DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

October 12, 2026

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany Dougherty Government Center on October 12, 2026. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, Russell Gray, and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Administrator Deron King, County Clerk Jawahn Ware, and other staff. The public participated in person and via live streaming on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel. County Attorney Alex Shalishali and Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks were absent.

After the invocation by Chairman Heard he asked the Commission to review the minutes of the September 21st Regular Meeting, September 28th Work Session, and September 28th Special Called Meeting.

The Chairman recognized Steven Belk, Parks and Recreation Director, to request monetary support and in-kind donations from the Commission for the October 24, 2026 Stop the Violence Softball Game. The initial funding request was for $3,000 to include in-kind donations (EMS & security). Several Board members provided comments in favor of the initiative. Commissioner Johnson suggested that the ask be increased to $5,000 to include funding for the annual blacktop event. Commissioner Edwards shared that the County Administrator has the ability to make decisions under $20,000 but appreciated the transparency of Misters King and Brooks. Commissioner Gaines clarified with Mr. King that he had the ability to approve this request, even if unbudgeted. He clarified that he does but preferred to share information with the Board.

The Chairman opened the zoning public hearing on the proposed amendment to the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Revision: Timeframe for Reapplication; Title III, Sections 4.04(D) and (E). The Albany Zoning Ordinance, Title III, Sections 404(D) and (E), sets the time allowed to apply for a rezoning after a denial of a previous application at 12 months for citizens and 6 months for the City/County Commission. The request was to ask the Planning Commission to make the time period consistent for all applicants. O.C.G.A. §36-66-4 states that "same property may not again be considered for rezoning until the expiration of at least six months immediately following the defeat of the rezoning by the local government". The Planning Commission recommends revising the Title III, Sections 4.04(D) and (E) reapplication timeframe to six months. Paul Forgey, Planning and Development Services Director addressed. Mr. Forgey answered clarification questions for Commissioner Johnson. There being no individuals present in support of or opposition to the proposed zoning matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the proposal for EMS Billing from the most responsive and responsible proposer, Emergency Billing, LLC (Maysville, GA) for an estimated amount of $280,000. Eleven proposals were evaluated. Funding will be a flat percentage of 7% from service revenues from the EMS portion of the General Fund. County

Administrator Deron King and EMS Director James Gibney addressed. Mr. Gibney stated that we currently pay 5% and clarified that there was a range of submissions. Due to concerns with the current vendor missing revenues, Mr. Gibney believed that the higher percentage would balance what was missed. Commissioner Gray shared concerns regarding the ethical basis of being paid via percentages and noted audit concerns. Commissioner Jones commended Mr. Gibney for looking for innovative ways to improve EMS.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to purchase one 2027 Ford Explorer for Public Works from Griffin Ford (Tifton, GA) in the amount of $36,842. Funding will be provided by CIP. County Administrator Deron King and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Commissioner Jones requested that the County Administrator have a conversation with the local Ford vendor to determine their interest in being on a state contract or doing business with Dougherty County and the Chairman noted the request.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to purchase one 2027 Ford F150 for Public Works from Griffin Ford (Tifton, GA) in the amount of $46,703. Funding will be provided by SPLOST VII. County Administrator Deron King and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Mr. Mathis clarified the request of Commissioner Gaines to explain the different funding sources for the vehicles listed on the agenda. He shared that administrative vehicles come from CIP. The operational vehicles used for storm drainage could be funded from SPLOST.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to retract the June 15, 2026 award from Banks Boiler Service, Inc. (Albany, GA) in the amount of $193,063.60 for the Judicial Building Boiler Replacement. Funding was budgeted in SPLOST VII. County Administrator Deron King and Interim Facilities Management Director Matt Idlett addressed. It was noted that the initial bid did not include costs for dismantling. The second lowest bidder was much higher, so it was proposed to rebid the request. Mr. Idlett addressed the concerns of Commissioner Gray. Commissioner Jones initially suggested that the initial company and their bid be utilized until Mr. Idlett clarified that the scope for the project did change. City of Albany Buyer Ricky Gladney addressed the concerns of Commissioner Gray regarding invoking the bid bond. Mr. Gladney added that this was a specialized vendor and it was not advantageous for the County to sue the company and it was not viewed as intentional lowballing. He did clarify that the initial bid was not perfect and the County could proceed, but it was better to rebid with minor scope changes.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the bid for the Judicial Building Boiler Replacement from the lowest, responsive, and responsible bidder, Banks Boiler Service, Inc. (Albany, GA) in the amount of $275,118.60. Two bids were received with the highest being $421,000. Funding is provided by SPLOST VII. County Administrator Deron King and Interim Facilities Management Director Matt Idlett addressed. City of Albany Buyer Ricky Gladney was present. Commissioner Edwards shared that the staff did a good job being business-friendly by recognizing that a mistake was made. The action was integral and Mr. King confirmed for Commissioner Johnson that the difference was still funded via SPLOST. Mr. Gladney shared his actions taken to review the initial apparent low bid. Most of the Board shared that the same result, via a change order, would have occurred but this was better for the County despite the concerns of Commissioner Gray that a precedent may have been set.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the resolution approving Dougherty County's application for Department of Natural Resources Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Grant for rehabilitation of the Radium Springs RiverPark. The grant was seeking funding in the amount of three million dollars ($3,000,000). The County would allocate the sum of four hundred thousand dollars ($400,000) to the project from a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax account as the County's match to the State's investment through the GOSP grant. Kent McClure, Design Architect, and Chuck Mathis, Public Works Director were present. Commissioner Johnson inquired about the management plan.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to approve a resolution authorizing Dougherty County's Pre-application for a Georgia Department of Natural Resources Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant for the Flint River (Lake Chehaw) Dredging Project. Commissioner Clinton Johnson and County Administrator Deron King addressed. Commissioner Johnson provided the historic aspect of the dam being lowered to allow citizens in the surrounding area to clean their property. He requested that the same approach being utilized for Radium Springs be followed. Mr. King said $210,000 in SPLOST interest could be utilized. It was noted that there was additional money in SPLOST V that could be used. Commissioner Johnson added that a comprehensive plan would be created for ongoing work. Commissioner Jones suggested utilizing SWGRC for grant purposes. He also noted that Golden Triangle may also be of assistance. Commissioner Gray made suggestions pertaining to the waterway and Commissioner Johnson shared additional information pertaining to the project. Several commissioners commended Commissioner Johnson for following up and spearheading this project. Commissioner Gaines confirmed that this was a pre-application. Commissioner Johnson shared that he was following the process of Radium Springs and it would take some time to identify the entire cost. Mr. King mentioned that the match would be approved in the Special Called Meeting.

Mr. King reminded the Board of the Special Called Meeting following the Work Session. He also congratulated those receiving recognition at the 2026 ACCG Legislative Conference for certification completions: Commissioner Victor Edwards (Specialty: Leadership Development), Commissioner Russell Gray (Specialty: Revenue and Finance), Commissioner Ed Newsome (Specialty: Revenue and Finance), and Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks (Core: Certified County Official). Commissioner Ed Newsome is the second official for Dougherty County to complete all ACCG Specialty Certifications. Commissioner Johnson gave kudos to Albany State University for a win. Commissioner Gray reminded everyone that early voting is starting this week. Commissioner Jones gave kudos to all colleagues who were getting certified. The Chairman recognized Executive Assistant Kaelyn King for her upcoming birthday.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

_____
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

_____
COUNTY CLERK