DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

June 09, 2025 DRAFT

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany Dougherty Government Center on June 09, 2025. 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 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. County Attorney Alex Shalishali participated online.

After the invocation by Chairman Heard, he asked the Commission to review the minutes of the May 19th Work Session.

The Chairman recognized Joseph Sheets, Director, and Alexa Delimon, Project Manager, Accenture, to provide an update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Dougherty County was a recipient of $17,084,422. It was noted that the money has to be utilized by December 31, 2026 and to date, $16,743,782.92 has been expended. Projects pertaining to public health, negative economic impact, and public sector capacity have been completed. Projects pertaining to revenue replacement and administration remain open. Ms. Delimon confirmed that all money was obligated, so there were no new projects. It was noted that the County was waiting for the completion of existing projects. A high-level overview of the projects was discussed, and questions from the Board were answered.

The Chairman recognized Travis Luke, Onxus, to make a funding request to the Commission. Mr. Luke was present to share about his summer program for children who needed behavior modification. He also added that he funds the program on his own and asked for any financial support. The Chairman provided personal funds of $500 and challenged the children who were present to read.

The Chairman recognized the City of Albany Commissioners, Jon Howard and Diana Brown, to request that the County Commissioners and the public support a rally to prevent the closure of our local Turner Job Corps. The Federal Government proposed to close all centers nationwide. The event will be held on June 14, 2025, from 12 pm- 2 pm. There will be a press conference regarding the economic impact held in Room 120 on June 10, 2025.

The Chairman called for the recommendation of the zoning application for Buford Jenkins, applicant owner, (25-021), request to rezone a 3.0-acre parcel from R-MHP (Manufactured Home Park District) to C-3 (Commercial Business District). The rezoning would be used for commercial purposes. The property is located at 1725 SE Liberty Expressway. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director, addressed.

The Chairman called for the recommendation from Code Enforcement to purchase one 2024 Ford Maverick Truck from Wade Ford (Smyrna, GA) under state contract 99999-001-SPD0000183-0006 in the amount of $31,230. Funding is budgeted in Special Services District - Code Enforcement Vehicles Capital Outlay. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Deputy Director Tania Harris addressed. In the FY24 cycle, the Marshall made a request for a new position that would require a vehicle. The position was just filled, so the request for the vehicle was being presented. Ms. Harris confirmed that there are now two Code Officers in the County.

The Chairman called for the recommendation from the Library to apply for the Georgia Public Library Service Capital Outlay Grant for the Westtown Library in the amount of $1,000,000. There is a local match of 10% required. Funding is budgeted in SPLOST VI and SPLOST VII. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Library Director Gail Evans addressed. The current estimate provided by SRJ was $1,748,109, and we received a $1,000,000 capital outlay grant; $900,000 from the State and $100,00 from local funds. It was shared that there was a shortfall of $748,100. The Library has an opportunity to apply for a FY27 Capital Outlay grant for $1,000,000. The State would provide $900,000 with a $100,000 commitment from the County. There was a request for permission to be granted to submit the application. Currently, there is $440,692 available in SPLOST VI and $168,502 in SPLOST VII and an updated timeline was presented to the Board. Commissioner Jones shared in layman's terms regarding the funding need of $138,000 if the grant was not awarded. Board Member Brenda Hodges Tiller was recognized, and it was noted that Board Chair Walter Kelley sent his regards for not being able to attend the meeting.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to declare a 2021 Ford Explorer (from the Jail) as surplus and authorize the sale through Charles Taylor TPA. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the revised Joint Resolution between Dougherty County and the City of Albany reestablishing Keep Albany-Dougherty Beautiful (KADB) and the administration, operation, governance, board membership, authority, and responsibilities. The Dougherty County Board of Commissioners accepted a resolution in the April 7, 2025 Regular Meeting. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Mr. Brooks shared that the City had met with the County and agreed to the document. However, after the County approved, the City requested a change. Mr. Brooks also mentioned the requested change to the board membership. He addressed the questions of Commissioner Edwards regarding the term limit of a person serving as the Chair of the Board. Commissioner Gray revisited his concerns regarding KADB not being a stand-alone 501(c)(3). He reemphasized not proceeding with this agreement and providing funding, stressing that doing so adds more tax burden to the citizens. Mr. Brooks addressed many of the concerns presented by Commissioner Gray. Commissioner Gray asked that additional information be provided.

The Chairman called for the recommendation of the presentation and review of the proposed FY 2026 Budgets as recommended by the Finance Committee. Finance Committee Chairman Clinton Johnson, County Administrator Deron King, and Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld addressed. Commissioner Johnson thanked all for participating and provided other comments. Mr. King provided a highlight on ways to provide a balanced budget and mentioned

that the proposed submittals by departments were being cut by 15.75%. He added that there were plans to provide a mid-year COLA to employees in January 2026. Additional highlights were shared that no reserves had been utilized yet. For the proposed FY25/26 budgets, there was a 7.6% decrease in the General Fund M&O. He discussed the healthy budget of the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. The amended FY 24/25 budgets to date were $98,941,153 and the proposed FY 25/26 budgets are $90,179,010, which reflects a decrease of 8.9%. The audited FY 24/25 beginning fund balance as of July 1, 2024, was $26,671,258, with an estimated revenue through June 30, 2025 being $64,753,309, with estimated expenditures of $67,608,031, yielding estimated revenues under expenditures of $2,854,724, with an estimated funding balance at June 30, 2025 of $23,816,534. Mr. King addressed the question of Commissioners Gray and Gaines regarding the stabilization plan. It was noted that initially there was a proposed use of $6,425,057 from the fund balance, but the revised estimate for FY25 is $2,854,724 and no budgeted use of the fund balance for FY26. The proposed expenditures for CIP for FY26 are $447,900, which is an increase of 15.30%. There was a high-level overview of the CIP fund balance and proposed expenditures. Upon the request of Commissioner Johnson, Sheriff Hayes and Chief Ostrander spoke about the Sheriff's Office increase, which was proposed primarily due to the increased cost in the medical care contract.

There was a review of the Special Services District Fund. The audited FY 24/25 beginning fund balance as of July 1, 2024, was $10,395,419, with estimated revenues through June 30, 2025, being $9,406,214, with estimated expenditures of $9,519,740, yielding estimated revenues under expenditures of $113,526, with an estimated net position of $10,281,893. The Special Services District fund balance history was referenced.

There was a review of the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. The audited FY 24/25 beginning fund balance as of July 1, 2024, was $30,392,067, with estimated revenues through June 30, 2025, being $5,191,786, with estimated expenditures of $4,391,706, yielding estimated revenues over expenditures of $800,080, with an estimated net position of $31,192,147. The five-year net asset history was reviewed.

There was a highlighted review of the proposed budget for confiscated funds, the DHS Building Lease Fund, the lease commercial fund, the DHS Building Lease Fund, lease commercial fund, the grants fund, the Law Library and Self Help Center, the Drug Abuse Treatment Education (DATE) fund, ARPA, and the Opioid Epidemic Litigation. Mr. King said that this was the first review of the budget and there will be meetings with the Department Managers. Clerk Ware outlined the financial calendar for the remainder of the fiscal year. Upon the request of Commissioner Edwards, District Attorney Edwards addressed the questions regarding budgetary needs.

Mr. King shared that there will be a Special Called Meeting following the Work Session. Commissioner Jones invited the Board and the public to attend his Neighborhood Watch Meeting on June 10th. Commissioner Edwards shared his concerns regarding allowing the department heads to express their concerns regarding the budget cut.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK