DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

May 11, 2026

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany Dougherty Government Center on May 11, 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, 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. Commissioner Russell Gray was absent.

After the invocation by Chairman Heard, he asked the Commission to review the minutes of the April 20th Regular Meeting and April 27th Work Session.

The Chairman recognized CEO of ASPIRE, Dana Glass to accept the proclamation recognizing May as Mental Health Month. Mrs. Glass provided an overview of services and allowed the present staff to introduce themselves. Questions from the Commissioners were answered and it was noted that there were 375 ASPIRE employees. The number to the crisis line 9-8-8 and the number to the local crisis center in Albany of 229-430-1842 were provided. Commissioner Johnson shared that the County would make an ask to the City to change the color of the fountain water to green, the color of Mental Health Month. A printed annual report and other materials were provided to the Board. The proclamation reads as follows:

DOUGHERTY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZES MAY AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, mental health is essential to overall health and well-being, affecting how individuals think, feel, and act; and

WHEREAS, mental health challenges impact individuals of all ages, as well as families and communities, regardless of background or circumstance; and

WHEREAS, stigma, misunderstanding and fear of discrimination continue to prevent many individuals from seeking the care and support they need; and

WHEREAS, early intervention, access to quality treatment and strong community support systems can lead to recovery and enable individuals to live healthy, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, fostering open dialogue and encouraging awareness can help build a community where individuals feel safe seeking help and supporting one another; and

WHEREAS, Dougherty County is committed to promoting mental wellness, increasing awareness and supporting resources that improve the quality of life for all residents;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners hereby recognizes May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month in Dougherty County, Georgia, and encourages all residents to work together to raise awareness, reduce stigma and support efforts that promote mental health and well-being on this 11th day of May, 2026.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: _____
LORENZO L. HEARD, CHAIRMAN
DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

The Chairman recognized former County Attorney Spencer Lee, Public Works Director Chuck Mathis, and Director of Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District (Ms.) Perri Cooper to update the Commission on the State funding received for the 324-acre Radium Springs River Park. Attorney Lee shared his appreciation to Commissioner Edwards for keeping this project in front of the Board. He provided the historical context and explained why it was important to understand that this is a River Park and not only funding for Radium Springs. The proposed funding match and its fulfillment by Dougherty County were discussed. Ms. Cooper discussed the MOU and partnership pertaining to the watershed plan and grant. She also shared the discussion on this project which started in 2022. The ask was initially over $1,000,000; appropriations and funding were provided for over $735,000 and the County was encouraged to apply for the grant for the remaining funds. It was noted that there were no restrictions on future use and Commissioner Edwards noted that there will be a Recreation Committee meeting to elaborate more. Attorney Lee requested permission to allow the team to proceed with the grant, noting that two specific personnel positions will be required to solve the problem at Radium Springs. The Chairman confirmed that the Commission was supportive. Commissioner Jones provided appreciation to Attorney Lee and Representative Gerald Greene.

The Chairman called for a zoning discussion for the Albany-Dougherty Payroll Development Authority, applicant and owner (26-028) requests to rezone a 358.21-acre parcel from R-2 (Single-Family Residential) to M-1 (Light Industrial District) parcel number 00204/00001/012 (Oakhaven Drive). The rezoning would allow the property to be used for Light Industrial purposes. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director addressed. Questions pertaining to buffer requirements were addressed.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to approve the FY 2027 Contract between the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on behalf of the UGA Cooperative Extension Service and Dougherty County Board of Commissioners. The contract is for the salary, retirement, Social Security, and Medicare costs for five County Extension Agents for the fiscal year. County Administrator Deron King and County Extension Coordinator Vivek Bist addressed. Mr. Bist confirmed that this was the standard request and Mr. King added that this

will be effective July 1st. Commissioner Jones commended Mr. Bist on the new role and the efforts that he and Ms. Halbrook provided in bringing back programs that had ended for Extension Services.

The Chairman called for the recommendation for the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners to engage Mauldin & Jenkins (Atlanta, GA), CPAs and Advisors, for a Strategic Assessment of the Solid Waste (SW) Department in an amount of $75,000. Funding will be provided in FY26 (in the amount of $5,000) and the remainder will be provided in FY27 Professional Fees. County Administrator Deron King, SW Interim Director Melvin Williams, SW Administrative Operations Manager Classie Johnson and Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld addressed. Upon the questions of Commissioner Jones, Mr. King shared that he does not want to discuss personnel at this time but spoke on the assessment components.

The Chairman called for the recommendation from the Dougherty County Sheriff's Office, EMS, and Aspire Behavioral Health to accept the quote from Cardiac Solutions (Birmingham, AL) to add Opioid Response Kits, Narcan, and Zoll AEDs to vehicles and buildings in the amount of $210,696. Funding is provided from the Opioid Settlement Fund. County Administrator Deron King, Major Ken Faust, Interim EMS Deputy Director Michael Pinson, and Aspire Behavioral Health Deputy Director Lisa Oosterveen addressed. Mr. King provided an extensive overview of plans. He shared that the Sheriff's Office had created an opioid response kit policy. It was noted that the number of kits was reduced to 58 and only specific departments will receive the kits, as opposed to the initial request. Commissioner Johnson asked for a map of the locations [for placement].

The Chairman called for the recommendation from the Sheriff's Office and Aspire Behavioral Health for the approval and funding of an Addictions Counselor and a Case Manager/Forensic Peer Specialist within the Dougherty County Jail to provide comprehensive substance use disorder (SUD) services, case management services and integration back to the community. The request for one-time funding in the amount of $133,187 will be provided from the Opioid Settlement Fund. County Administrator Deron King, Major Ken Faust, Interim EMS Deputy Director Michael Pinson, and Aspire Behavioral Health Deputy Director Lisa Oosterveen addressed. Mrs. Oosterveen addressed the outreach and intervention vision and the roles of staff. She noted that she felt comfortable being able to staff the positions moving forward.

The Chairman called for the recommendation from Public Works to apply for the 2026 Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Implementation Grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation in the amount of $9,210,800. This is a joint City and County application and required a 20 percent match of $1,842,160 and the County's portion of the local match is $796,080 and will be funded from T-SPLOST (2023) if the grant is approved. The County's portion of the project will be for shoulder improvements along Eight Mile Road and Tarver Road. The application deadline is May 26, 2026. County Administrator Deron King, Public Works Director Chuck Mathis, Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld, and Foresite Group Program Manager Erik Steavens addressed. After Mr. King provided an overview, Mr. Mathis recommended approval. Mr. Steavens reviewed the PowerPoint presentation and noted changes from the last request. Upon the request of Commissioner Jones, the Chairman charged staff with finding funding

countywide for safer streets. Questions of the Board were addressed and Mr. Mathis noted that the funding source has been updated from SPLOST V to TSPLOST.

County Administrator Deron King provided condolences to Mr. Brooks for the loss of his father. A moment of silence was held and he also provided congratulations to Deputy County Clerk, Bristeria Clark, for receiving her Associate of Science and pin for Nursing. Mr. King thanked Mr. Brooks for work done on AED's. County Attorney Alex Shalishali provided appreciation to former Attorney Spencer Lee for assistance and continued dedication to the County. Commissioner Johnson inquired about the information listed in the zoning packet being incorrect, pertaining to the District. Commissioner Gaines shared that State Representative John White had passed and a moment of silence was held. Commissioner Jones gave kudos to Bristeria Clark on her accomplishments. Chairman Heard noted the passing of Thomas County Commissioner Wiley Grady and a moment of silence was held.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

_____
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

_____
COUNTY CLERK