DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

October 14, 2024 DRAFT

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on October 14, 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, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Administrator Deron King, Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, County Attorney Alex Shalishali, 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.

After the invocation by Chairman Heard, he asked the Commission to review the minutes of the September 23rd Regular Meeting and September 30th Work Session.

The Chairman recognized Student Minister Aaron Muhammad of Muhammad Mosque No. 100 to receive proclamations recognizing the Mosque's efforts for serving the people of Albany and Southwest GA. Business Manager Kaheed Ali and Kalimahi Muhammad were also in attendance. After questions and sentiments from the Board were addressed, two proclamations were presented. The first proclamation reads as follows:

Proclamation by the Dougherty County Board of
Commissioners Recognizing the Million Man March
Holy Day of Atonement on October 16, 1995

WHEREAS, on October 16, 1995, Black men from Albany, GA, and across the United States journeyed to Washington, D.C., to participate in the historic Million Man March. This momentous gathering brought together over 2 million men of diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and faiths on the Mall of the nation's capital to engage in an unprecedented collective act of atonement—toward God, themselves, their families, and their communities; and

WHEREAS, these men, united in a shared commitment to improve themselves and become better men, fathers, husbands, and leaders, challenged and countered the negative stereotypes that have often portrayed Black men as a "Menace to Society." Their demonstration of love, unity, and respect restored the image of the Black man as a protector, provider, and pillar of his family and community; and

WHEREAS, the Million Man March had a profound and lasting impact on the lives of individuals and communities, yielding significant social, economic, and cultural benefits for African Americans. Notably, unemployment among African Americans decreased from 55% to 35% in the years following the march; and

WHEREAS, the poverty rate among African Americans saw a considerable reduction of over

27%, improving the quality of life for many families and communities; and

WHEREAS, the crime rate within the African American community also saw improvement, with violent crime rates decreasing, and the homicide rate for African Americans dropping from 72 per 100,000 to 29 per 100,000, a testament to the march's influence on fostering peace, accountability, and responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the Million Man March inspired a renewed sense of commitment to the well-being of African American children, with adoption rates rising by over 13,000 cases, demonstrating a collective resolve to ensure the safety, stability, and future of the next generation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners does hereby remember October 16th as the Million Man March / Holy Day of Atonement, recognizing the profound impact of this historic day on our community, and we urge all citizens to reflect on the values of unity, accountability, and service to others that were embodied in this march.

This the 14th day of October 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: _____
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman
Dougherty County Commission

The second proclamation reads as follows:

Proclamation by the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners
Recognizing the Contributions of Muhammad Mosque No. 100
and the Nation of Islam to Albany and Southwest Georgia

WHEREAS, for over 90 years, the Nation of Islam (NOI) has been committed to the Re-Education and Re-Training of Black people, instilling the vital knowledge of self, and promoting self-improvement, self-awareness, and self-sufficiency within communities across the nation; and

WHEREAS, Muhammad Mosque No. 100, based in Albany, GA, has continued this great work, serving the people of Albany and Southwest Georgia with dedication and commitment, empowering individuals and families through a variety of transformative programs and initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of the Nation of Islam have greatly benefited the City of Albany by fostering personal development and promoting peace through programs aimed at reducing violence and crime, cultivating a safer, more united community; and

WHEREAS, the health and well-being of the Albany community have been improved through the "Eating to Live" health awareness programs, which encourage proper nutrition and healthy

lifestyles; and

WHEREAS, Muhammad Mosque No. 100 has strengthened marriages and families by offering seminars and counseling, promoting the values of unity, commitment, and family support as the foundation of a thriving community; and

WHEREAS, the mosque has played an important role in food distribution to the community, addressing food insecurity and ensuring that families in need have access to essential resources; and

WHEREAS, in times of crisis, Muhammad Mosque No. 100 has provided vital support through Disaster Preparedness workshops, helping citizens plan and prepare for emergencies to safeguard their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, the youth of Albany have benefited from engagement initiatives focused on fighting illiteracy, reducing teen pregnancy, and preventing youth suicide, equipping the next generation with the tools and support they need to succeed and lead fulfilling lives; and

WHEREAS, the practice of collective economics has been exemplified through the purchase of a 1600-acre farm in Terrell County, GA, demonstrating the importance of self-sufficiency, agricultural development, and community-based wealth building; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners does hereby recognize and commend Muhammad Mosque No. 100 and the Nation of Islam for their outstanding contributions to the City of Albany and Southwest Georgia, and we extend our deepest gratitude for their ongoing work in uplifting and empowering individuals and communities.

This the 14th day of October, 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY:_____
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman
Dougherty County Commission

The Chairman recognized Chief Jailer John Ostrander to update the Commission on the accreditation that the Sheriff's Office attained through the Office of Sheriff Accreditation Program (OSAP) of the Georgia Sheriff's Association (GSA). Our Jail assisted with the accreditation credentials and Dougherty County Jail was the third in the state to receive the accreditation. The award will be presented to Sherrif Sproul at the fall conference. It was noted that our facility has 100% compliance. Upon a question from Commissioner Edwards, Chief Ostrander addressed maintenance, inmate tablets, and housing of other inmates. A meeting with Mr. King and the Public Works Subcommittee will be scheduled.

The Chairman recognized Coroner Michael Fowler to thank the Board for their financial support.

This year, 613 people registered for free swimming lessons, which was the largest enrollment to date. Due to the success, the YMCA has obtained a grant to teach parents how to swim. Commissioner Jones asked that pre and post-tests be conducted to know how many children learned how to swim. Coroner Fowler shared that all children do not learn to swim at the same pace and may take several years to learn. Commissioner Jones clarified that he was interested in the impact. Commissioners Gaines and Edwards requested the same and questions about assisting those with behavioral needs were addressed.

The Chairman called for a zoning recommendation for Lanier Engineering, Inc., the applicant and Billy Bogus Construction, LLC, owner (24-062) request to rezone a 1.012-acre parcel from R-1 (Single-Family Residential District) to C-R (Community Residential Multiple-Dwelling District). The rezoning would align with adjacent parcels and allow a single-family residential development. The property location is 1729 Beattie Road. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director addressed. Commissioners Johnson and Newsome shared information pertaining to the request and Commissioner Newsome elaborated on the plan for affordable housing.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to accept the quote for recording equipment for Juvenile Court from BIS Digital (Ft. Lauderdale, Fl) in the amount of $27,500. Juvenile Court recently obtained new computers, and the recording system needs to be upgraded to be compatible with the equipment. Funding is budgeted in the General Fund. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Juvenile Court Clerk Tequila Woods addressed. Mr. Brooks stressed that this was an important upgrade, especially for sound in the courts. Ms. Woods provided additional information pertaining to the need.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to purchase two Caterpillar M318 Hydraulic Excavators from Yancey Bros. Co. (Albany, GA) in the amount of $735,486. The dealer will provide a trade in allowance of $209,000 for the existing equipment. The final expenditure will be $526,486. Funding is budgeted in SPLOST VII. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks was present.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to accept the funding allocation request and bid for the FY 22/23 Road Resurfacing Project from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Reeves Construction Company Inc. (Albany, GA) in the amount of $6,620,255. Two bids were received. Funding, if approved, will be provided by unappropriated/unused funds in SPLOST III, IV, V, VI, VII; 2022 and 2023 LMIG; T-SPLOST-2 Roadway Improvement; T-SPLOST-2 Roadway Striping. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. City of Albany Buyer Ricky Gladney was present. The bid initially exceeded the funding allocated. Mr. Brooks clarified for Commissioner Johnson that the LRA funding, from the State, was for future projects. Commissioner Johnson also inquired about the funding request not being presented to the Finance Committee. Mr. Brooks responded by sharing that the past administrators utilized the practice to retire old SPLOSTS, so he utilized the same practice and added that the funding allocation and quarterly reports will be provided to the Board. The first quarter just ended, and the Finance Committee meeting will be scheduled. Mr. Mathis mentioned the method utilized for how roads were identified for resurfacing. A computer-generated algorithm was produced, and staff physically inspected and prioritized the roads.

Commissioner Gaines asked for the roads that were subject to resurfacing for the next 5 years in District 5. Commissioner Jones inquired about the status of Wilson Road to the pecan farm. Mr. Mathis shared that it was on our list for resurfacing and a portion of it would need to be raised due to flooding. Mr. Mathis will follow up on the status of Hancock Road for Commissioner Jones. He also addressed the changes to the asphalt spread in the bid. Mr. Brooks explained that value engineering and the use of unused/unallocated funds were utilized to meet DOT standards and still have the County commit to the existing list of roads. It was noted that the proposal still exceeded DOT standards. The gentlemen stressed to Commissioner Jones his concerns as it related to Fleming Road were different, and that the situation had subsurface issues. Mr. Brooks shared that the Board had the option to cut [roads on] the project list. Commissioner Edwards asked that prior to the project commencing, there was a priority list of the top five roads generated. He also asked for an update unrelated to a specific Circle K and Mr. Mathis will follow up with the state regarding the right of way.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from the Library to apply for three Georgia Public Library Service Major Repair and Renovation Grants in the amount of $900,000 for renovations of the Westtown Library. The grant includes a $450,000 local match. Funding is available in SPLOST VI and VII. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Library Director Gail Evans addressed. Commissioner Jones shared that inflation impacted the start of the project. There was about $608,000 SPLOST where the County match would derive. Commissioner Johnson mentioned to the citizens that there would be a mobile unit to support the temporary closing of the building. Ms. Evans informed the Board that the mobile unit's delivery has been pushed back to the first quarter of 2025 instead of the end of the year. Commissioner Newsome and Ms. Evans explained to Commissioner Gaines that the project cannot be phased.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to accept the Albany/Dougherty Resiliency Plan. The City of Albany adopted the proposed plan in their September 24, 2024 Meeting. Disaster Recovery and Grants Program Manager Harriet Hollis and Chandler Duncan, Managing Partner, MetroAnalytics addressed. Ms. Hollis provided a historical overview to (1) have the county's properties assessed and to see properties in real time to be integrated into the City's database and (2) develop a resiliency plan for future disasters for the Board to accept so the next phase can be implemented. Mr. Duncan reviewed the electronic playbook (plan) for the Board. Ms. Hollis shared that she was the team lead for the County and Angel Gray and Paul Forgey were the leads for the City of Albany. The need for the education summit was reemphasized and she reminded the Board that the grant ended in December. Mr. Duncan clarified that there were no programming requirements if the plan was adopted. Ms. Hailey added that it would not change the disaster workflow, and it provides a communication plan for the community. Commissioner Gray shared his concern regarding funding of the plays. Mr. Duncan mentioned that each entity has the ability to look at ordinances and bring them into what the County was doing to prevent different projects or scope of work. He added that funding for each entity would be considered and can be budgeted.

Mr. King shared that two items he will discuss derived from the mitigation grant received and the ask was for the Board to accept the Resiliency plan so the next phase can be implemented. Secondly, he gave an update on the HMGP 4284-0057 Sirens Project. During the installation, it was brought to the County's attention that the current encoder was failing and needed to be

updated. The cost is $3,605 and it was within the administrator's approval but he wanted to provide an update to the Board. He shared that a letter of authorization is required to be sent to GEMA. This cost would not impact the overall sirens project and would be funded via contingency. Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. King to research the initial project and address pending concerns. Upon approval of the Chairman, Consultant Georgia Collier- Boiling addressed. She added that the County would only be required to pay 15% of the cost quoted to purchase and install the Whelan E1000 Central Station Siren Control Desktop Encoder/Status Decoder.

Commissioner Newsome provided an update on the Legislative Leadership Conference and gave kudos to Commissioners Johnson and Gray for the certifications received. Commissioner Edwards shared that a privacy fence was installed at Paradise Village because of concerns regarding appearance. They installed the fence instead of a buffer and he asked the County Attorney to research the status of the fire station on Holley Drive because individuals were asking to purchase it. Commissioner Johnson commended Commissioner Newsome for his certification and gave an update on the hydrilla removal. It was mentioned that a project will be reviewed with the County Attorney for a gaming opportunity in the state. Commissioner Gray recognized the recent 107th birthday of former Mayor Jimmie Davis and wished everyone a good homecoming and Columbus Day. He also asked individuals to please be safe and leave the community well. Commissioner Gaines shared that she does not understand the revaluation process and would like an update on the effect and implementation. Commissioner Jones congratulated everyone on their awards and thanked all who were able to attend the ribbon cutting at Putney Park. He also reminded the administrators to follow up on the receipt of the check.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK