DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 3, 2025 DRAFT

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany Dougherty Government Center on February 3, 2025. Rev. Elvin Mallory, First Bethesda Baptist Church and Albany Technical College Instructor, opened the meeting with a song. Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome were present. Also present were County Administrator Deron King, Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, County Administrator Alex Shalishali, and other staff. The public and media participated in person and via live streaming of the meeting on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel.

After the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by the Chairman, he called for approval of the minutes of the January 6th Work Session, January 6th Regular Meeting, and January 13th Work Session.

Commissioner Newsome moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gray, the minutes were unanimously approved.

The Chairman called for consideration to purchase new tax collection computer software from single source vendor Manatron Inc. (dba Aumentum Technologies) for the total expenditure of $24,716. This quote includes the tax collection software upgrade from VCSTax to VCSTax Web and staff training. The software upgrade will improve the tax collection and accounting process. Funding is available in the CIP Fund Balance. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, Tax Director Shonna Josey and City of Albany Technology and Communications Director John Dawson addressed. Clarity was provided by Mr. Brooks that the software expenditure was budgeted. Mr. Dawson shared that the software will not be housed in the cloud, but the County will have an option to do so in the future. The cost of the software was explained. Data security and the rationale for keeping the software in-house was also shared. Mrs. Josey attempted to answer Commissioner Edwards' concerns pertaining to the DMV's process regarding fines and notification to citizens.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gray, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration to purchase thirty OptiPlex towers and thirty-five Dell Monitors from Dell Technologies via the City of Albany TAC Department for a total expenditure of $26,400. The computers are needed to be compatible with the new tax collection software. Funding is available in the CIP Fund Balance. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, Tax Director Shonna Josey and City of Albany Technology and Communications Director John Dawson addressed.

Commissioner Gray moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Johnson, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration of the proposed board appointment to the Air Conditioning, Heating, and Ventilation Board. Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, Larry Harry was unanimously recommended to the City of Albany for ratification for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025.

The Chairman called for the Zoning Consideration of Lanier Engineering, applicant and Emory Keith Griffis, Sr, owner (24-081) request to rezone a 4.095-acre portion of a 59.05-acree parcel from AG (Agricultural District) to C-R (Community Residential Multiple Dwelling District). The rezoning aims to operate a recovery residence for women. The property is at 1021 Cordele Road. The motion of the Planning Commission failed and was denied due to a 3 (yes)-2(no)-2(abstain) vote, yielding no majority vote.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gray, the motion for approval passed via roll call with fives ayes and two nays by Commissioners Gaines and Jones.

The Chairman called for the Special Approval consideration of Lanier Engineering, applicant and Emory Keith Griffis, Sr, owner (24-080) request to operate a Recovery Residence for Women on a 4.095-acre portion of a 59.05-acree parcel, if rezoned to C-R (Community Residential Multiple Dwelling District). The property is at 1021 Cordele Road. The Planning Commission recommended approval with the following conditions: a buffer must be installed, and screening must be put in place to separate adjacent properties.

Commissioner Gaines asked for a point of order stating that the Zoning Consideration was not approved, so the Board should not take action on the request. The Chairman clarified that the Zoning Consideration was approved. There was a motion by Commissioner Johnson and the second provided by Commissioner Edwards for approval. Commissioner Gray offered a substitute motion to approve without the screening requirement. The substitute motion failed due to a lack of a second. Under discussion, Commissioner Johnson asked Planning Director Paul Forgey to clarify the buffer and screening requirements. Mr. Forgey reminded the Board that the applicant is not required to put up anything because this is a condition presented by the Planning Commission. It was suggested to negate neighbor concerns. He shared that the words buffering and screening are used interchangeably and provided examples. The Board was reminded that they have final approval and a recap was shared of the Planning Commission's action on both zoning requests. Commissioner Gray shared that Commissioner Johnson's concerns were addressed in his substitute motion, noting that there is a lot of subjectivity that may cause confusion in the future for the occupants. The Chairman shared his concerns and noted that he would like a condition that if the use of the property becomes anything beyond a sober living facility for women, that it would have to come back to the Commission to protect the homeowners. It was clarified by the County Attorney that as long as the function of the property remained under the Community Residential Multiple Dwelling District designation, a change in use will not be required to come back for approval. He advised that the Board would need to include their concerns regarding the

property being a sober living facility as a condition. Mr. Forgey concurred with the Attorney. Commissioner Johnson combined the desires of Commissioner Gray removing the buffer/screening requirements and the Chairman, clarifying that if the function changes from a sober living facility that the request must come before the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The final motion passed via roll call with six ayes and one abstain by Commissioner Jones.

Mr. King reminded the Board that the Commission's annual retreat will be held on February 5-6, 2025, at the Northwest Library Event Center.

Commissioner Edwards asked for an update on the paving of Redbud by Public Works. Upon the question of Commissioner Edwards, Mrs. Josey and other Board members shared that the contribution via tag renewal to Back the Blue was lobbied by the State. Commissioner Gray added that the collection, whether online or in person, is optional. Mrs. Josey and Commissioner Johnson explained the State's disbursement process and the county's inability to control. She will provide as much information as possible, noting that it may not address Commissioner Edward's specific question. Commissioner Gray clarified that the discussion was confusing two different fees and suggested how the information could be obtained. Chairman Heard directed the County Administrator to have staff research, but Chief Deputy John Ostrander addressed the concern.

Commissioner Gaines inquired if the federal funds that the County receives will be impacted by the freeze on the National level. Staff will provide information.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the County Attorney to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing potential litigation and then to adjourn.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gray, the motion for approval passed unanimously via roll call.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the Board entered into Executive Session at approximately 11 a.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK