

**DAWSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
VOTING SESSION MINUTES – THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024
DAWSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER ASSEMBLY ROOM
25 JUSTICE WAY, DAWSONVILLE, GEORGIA 30534
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 4:00 PM WORK SESSION**

ROLL CALL: Those present were Chairman Billy Thurmond; Commissioner Seth Stowers, District 1; Commissioner Chris Gaines, District 2; Commissioner Alexa Bruce, District 3; Commissioner Emory Dooley, District 4; County Manager Joey Leverette; County Attorney Melissa Tracy; County Clerk Kristen Cloud; and interested citizens of Dawson County.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Thurmond

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion passed 4-0 to approve the Minutes of the Work Session held on December 5, 2024.
Stowers/Bruce

Motion passed 4-0 to approve the Minutes of the Voting Session held on December 5, 2024.
Bruce/Gaines

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion passed 4-0 to approve the agenda with the following change:

- Addition of Nos. 4-6 under New Business:
 - Agreement Between Dawson County and Northeast Georgia Physicians Group Concerning Use of Clinical Sites for EMT Students
 - Renewal of Agreement Between Dawson County and Lanier Technical College Concerning Third Riders on Ambulances
 - An Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Dawsonville and the Dawson County Board of Elections and Registration Relating to the 2025 Municipal Elections for the City of Dawsonville

Stowers/Bruce

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Request for Approval of FY 2025 State Public Defender Contract
- Request for Approval of FY 2025 Public Defender Intergovernmental Agreement Between Dawson and Hall Counties
- A Resolution for Dawson County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024-2029
- Keep Dawson County Beautiful Executive Director Appointment: Ehron Ostendorf
- Board Appointments:

- **Development Authority**
 - Jere Allen- reappointment (Term: January 2025 through December 2028)
 - Tony Passarello- reappointment (Term: January 2025 through December 2028)
- **Joint Development Authority**
 - Jere Allen- reappointment (Term: January 2025 through December 2028)

Motion passed 4-0 to approve the Consent Agenda. Dooley/Stowers

ALCOHOL LICENSE:

New Alcohol License (Retail Package Sale of Malt Beverages and Wine) – Nelson Food Mart, 25 Beartooth Parkway, Dawsonville, GA 30534

Dawson County Alcohol Administrator Kathryn Massey presented an alcohol license application for Nelson Food Mart.

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a New Alcohol License (Retail Package Sale of Malt Beverages and Wine) – Nelson Food Mart, 25 Beartooth Parkway, Dawsonville, GA 30534. Stowers/Gaines

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Amended Development Impact Fee Ordinance (1st of 2 hearings; 2nd hearing will be held on January 16, 2025)

Planning & Development Director Sharon Farrell said there are several “moving parts to the Capital Improvements Element (CIE), which is updated every five years that then triggers a new amended CIE...” She referenced a draft fee schedule and used a PowerPoint presentation to display previous and current impact fees as well as county comparisons.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to be heard on an Amended Development Impact Fee Ordinance.

The following spoke on an Amended Development Impact Fee Ordinance:

- Harris Georgia, Dawsonville, Georgia, said he agreed with Commissioner Bruce when she suggested moving some of the impact fees “over to fire and EMS, however you may do that.” Georgia added, “I see them struggling on a daily basis with the staff, with finding the paramedics that they need. I would love to see you guys move some type of funds, whether that be from impact fees or elsewhere toward finding the paramedics that they need...”
- Shannon Stanford, Dawsonville, Georgia, said, “This is an important part of our community – how it’s built and how these impact fees are going to be divided up, so I definitely think that roads as well need to be prioritized because that seems to be one of the major issues that we’re running into out here.”

Chairman Thurmond asked if there was anyone else present who wished to speak on an Amended Development Impact Fee Ordinance and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

A second public hearing concerning an Amended Development Impact Fee Ordinance will be held on January 16, 2025.

Text Amendment to Amend the Language of Chapter 129, Sign Ordinance (1st of 2 hearings; 2nd hearing will be held on January 16, 2025)

Planning & Development Director Sharon Farrell said, “[This is a] change in the code to meet state law regarding administrative variances, also removing variances from the sign ordinance, and some cleanup that’s been vetted through legal counsel.”

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to be heard on a Text Amendment to Amend the Language of Chapter 129, Sign Ordinance and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

A second public hearing concerning a Text Amendment to Amend the Language of Chapter 129, Sign Ordinance will be held on January 16, 2025.

ZONING:

ZA 24-11 - Jim King requests a Land Use Amendment to zone 152.44 acres of property currently zoned RA (Residential Agriculture) to RS2 (Residential Suburban 2). This property is located at the southeast corner of Georgia 9 North and Dawson Forest Road, Dawsonville (Parcel ID 098-015).

Chairman Thurmond announced that if anyone contributed more than \$250 to the commissioners or chairman in the past two years and wished to speak, they would have to fill out a disclosure form, which would be made available to them. Under the normal program, 10 minutes is given to those who wish to speak in favor of or opposition to with some redirect, time permitting.

Planning & Development Director Sharon Farrell said the Planning Commission recommended denial of the application. She said a staff report has circulated and staff is supportive of the request. Farrell said the application meets the county’s future land use, character map and policies in the comprehensive plan. She said staff added stipulations to its staff report.

Applicant Jim King said he represents the owner of a 152-acre tract at the southeast corner of Dawson Forest Road and Highway 9. He said the application seeks to create “a 280-lot residential subdivision with a gross density of 1.7 units per acre; it has a net density of 2.0 units per acre, which is in conformance with the suburban residential zoning classification that we’re looking at and the character area.” King echoed Farrell, pointing out that the application is in conformance with the county’s current land use plan and character area. “And I think that’s really probably the biggest point I’d like to make here tonight,” said King, displaying a PowerPoint presentation explaining the county’s comprehensive plan history. He also requested time for rebuttal if needed.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to speak either for or against the application.

None spoke in favor of the application.

The following, all of Dawsonville, Georgia, spoke in opposition to the application:

- Shannon Stanford
- Harris Georgia

- Linda Mahler
- Tiffany Georgia
- Sabrina Needy
- Victoria Davis
- Michelle Jarrett
- Kelly Venters
- Tom Carry
- Nick LeBarnes
- Ben King
- Christy Castleberry
- Tristan Brooksher
- Tory Daniel

Chairman Thurmond asked if there was anyone else present who wished to speak on the application and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Jim King was given an opportunity for rebuttal as he requested. He mentioned the land use plan and said “ever since I can remember [it has] been the theme of the land use plan to concentrate the growth on the south end of the county near Highway 9 and near 400 because you’re not going to stop, you can’t stop, the growth. There’s going to be growth. You just need to plan for it and put it in the right area and that’s what the land use plan has done all for 25 years, and this parcel has been designated for more intense growth for 25 years.” He added, “Having said that, my client, since the Planning Commission [meeting in November], ... has offered up to look into a potential of a 55+ community. Now this is a totally different builder. He has reached out, and he does have someone who has expressed some interest in it. In order to vet this out, though, it’s going to take some time.” King requested the board table the application until March 2025 to explore this possibility.

Motion was made by Commissioner Dooley to table ZA 24-11. He withdrew the motion.

Motion passed 4-0 to table ZA 24-11 until March 20, 2025, and that there be another public hearing to receive input from the public on the future form of the application. Dooley/Stowers

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration of Variation of Request to Extend and Allocate Additional Funds for Sign-On Bonuses for Full-Time Paramedic Applicants / New Hires

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Variation of Request to Extend and Allocate Additional Funds for Sign-On Bonuses for Full-Time Paramedic Applicants / New Hires to include the following:

- Fully paid paramedic certification training for any existing Emergency Services employee who successfully completes an accredited paramedic certification program. Upon completion of the county-paid training, employee must remain employed full-time with Dawson County for a period of two years from the date that the certification is issued. A formal written policy and agreement will be developed related to this educational incentive. (The typical cost of paramedic training is \$8,000 over an 18-month period from an accredited technical college.) It is intended that this will be an ongoing incentive

program budgeted each year with no expiration date. Program budget for FY 2025 is \$32,000;

- Retention bonus of \$6,000 for FY 2025 for all existing Dawson County employees who are certified paramedics, to be paid quarterly in \$1,500 installments. Budget for FY 2025 is \$96,000; and
- Sign-on bonus program for qualified and certified new-hire paramedics in the amount of \$8,000. Sign-on bonus of \$2,000 paid quarterly upon completion of each quarter the first year of employment. Upon date of hire and acceptance of sign-on bonus agreement, new hires will be required to complete two years of full-time employment with Dawson County. Budget for FY 2025 is \$32,000. This program is intended to continue and be budgeted for FY 2026, with the sign-on bonus program to expire on December 31, 2026.

Total funds for all incentive programs are \$160,000, which will come from General Fund's fund balance. Formal written policies will be developed for all three incentive programs.

Bruce/Dooley

Consideration of IFB #460-24 – State Route 136 at Shoal Creek Road Roundabout Award Request

Motion passed 4-0 to approve IFB #460-24 – State Route 136 at Shoal Creek Road Roundabout Award Request; to accept bids received and award a contract to Bartow Paving in the amount of \$2,085,040, which will come from Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) VII funds. Stowers/Gaines

Consideration of RFP #459-24 – Construction Services - Styles Park

Motion passed 4-0 to approve RFP #459-24 – Construction Services - Styles Park; to reject proposals received for Task 1, accept proposals received for Task 2 and award a contract to Steele & Associates in the amount of \$334,296 utilizing SPLOST VI funds. Bruce/Stowers

Consideration of Agreement Between Dawson County and Northeast Georgia Physicians Group Concerning Use of Clinical Sites for EMT Students

Motion passed 4-0 to approve an Agreement Between Dawson County and Northeast Georgia Physicians Group Concerning Use of Clinical Sites for EMT Students. Bruce/Gaines

Consideration of Renewal of Agreement Between Dawson County and Lanier Technical College Concerning Third Riders on Ambulances

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Renewal of an Agreement Between Dawson County and Lanier Technical College Concerning Third Riders on Ambulances. Bruce/Stowers

Consideration of An Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Dawsonville and the Dawson County Board of Elections and Registration Relating to the 2025 Municipal Elections for the City of Dawsonville

Motion passed 4-0 to approve An Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Dawsonville and the Dawson County Board of Elections and Registration Relating to the 2025 Municipal Elections for the City of Dawsonville. Dooley/Stowers

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

Chairman Thurmond and the board presented outgoing District 4 Commissioner Emory Dooley with words of thanks and an appreciation gift for his term of service.

ADJOURNMENT:

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Billy Thurmond, Chairman

Kristen Cloud, County Clerk