

THE SCREVEN COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

FEBRUARY 14, 2023

The Board of Commissioners of Screven County, Georgia, Mr. Will Boyd, Chairman, Mr. J.C. Warren, Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Allison Willis, Mr. Ben Thompson, Ms. Rosa Romeo, Mr. Edwin Lovett and Mr. Mike Dixon met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on February 14, 2023, at the Screven County Courthouse.

PERSONS ATTENDING THE MEETING

Mr. Aaron Meyer, County Attorney (via speakerphone), Mrs. Sonya Gordon, Administrative Clerk, Ben Deen, Thomas Griffin, Uley Robbins, Laura Mills, Ben Counts, Kathryn Counts, Becca Hughes, Phillip Hughes, Paul Keller Newton, Lagina Evans, David Perry, Laura Duncan, Roger Brown and Stacy Mincey

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Boyd called the meeting to order. Commissioner Warren gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Willis made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Romeo seconded the motion and it carried by unanimous vote.

MINUTES

Commissioner Romeo made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2023 and the January 24, 2023 Commissioners' meetings. Commissioner Willis seconded the motion and it carried by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Thomas Griffin of Farmdale Road presented the Board with pictures of garbage trailed alongside county roads and garbage that has blown out of the containers at multiple dump sites. Mr. Griffin is concerned that this will become a health hazard because some of this garbage is blowing

into the Canal on Best Bridge Rd. Commissioner Warren informed Mr. Griffin that the Board is aware of the situation and is trying to take measures such as purchasing property so that the dumpsters can be fenced in to try to contain some of the garbage. Commissioner Warren stated that no one is willing to allow the County to purchase property at this time, but any recommendations are welcomed.

Mrs. Rebecca Hughes of Buttermilk Road is concerned with the process of our Animal Control Shelter. Mrs. Hughes feels that the County is spending money on unnecessary procedures for some animals when they are going to be euthanized soon after these visits from the Veterinarian. Mrs. Hughes owns a dog training business and would like to see these stray animals find loving homes, but feels like there is also a lack of advertising for these animals to be adopted. Mrs. Hughes would love to see changes in the areas mentioned in her letter to the Board.

APPEARANCE

(1) Mr. William Arthur of Aurthur Engineering appeared before the Board to discuss Screven County becoming a Sanctuary County. Commissioner Willis and Commissioner Thompson are in agreeance with passing this Resolution after further review from the County Attorney. Commissioner Lovett would like to educate himself a little more by speaking with County Attorney Aaron Meyer and Sheriff Kile before making a decision. The Board has agreed to table this discussion until next month.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) **Health Department/HVAC** The Screven County Health Department provided quotes for their HVAC system to be repaired. Hagan Heating & Air was the lowest bidder in the amount of \$6,135.00. County Attorney Aaron Meyer stated no motion was necessary for this approval.

(2) **Ag Building/Estimates** Commissioner Willis provided the Board with a few estimates for the roof of the Ag Building. Commissioner Boyd reminded Mrs. Willis that there are funds set aside

from the last SPLOST to remodel the building. Commissioner Willis wanted to know if there was a proposal or plan put in place for this remodel. Commissioner Thompson informed Mrs. Willis that he will have a plan put together to present at next month's meeting. Commissioner Boyd and Commissioner Thompson also encouraged Mrs. Willis to wait until after the Livestock Festival/Show in April before starting on any repairs, so that it won't have the potential of interfering with these activities. Commissioner Willis made a motion to move forward with the repairs to the roof of the Ag Building. Commissioner Dixon seconded the motion. Commissioner Willis and Commissioner Dixon are in favor of this motion. Commissioner Boyd, Commissioner Warren, Commissioner Romeo, Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Lovett opposed. The motion failed.

Commissioner Lovett also discussed the condition of the Library's roof. Mr. Lovett says leaks have been an ongoing issue for the Library. Sonya Gordon, Administrative Clerk, reached out to J.D. Meadows, Building & Maintenance Supervisor about these leaks and he stated that they are coming from the rain blowing through vents and getting into the tiles. Mr. Meadows stated that the building itself does not need a roof and that he already has the materials to fix these leaks. Commissioner Lovett stated that a few months ago an analysis of the entire building was done with an ending estimate of \$165,185.00. This estimate included some cosmetic issues that can be handled by our Building & Maintenance Supervisor or local businesses. Mr. Lovett also mentioned that the Library has a MRR grant that may become available that could help with the cost of some of these repairs. Commissioner Lovett feels that this building also needs some immediate attention.

(3) Discussion Commissioner Willis and Commissioner Thompson were called by some county residents over the weekend to report that the HVAC system at the Ag Building was not working properly. Commissioner Willis discovered that the propane tank was empty and called Thompson Gas to come refill the tank. Since the tank was completely empty, the line had to bleed for three

hours. Mrs. Willis suggested that in the future the gas be turned off from the ceiling unit instead of the tank.

(4) Discussion Commissioner Willis has met with a few surrounding counties to discuss the process of their Animal Control Shelter. Mrs. Willis is concerned with the amount of money the County is spending to test these animals then soon after they are euthanized. Mrs. Willis would like to start an Advisory Board to help assist Animal Control. This Board could help with setting up a TNR program to apply for grants, taking photos to help advertise for adoption and finding a new Veterinarian to help reduce the current cost. Mrs. Willis would also like to look into hiring a part-time employee to assist Ashley Bazemore, Animal Control Officer. Ashley often has calls that keep him away from the shelter throughout the day. Commissioner Warren feels like there should be proper protocols put in place for the public visiting the Animal Shelter.

(5) Discussion Commissioner Thompson stated that some county residents have reached out to him about the condition of Plantation Road. Plantation Road which is in Commissioner Lovett's district is on the road list for the 2023 LMIG. Commissioner Lovett has spoken with Mr. Bobby Smith, Co-Superintendent of Roads & Bridges about Plantation Road as well as New Bridge Road, which has damage due to logging operations. Mr. Smith has several different methods in mind that the DOT uses that he is interested in trying out on some locations throughout the county. Commissioner Willis asked if the County is charging a Bond to Loggers. Mrs. Willis stated that the surrounding counties charge a Bond to Loggers for the purpose of road damage, and thinks this is something worth looking into. Commissioner Dixon has concerns about Bradwell Road. Mr. Dixon says this road is in terrible condition and would like for this road to get some attention as well.

COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENTS

Mrs. Lagina Evans who was accompanied by Mr. David Perry, CEO of Optim and Mrs. Laura Duncan, Chief Nursing Officer gave an update on the hospital. Mrs. Evans informed the

Board that they suffered a minor setback to renovations due to flooding. Optim has now installed badge readers for after-hours entry. Optim has also teamed with Georgia Southern to offer more education and leadership/management courses for employees. A group was also sent to Augusta University to enhance their skills in critical care. Commissioner Warren inquired about staffing. Mrs. Evans stated that currently they are fully staffed. Commissioner Lovett asked about the utilization of lab services and surgery. Mrs. Evans stated that majority of lab services come from emergency patients but they also have a lot of outpatient labs. Optim has an agreement with LabCorp in Statesboro, where citizens can have their blood drawn from here, this helps local businesses from employees having to take time off from work to travel to Statesboro for blood work. There has also been a significant increase in general surgeries, which are performed on Wednesdays.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Willis made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel at 10:30 a.m. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion and it carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Thompson made a motion to return to regular session at 11:05 a.m. Commissioner Willis seconded the motion and it carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Romeo made a motion to approve the minutes of the executive session. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion and it carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Warren had questions regarding the combining of precincts. Commissioner Willis reminded Mr. Warren that the Election's Office brought this before the Board a few months ago, with the impression that no approval from the Board was needed. Commissioner Lovett also has concerns about this matter and how it will affect the Special Election in June. Mr. Lovett feels that this will cause a lot of confusion for voters. Although these voters should receive new Voter Registration cards from the state, Mr. Lovett feels that they may get ignored. Commissioner Willis

will question Debbie Brown, Elections Superintendent about when the notifications for these changes will be sent out. The Board feels that these changes could wait until after the Special Election. Commissioner Warren would like to invite Mrs. Brown to the next commissioner's meeting to answer any questions the Board may have regarding this matter. Chairman Boyd informed the Board that he spoke with Senator Max Burns concerning the Board of Elections. Mr. Burns has seen many issues with a three-person board, so he would like to recommend a five-person board instead. The Board has agreed by common consent to increase the members of the Board of Elections to five members.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Boyd adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Chairman

County Manager