DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

November 18, 2024 DRAFT

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on November 18, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray and Clinton Johnson. Also present were County Administrator Deron King, Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, County Clerk Jawahn Ware, 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. Commissioner Ed Newsome and Attorney Shalishali participated via teleconference. Commissioner Anthony Jones was absent.

After the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by the Chairman, he called for approval of the minutes of the October 21st Regular Meeting, October 28th Work Session, and October 28th Special Called Meeting.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gaines, the minutes were unanimously approved.

The Chairman recognized Jana Dyke, President & CEO, Albany-Dougherty Economic Development Commission (EDC), to provide the quarterly update. Mrs. Dyke announced the hiring of Marvin Oliver as the Director of Business Relations. In updates on business activity, she shared that the City of Albany has given them permission to market the Paul Eames Sports Complex as a potential development site. There were specific criteria to be met, and they were cognizant of the residential area in the selection of potential businesses. She officially announced Academy Sports will be locating in the unused space at the Mall. Planned activities to include "meet and greets" were shared. Under discussion, Commissioner Gaines shared that Dougherty County was updating the ordinances and asked her to please review and let us know if there were any updates or revisions needed that would be an assistance to her efforts. Mrs. Dyke addressed the question of Commissioner Gaines regarding grants and elaborated on the questions from Commissioner Johnson referencing sites and the Joint Development Authority. There was discussion regarding seeing beyond the "County Line" to be inclusive of surrounding areas for all of us to thrive economically. Rumors on social media were clarified. Mrs. Dyke will provide the PILOT information on the Georgia Pacific site. She also reminded Commissioner Edwards that their services were a "long game" and did not provide "instant gratification" in response to his inquiring on the potential development of specific areas.

The Chairman opened the zoning public hearing for Karen Shchuka, applicant, and C A Tucker Properties, owner (24-063), request to rezone a 0.812-acre portion of the 5.43-acre parcel form C-8c (Commercial Recreation District with Conditions) to M-1 (Restricted Industrial District).

This rezoning would align this portion of the parcel with the rest of the parcel which is zoned M-1. In addition, this consideration would remove the non-conforming use and allow for permitted parking. The property address is 1218 Liberty Expressway. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director addressed. 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 consideration to accept the quote from single source vendor, Albany Elevator Service (Leesburg, GA), in the amount of $41,480 to upgrade and add mechanical components and door lock monitoring to four elevators. Facilities Management will need to upgrade and add mechanical components and door lock monitoring for the two elevators located in the West Parking Deck, 124 West Jackson St., and the two elevators located in the Central Square Building located at 240 Pine Ave. Funding is available in SPLOST VIII.

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

The Chairman called for consideration to purchase seven tasers for DCP from the single source vendor Axon (Scottsdale, AZ) for a total expenditure of $27,620. This quote includes training, tasers, taser cartridges, replacement cartridges, and maintenance/warranty. Funding is budgeted in the Special Services District Fund.

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

The Chairman called for consideration to accept the quote for Public Works from Acre Maker Tree & Land Service (Meigs, GA) in the amount of $21,500 to create and maintain an adequate buffer along the north side of Southgate Subdivision. Funding is available in the Special Services District Fund.

Commissioner Edwards moved for approval. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Edwards recognized that Mr. Dawson, the Neighborhood Watch Chairman, was present. As the Chairman called for a vote, Commissioner Gray made a motion for the amendment of the agenda to remove two items from the agenda. Commissioner Newsome seconded the motion. Upon a roll call, the substitute motion failed with two ayes by Commissioners Gray and Newsome and four nays by Commissioners Edwards, Johnson, Gaines and Chairman Heard. The initial motion passed.

The Chairman called for consideration to approve the alcohol application from MC's Bar and Grill LLC, Christopher Dale Holland, licensee, dba MC's Bar and Grill, at 411 Philema Rd. for Consumption- Liquor, Beer, and Wine. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal’s Office recommended approval.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution providing for the acceptance and execution of the contract with The Levee Studios to provide public information officer (PIO), social media management, creative design, video and photography services and support in the amount of $41,100, paid in installments of $6,850 per month. The proposal is for six months.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Gaines asked for details of the services that would be provided to which Mr. King responded. He also provided an update on the advertisement of the PIO position. Mr. Brooks addressed the concerns of Commissioner Gaines regarding the overlap of services and provisions of the contract. He shared that this proposal was similar to what was provided after the departure of former PIO Wendy Howell. Attorney Shalishali addressed the contract terms and the replacement of the previous contract. Tracy Goode, with The Levee, addressed service concerns and added that the Levee's role was to support the County's PIO staff as opposed to being physically present. During the discussion, Commissioner Edwards shared that he was involved in this process to help determine the scope of the PIO. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 24-042 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION

ENTITLED

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE APPROVAL AND EXECUTION OF PROPOSED CONTRACT BETWEEN THE LEVEE STUDIOS AND DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA TO PROVIDE PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT, SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT, CREATIVE DESIGN, VIDEO AND PHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES; REPEALING RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chairman called for the discussion of the proposed resolution approving the Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on behalf of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service and Fort Valley State University (FVSU) Cooperative Extension Service and Dougherty County for placement of a new county agent from FVSU. County Administrator Deron King addressed. There has been a candidate identified, and approval was recommended by December 1st. Commissioner Gray shared that he understood the need for the discussion today and the Special Called Meeting next week. He also mentioned his concern about the cost to the County. There was discussion on the positive need for the position.

The Chairman called for the discussion of the proposed resolution approving the agreement for representation between GeorgiaLink Public Affairs Group, LLC, and Dougherty County for government relations services in the total amount of $300,000, to be paid in monthly installments of $25,000 per month. The proposed agreement term is for one year. County Administrator Deron King and County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Mr. King shared federal and state lobbying services in addition to monthly reports were included in the proposal beginning December 1st. Attorney Shalishali clarified that Georgia Link would contract with another vendor to provide federal services. GeorgiaLink Representative Boyd Pettit was available to answer questions. Upon the question of Commissioner Edwards, the contracted company to complete the federal services was Tiber Creek Group (located Washington, DC). Commissioner Gray shared his concern that this new proposal was costing the County an additional $120,000 per year and they all took an oath to be fiduciary stewards. He added that Dougherty County does not have a strategic plan to direct a lobbyist to provide assistance. Commissioner Johnson shared his concerns regarding the public comments specifying that this request was a vendor change. He added that the current vendor had shared that their rates would increase.

It was noted that Commissioner Newsome left the meeting at 12:10 pm via teleconference.

The Chairman called for consideration of the proposed board appointments.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbents Stephen Dew and Ronald Smith were unanimously recommended to the City of Albany for ratification for a three-year term ending October 1, 2027.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbent Clint Newsome (joint) was unanimously recommended to the City of Albany for ratification of appointment and incumbents Quianna Lavant (County), and Clifford Tolbert (rotational) were reappointed to the Air Conditioning, Heating & Ventilation Board for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025. The County will re-advertise for one vacancy to fill a one-year term ending December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbent Sanford Hillsman (rotational) was unanimously reappointed to the Electrical Board for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025. The County will re-advertise for four vacancies to fill a one-year term ending on December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, the recommendation for Ronald Smith to replace Bruce Campbell on the Fire Code Board of Appeals was unanimously accepted for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027. The County will re-advertise for two vacancies for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbents Tod Lanier and Perry Ford, Jr. were unanimously reappointed to the Flood Plain Management Review Board for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027. The County will re-advertise for one vacancy for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbent Sanford Hillsman (County) was unanimously reappointed to the Gas Board for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025 and incumbent Rhett Parker (joint) was recommended to the City of Albany for ratification of appointment. The County will re-advertise for one vacancy (rotational) to fill a one-year term ending December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbents Julian Marcus and Doug Wilson were unanimously reappointed to the Golden Triangle RC & D Council for a two-year term ending December 31, 2026.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbents Will Davis, Angelia Jones and Quianna Lavant were unanimously reappointed to the Historical Preservation Commission for a two-year term ending December 31, 2026. Commissioner Johnson also nominated the recommendation for King Randall to fill the vacancy of Kenneth Loudenbarger. Commissioner Gaines nominated the slate to keep the vacancy open. The second nomination failed for the open vacancy with one nay by Commissioner Gaines and four ayes by Commissioners Johnson, Edwards, Gray and Chairman Heard. The original nomination passed with four ayes by Commissioners Johnson, Edwards, Gray and Chairman Heard and one nay by Commissioners Gaines.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, the recommendation for Chris Hatcher to replace Joel Wright on the Albany/Dougherty Hospital Authority was unanimously accepted for a five-year unexpired term ending December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbents Dr. James Hill and Commissioner Anthony Jones were unanimously reappointed to the Library Board of Trustees for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, the recommendation for Cynthia Bradshaw and Angela Patterson to replace Gail Davenport and Debra Richardson were unanimously accepted to the Department of Behavioral Health & Development Disabilities Regional 4 for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027.

Upon the nomination by Commissioner Johnson, the recommendation for Roderick Garner was accepted to be reappointed to the Payroll Development Authority for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbents William Geer and Sanford Hillsman were unanimously reappointed to the Planning Commission for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, incumbents Lee Eppley (Master Plumber), Rhett Parker (Master Plumber) and Glenn Harris (Citizen Member) were unanimously reappointed to the Plumbing Board for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination by Chairman Heard, incumbents Charlie Kelly (citizen appointee), Pamela Coley (employee representative) and Commissioner Ed Newsome were unanimously reappointed to the Retirement Fund Committee for a four-year term ending December 31, 2028.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, the recommendation for Thelma Johnson to replace Glenn Tyler Harris was unanimously approved to the Southwest Georgia Community Action Council for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, the recommendation for King Randall to replace Lawrence Knighton was accepted with four ayes by Commissioners Johnson, Edwards, Gray and Chairman Heard and one nay by Commissioner Gaines to the Southwest Georgia Housing Task Force for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Johnson, Raymond Breaux (County) was unanimously recommended to the City of Albany for ratification of reappointment to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission for a one-year term ending December 31, 2025. Upon the same nomination, the recommendation for (Ms.) Casey Beane to replace Demetrius Love (joint) was unanimously accepted to be ratified by the City of Albany to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission. Upon the appointment of Chairman Heard, Commissioner Anthony Jones was reappointed to serve as his designee for the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission with a one-year term ending December 31, 2025.

Upon nomination of Commissioner Johnson, incumbents George Anderson and Wayne Shaw were unanimously reappointed to the Tax Assessors Board for a three-year term ending December 31, 2027.

Upon nomination of Commissioner Johnson, incumbent Frederick Williams was unanimously reappointed to the Voter Registration and Elections for a two-year term ending December 31, 2026.

Mr. King reminded the Board of the meeting with the State Delegation on November 25, 2024, at 9 am. Commissioner Johnson shared a notice that was received pertaining to Harriet Hollis and her grant compliance from DCA.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK