

**DAWSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
VOTING SESSION MINUTES – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023  
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; Interim County Manager Vickie Neikirk; County Attorney Angela Davis; 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 January 19, 2023.  
Dooley/Stowers

Motion passed 4-0 to approve the Minutes of the Voting Session held on January 19, 2023.  
Gaines/Bruce

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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

- Addition of Nos. 8-11 Under New Business:
  - Request to Apply for a 2024 Georgia Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant for the Construction of Bike and Walking Trails at the Styles Park Property
  - Employee Evaluation Incentive Program for 2023
  - Lease Agreement Between Dawson County and Rocky Hill Cattle Company LLC
  - Board Appointments:
    - **Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation & Development Council**
      - George Lyons- *reappointment* (Term: Through December 2026)
      - Seth Stowers- *replacing Sharon Fausett* (Term: Through December 2026)
    - **Development Authority**
      - Gary Vaughters- *replacing Gary Coates* (Term: Through December 2026)

Bruce/Gaines

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Consideration of School Resource Officer Position Request

Motion was made by Commissioner Gaines to approve a School Resource Officer Position Request at an amount of \$77,877, funds that will come from General Fund's fund balance and that will be reimbursed 50 percent by the Dawson County Board of Education. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruce.

Commissioner Gaines amended his motion to change the amount to \$78,887. Commissioner Bruce amended her second. Motion passed 4-0.

Consideration of Retirement Award of Firearm and Badge for Sheriff's Lieutenant Michener Long

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Retirement Award of Firearm and Badge for Sherriff's Lieutenant Michener Long. Dooley/Stowers

Consideration of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Vehicle Purchase

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Vehicle Purchase for the Sheriff's Office; to allow the chief financial officer to request quotes from banking sources for the best interest rate and terms, enter a cooperative agreement through the federal General Services Administration contract #GS07F-169DA, to allow purchasing to issue a purchase order once funding has been secured, and to obtain financing if necessary. Funds will come from the Sheriff's Office Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax VII vehicle fund. Dooley/Bruce

Consideration of Family Connection Fiscal Agent Request

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Family Connection Fiscal Agent Request. Gaines/Stowers

Consideration of Request to Accept Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Request to Accept a Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant. Stowers/Gaines

Consideration of IFB #412-22 - Highway 53 and Thompson Creek Park Road Roundabout

Motion passed 4-0 to approve IFB #412-22 - Highway 53 and Thompson Creek Park Road Roundabout; to accept the bids received, approve a contract to Vertical Earth in the amount of \$1,547,083.74, accept \$1,061,817 from Georgia Department of Transportation in Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant funds, and approve a 10 percent contingency of \$154,708.40 that will come from General Fund's fund balance. Gaines/Bruce

Consideration of Corridor Study - Lumpkin Campground Road

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Corridor Study – Lumpkin Campground Road in the amount of \$29,675; funds will come out of \$150,000 for Lumpkin Campground Road improvements provided by the developer as stipulated in a zoning application 22-19/variance request 22-14 approval in October 2022. Bruce/Stowers

Consideration of Request to Apply for a 2024 Georgia Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant for the Construction of Bike and Walking Trails at the Styles Park Property

Motion passed 4-0 to approve a Request to Apply for a 2024 Georgia Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant for the Construction of Bike and Walking Trails at the Styles Park Property. Bruce/Stowers

Consideration of Employee Evaluation Incentive Program for 2023

Motion passed 4-0 to approve 2023 employee evaluations being completed on an employee's anniversary date of hire, at which time an employee will receive a longevity increase and may receive any applicable Paid Time Off merit. First-year employees, who were not eligible for a 2022 evaluation and resulting January 2023 monetary merit, will receive any applicable monetary merit on their one-anniversary date of hire in 2023 based on their employee evaluation in 2023. Dooley/Bruce

Consideration of Lease Agreement Between Dawson County and Rocky Hill Cattle Company LLC

Motion passed 3-0 to approve a Lease Agreement Between Dawson County and Rocky Hill Cattle Company LLC. Gaines/Bruce- Commissioner Stowers abstained

Consideration of Board Appointments:

- Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation & Development Council
  - George Lyons- reappointment (Term: Through December 2026)
  - Seth Stowers- replacing Sharon Fausett (Term: Through December 2026)
- Development Authority
  - Gary Vaughters- replacing Gary Coates (Term: Through December 2026)

Motion passed 4-0 to approve the reappointment of George Lyons and appointment of Seth Stowers to the Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation & Development Council, and the appointment of Gary Vaughters to the Development Authority. Terms will run through December 2026. Bruce/Dooley

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ren Hall, Dawsonville, Georgia, said he “fled taxes” from Fulton County to Dawson County, “so I was really alarmed this last week when I applied for a permit and, of course, the permit was to finish a building that I never finished six years ago, and I saw a \$2,600 impact fee. [I] swallowed my tongue because, now that I’m retired, I’m on Social Security and that’s about 80 percent of my Social Security for a month.” He said he then did a “deep dive” on impact fees. He said he does not feel impact fees are reasonable for private citizens building on their own property, particularly in rural areas. “I understand all the development going in on the east side and that puts an added strain on the government to keep up with them...” Hall, a military veteran, said he just wants to retire on his property on Cowart Road that he purchased 12 years ago. He said his taxes have doubled since that time, and “then I saw this fee being assessed to me to build on my property and it leads me to here, which is the last thing I actually want to do.” Hall said he had gotten all his permits to build on the property a number of years ago prior to the implantation of the current impact fee schedule but never got a certificate of occupancy. He said he would like the board to reconsider impact fees on individuals; “it’s an undue tax,” he noted.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Motion passed 4-0 to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel. Gaines/Bruce

Motion passed 4-0 to come out of Executive Session. Dooley/Bruce

Motion passed 4-0 to approve an amendment to the Dawson County employee handbook in regards to the salary of the county manager. Stowers/Bruce

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Billy Thurmond, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristen Cloud, County Clerk