

Baldwin County Planning Retreat

December 3, 2021

9:00 a.m.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

175 Emery Highway, Suite C

Macon, Georgia

PRESENT: Craig, Westmoreland, Butts, Davis Hall ALSO Present: McRee, Tobar, Hudson, Cunningham

Call to Order by Chairman Craig at 9:00 a.m.

PRIORITIES FROM 2022

Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) — Attorney David McRee stated the Department of Revenue (DOR) has to be notified by July that LOST negotiations have started. Chairman Craig recommended that he and County Manager Tobar talk to City about process and next steps. LOST brings in \$8 million - County 60% \$4.8 million dollars. Used for direct rollback for property tax; used as General Fund Revenue. Since last LOST negotiation the County has taken on more services per SDS — County pays all Development Authority; animal control, and library.

T-Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (I-SPLOST) — David McRee recommends notifying the City shortly after January 1st about putting the T-SPLOST on the ballot; discussing with the City what their position is; and hopefully, City will say YES; Judge Blackwell needs to know Feb. if it is going to be on ballot; IF City says no- will we move forward & only get 75%. STILL have to give city their percentage based on City population. After T-SPLOST matter is decided, then LOST discussions must begin. sidewalks, storm drain improvements, generic intersection improvements; paving roads; specific information on what roads will be resurfaced. Want to put information about exactly what money will be spent for. Dawn Hudson stated information to be included on ballot must be wisely decided —be careful about naming specific roads because IF you say you are going to do it --

- you will have to do it. Chairman Craig recommended looking at the number of voters on roads & maximize votes. Commissioner Hall stated he felt there would have to be some in every district. He stated we need to get it passed before anybody will benefit.

County Manager discussed a property that had drainage problems, and stated the easement can be obtained at no charge & County put pipe in to assist with erosion, Commissioner Hall and Chairman Craig felt the County does not have money to be putting pipe in to do this. Do not think we need to start this. County can dig ditches and maintain easements. Commissioners agreed the road list for T-SPLOST should be done by mid-January.

SPLOST - Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson stated SPLOST is just as important as TSPLOST because we must have SPLOST to do capital projects. She reported the Call for Election should be done in March 2023 which is a year prior to year of expiration of sales tax. She stated County Departments need to start working on list of projects for SPLOST; Capital Improvement Plan from departments is available that shows what every department needs. Departments must develop and prioritize projects.

BUDGET - County Manager Tobar stated the County needs to focus on industry to bring money back to the County. He stated the budget for 2022 will be voted on at the meeting on December 7th. Commissioner Butts discussed the ambulance contract

with Grady, fleet maintenance and a full-time investigator for the District Attorney's office. In regards to fleet maintenance, he stated he feels that too many

employees drive vehicles home which is the expense of gas & wear / tear on vehicles. He stated the County needs to have a replacement policy that sets out guidelines for replacement. County Manager Tobar stated having someone in the maintenance shop helps by getting things done quicker. The liability of children riding in County vehicles was also discussed. Assistant County Manager Hudson stated the County should contact insurance company about this and get something in writing. She said the full-time investigator for the DA is included in budget. Discussion was held as to whether this person will be used throughout the circuit.

Commissioner Hall stated the DA said it will be used only in Baldwin County. Assistant County Manager stated benefits are 40% of salary and she doesn't have specific salary from the DA; however, included in the budget is the starting salary of our investigators at Sheriff's Department which is \$46,000. Attorney McRee stated that historically investigators that work for DA do not investigate crime. Investigators from law enforcement build the case & then it goes to DA. DA Investigators are not out in the community investigating crime — they interview witnesses, etc. They work as an arm of DA. Dawn Hudson reported she felt the investigator should be paid for by all counties in the circuit. Chairman Craig stated that the DA said investigator will ONLY work in Baldwin County. He stated the Sheriff supports this as well. Chairman Craig said he felt that if this will help

Baldwin County then he is for it. Assistant County Manager reported the cost will be about \$70,000 - \$80,000 and the starting salary included in budget is starting salary of investigator. After discussion, Chairman Craig stated the majority agrees to fund this at this starting salary of investigator.

ARP ACT — Used for roads, fire; County Manager stated that next year if we get a big company at Smith — Sibley we will be on hook for sewer & water which will cost approximately the amount of ARP funds we will be getting - \$4.6 million. He recommended that the County "Hold" this ARP money in case we need water / sewer for a big industry. He stated it will cost \$4.3 million to "run" sewer to city or some other type other self-sustaining system.

Commissioner Hall reported the SWA has delayed maintenance at the plant and will be looking at \$1 million for repair / maintenance for improvements. He stated SWA will provide \$600,000 and are asking the two counties to come up with \$400,000. Commissioner Hall recommended the County set aside some of ARP money - \$200,000 with payment being delayed until May. He stated there are a variety of things that need to be done. Chairman Craig stated he feels the County should consider this. Assistant County Manager Hudson stated Putnam County has to agree to this also, and she does not feel the County should automatically give all the money to SWA. She felt this should be project driven. Commissioner Butts asked how much of the ARP Act fund has been spent. Assistant County

Manager reported \$1.9 million has been spent on premium pay for employees — \$319,000 which displaced money from General Fund for law enforcement; \$600,000 spent on Erin Shores water project; \$2.87 million match commitment for the State Fiscal Recovery fund. She reported that some other charges will be added like drainage at the Recreation Dept. She concluded that all first-round money has been spent or obligated. She stated the second allocation

should come in May, and regulations for spending could change. She stated that if we get this money it could be spent on water / sewer at the Smith Sibley site. Chairman Craig recommended the County have alternate plans to spend the money.

Commissioner Davis stated ARP money can be used for Recreation if it is COVID related. She stated the County couldn't have camp, and if we lost money we can get this back. Dawn Hudson stated that Baldwin County did not have revenue loss. Can't recoup any of this ARP because we would have to prove REVENUE LOSS.

REDISTRICTING

County Attorney McRee stated there needs to be a map authorized to be sent to reapportionment office. That office looks at map to see if it complies with all the requirements. They either agree or send back and recommend changes. Once approved by reapportionment office, the map will be available for public review and then approved by Board to get to Rep. Williams to introduce legislation. He stated this needs to be done as soon as possible.

If there are different districts for the Board of Commissioners and Board of Education, it will cost more in elections.

County Manager Tobar explained the process the County went through to meet guidelines. Staff recommends Map # 5; percentages are good; all districts changed somewhat. He stated both #5 & #7 maps meet all requirements. #5 is more compact & will save money in elections. Commissioner Davis stated streets in front of Country Club were given to her, and she didn't think that would be a good fit for her. Black Springs Road will give her a few more black voters. County Manager reported that only the districts of Commissioners Craig and Davis changed, and these are well within the standard deviation.

Chairman Craig stated he is in favor of submitting map #7 and if it is opposed by Reapportionment to go with map #5. He also recommended sending map #7 to Board of Education and notifying them that it will be presented at the Commissioners meeting on Tuesday.

FIRE CONTRACT

County Attorney McRee presented an update on the lawsuit with the State regarding the Fire Contract

EMS CONTRACT

County Manager Tobar presented information about the proposed EMS contract and expenses associated with this. He stated this will be presented at the December 7th meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Equipment, staffing, recruitment and volunteers were discussed. Capital needs and locations of fire stations were discussed. Commissioners requested the development of a policy by March 2022 on managing equipment assigned to each department. County Manager Tobar stated that equipment was recently ordered.

CRIME

County Manager Tobar reported cameras will be placed in most needed areas to assist with crime. He stated support is needed for new legislation to provide strict penalties for minors. He discussed Faith Based Organizations to help with programs on weekends and evenings. Also, to get churches together to support youth, recruit black pastors with ministerial alliances help to raise funds, hire pastors.

Chairman Craig stated he felt the decision on use of Collins P. Lee Center should be left up to what the citizens would want.

Attorney McRee stated juvenile laws have changed, and it is hard to prosecute and place violators in juvenile detention centers. Laws must come from Atlanta to enable courts to do this.

Chairman Craig recommended that the County show that the County is interested in solving the problem; let's decide to lead; put money into helping.

HEALTH / WELLNESS PROGRAM

Assistant County Manager Hudson reported the Health Fair was a success. Onehalf of staff participated. She stated the major problem identified is obesity. She reported identifying risk factors and being proactive to keep participants healthy would save the County money. Dawn reported she thinks the County should form a committee and select a leader to promote ways to help with this effort by addressing challenges such as weight loss; i.e., contest for most weight lost. She reported she does not know what percentage of each department participated; but, those who did participate get a discount on health insurance. She reported the County offered free flu shots for all full-time employees again this year. She gave an update on how the clinic is being utilized. Vice Chairman Westmoreland suggested the County contact local gyms to see if they will give a discount to County employees.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

County Manager Tobar reported one of largest needs at the Recreation Department is to replace lights; however, the County can't afford it. This project will have to wait for next SPLOST. A walking track around the Government Building was discussed. Chairman Craig stated he felt the Government Building grounds should be a place for community and felt there are opportunities to make something special over time. Commissioners discussed placing picnic tables so employees can go outside and have lunch. Assistant County Manager Hudson reported the fence around the carwash will be removed and replaced with trees. County Manager Tobar discussed making a disk golf course at Walter B. Williams. He stated the County would have to take down trees, and \$10,000 is needed to help in getting concrete pads installed. He reported there will be no entrance fee, and disks will be held at the Recreation Department for use. Commissioner Davis suggested talking to Fowler Flemister Concrete to see if they would help with pads. Vice Chairman Westmoreland stated he felt parking will be an issue. He stated the area on the cut through road needs to be cleaned up, and old equipment and school buses behind Department should be

removed. Commissioner Davis stated the area around the pond needs to be kept clean.

Golf Course — County Manager reported Engineer Brian Wood is working with Golf Course Director Kyle Wall to determine what the County can do to help with issues brought before the Commissioners by a citizens group. Volunteers who offered to help with improvements will be contacted for their assistance. He stated the larger items such as can path improvements and extension of greens will be responsibility of the County. Assistant County Manager Hudson stated money can be put in next SPLOST if all improvements can't be done this year

COUNTY BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES

County Manager Tobar stated the County has been recycling and repurposing buildings.

Convenience Center on Meriwether Road - has been cleaned up — cleaned fence and sprayed fence line to keep grass growth down; new skids were installed and repair to center parking / pavement at center will be done as well.

Courthouse — District Attorney has moved into the new space; County can't afford new HVAC in this SPLOST, but should pursue it in the next SPLOST to reduce operating costs. Solicitor's Office will move into their new space by end of year. He reported the first floor is the most expensive because of putting in new courtroom on this floor. County Manager stated a request was made to put jury pool room in basement with two bathrooms in basement. He stated this will be very expensive since a system would have to be installed to pump sewerage up. There will not be bathrooms put downstairs; but, there can be a jury room downstairs.

Public Health Building: Annex & Renovated Health Department — No Ribbon Cutting except possibly the Renovated Health Department.

Mary Vinson Library & Collins P. Lee center are eligible for funding. Rep. Rick Williams will be asked to focus efforts on Collins P. Lee Center: 10% set-a-side, \$100,000, will be the local match. Will need over \$900,000 in state funds.

Renovated Health Department Building - Mr. Tobar stated he felt this is a great building, and it will house the Drug Task Force, EMS; EMA. He reported the 4-H programs will be moving into the previous building occupied by the Drug Task Force. He stated no other department will be moved into the former 4-H building at this time.

Animal Control had to put up animal proof items in the center due to dogs damaging it; system was installed for better ventilation. The Department is requesting an automatic gate; however, this will have to wait for next SPLOST.

Lawrence Building — County Manager reported there has been some interest in the building, and the County may be getting proposals. County is maintaining grounds. He reported people are storing stuff at Lawrence Building without permission. This needs to be gone. Attorney McRee stated everything has to be moved. Discussion was held about Thomas Field Road lot. It was prepared for parking big trucks. Staff should look at developing policy and fee schedule.

Ogden Property — County Manager reported work will be done by contractor &

County forces. This will not start until after roundabout is finished. County got \$3,500 for the tractor that was sold, and County will pay Ms. Ogden whatever contract specifies.

Roundabout- Signs have been installed,

Plan First— County Manager reported there were 3 reasons County was not designated as Plan First Community - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT; TYING STRATEGIC PLAN TO COMP PLAN; ZONING. He stated at town hall meeting there was an indication of "HIDDEN" Agenda. The intent of zoning is how you want the County to look in future. Need to have more town hall meetings. Mr. Tobar stated he thinks the zoning document will meet all desires and should reflect what we want. Intent is to revitalize southside — not making it a dumping ground.

Commissioner Butts asked what are other ways we can get Plan First designation other than zoning? Mr. Tobar responded of the three things the County could possibly get the designation by completing two out of the three. Commissioner Hall stated he is not for zoning and will not vote for it. Commissioner Butts stated he hasn't made up mind. He doesn't think Plan First must have zoning to get

designation. County Manager responded that zoning lets you have your district "how you want it to look".

County Manager discussed two census tracts with highest poverty levels in County. He stated a way to get houses built in these areas are with GICH designation and by waiving sewer and water fees and building fees. He stated we could put county owned properties out to bid. IF you build a new residential structure in these two impoverished census tracts fees will be waived. Incentives for single or multi-family needs to be decided. Identify parcels. Chairman Craig asked County Manager to develop a concept with the County Attorney for this and bring information back to Board.

Animal Control Ordinance - County Manager reported the ordinance will be revisited to enable the Solicitor to prosecute. Will be brought back to the Board after the Lodging Tax.

PIO (Public Information Officer) — Chairman Craig stated he felt it would benefit the county to have a public information officer.

Grant Writer — Chairman Craig stated he felt the County should hire grant staff person to look for available grant money. Decision later.

Fleet Policy — Commissioners discussed employees driving vehicles home. They discussed whether employees must take vehicle home & how many times do they respond to callouts? County Attorney responded it is considered an added employment incentive to have a vehicle provided by county. Vote on Fleet Policy at December 21st Meeting.

TYLER — Training held on Tax Assessor side / staff; Chairman Craig asked how are employees responding to training? County Manager stated the Board needs to insist

on reports from Tax Assessor's office to see that it is meeting timelines / requirements. Chairman responded that the Chief Appraiser doesn't work for Commissioners. Discussion was held about asking Board of Assessors to submit information.

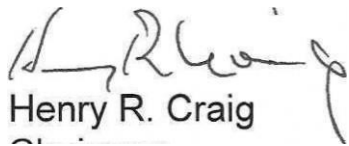
Commission Meetings — Chairman Craig stated as discussed earlier this morning he felt it would be good to have students from various high schools lead the Pledge of Allegiance at Commission Meetings. County Manager Tobar reviewed the Agenda for Dec 7th.

Other Business - Vice Chairman Westmoreland asked for an update on the development that will be located on Log Cabin and N. Columbia St. County Manager has sent a letter to City stating it is in the County service area, and the County will provide water and sewer to the site. City of Milledgeville may annex property but it is in the County's service area

VISION FOR 2023 AND BEYOND

Fire Department is the Primary Goal for next SPLOST

ADJOURNMENT — Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.


Henry R. Craig
Chairman

Cynthia
Cunningham


K. Cunningham
County Clerk