salary than the current county clerk, adequate funds should already be in the annual budget. Therefore, there is no negative budgetary impact expected.

After discussion, a motion to approve this request was made by Wilson, seconded by Jopling and passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Bid-Sr. Center Renovations/Addition: Chairman Newton presented the bid tabulation sheet for the County Sr. Center for which the bids were opened January 14, 2010 at 1:00 PM, Commissioners’ Office.

After discussion , a motion to approve the low bid from Maybohm & Associates in the amount of \$340,831.00; motion was seconded by Wilson and passed the unanimously.

6. **Retro-Active Approval of CSRA RC Regional Broadband Initiative:** Chairman Newton asked County Manager Don Norton to help in presenting this matter to the Board.

Chairman Newton advised everyone that this particular project was in conjunction with the Bridge Grant originally initiated by Kelly Evans some time ago. The original project was a study called TechSmart contracted with the Economic Innovative Institute at Georgia Tech. The Finance Office has invoiced the original five counties (total of \$28,000 match for 5 counties) for their respective share of the match for the grant, i.e. Columbia, Lincoln, McDuffie, Warren, Wilkes; Columbia and Warren have submitted payment. The Clarks Hill Partnership TechSmith Regional meeting was held December 11, 2008 at the Thomson Campus of Augusta Tech with a status update at that time to all Commissioners and Department Heads

Now, OneGeorgia comes forward are offering a Second Round Broadband funding through the BTOP Program on behalf of interested member jurisdictions (13 counties) The cost of preparing the required technical study and application if \$32,000 per county with the CSRA Regional Commission and CSRA Unified Development Authority are each contributing \$1500 per participating county. The counties who are members of the Clarks Hill Partnership (Columbia, McDuffie, Lincoln, Warren, Wilkes) have remaining funds from a previous One-Georgia Bridge grant. These funds can be committed to reducing those communities' application costs. For the other counties (Burke, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Richmond, Taliaferro and Washington). The anticipated total cost out of pocket cost per county is as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Columbia, <u>McDuffie</u> , Lincoln, Warren, Wilkes Counties: = 5 counties | |
| \$9,600 | |
| Burke, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Richmond, Taliaferro & Washington Counties: = 8 counties; TOTAL 13 COUNTIES | \$9,000 |

-4-

The eight (8) counties that are not members of the Clarks Hill Partnership may also have to pay \$29,000 up front with the anticipation that \$20,000 will be reimbursed by One Georgia.

McDuffie County is the current fiscal agent for the funds awarded to the Clarks Hill Partnership. Because time is of the essence (with the federal grants due March 15, 2010, McDuffie County will serve as the lead entity and executive the contract with the project consultant, Civitium.

At this time, County Manager Don Norton recommended that the local matching funds of \$9,600 be made with funds coming from the Development Authority, SPLOST IV, (after checking with Riley Stamey, Chairman of the Development Authority). This included the fiber optic expansion growth throughout McDuffie County, particularly in the new City/County Government Center and connecting with adjoining counties. A motion was made by Wilson and seconded by Jopling to enter into this Agreement represented by the CSRA Regional Broadband Initiative; motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At this time, Chairman Newton asked to enter into an Executive Session to discuss the following 2 items;

1. Topic of Discussion: Potential Purchase of Real Estate
2. Topic of Discussion: Personnel Issue

A motion to enter into the Executive Session was made by Wilson, seconded by Jopling and passed unanimously.

At the end of the Executive Session, a motion to resume the regular Commission Meeting was made by Wilson, seconded by Jopling and passed unanimously.

NO ACTION TAKEN

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, a motion to adjourn was made by Wilson, seconded by Jopling and passed unanimously.

McDUFFIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles G. Newton IV, Chairman

ATTEST:

Annette Finley, County Clerk