



BANKS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

Courthouse Annex Boardroom | 150 Hudson Ridge | Homer, GA 30547

Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 3:00 PM

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ch. Griffith called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Chairman Taylor Griffith
Vice Chairman Danny Maxwell
Commissioner Chris Ausburn
Commissioner Keith Gardiner
Commissioner Bo Garrison

STAFF

County Clerk Regina Gailey
Deputy County Clerk Erin Decker
Chief Finance Officer Randy Failyer
Recreation Director Kat Roberts
Public Utilities Director Chad Willbanks

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ch. Griffith stated they needed to amend the agenda to add 4A. Fire/EMS Brush Truck and 4B. Blood Products and move the remaining agenda items down the list.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

3. SPECIAL RECOGNITION:

a. Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency Federal-State-Local Disaster Match Policy Recognition - Fire Chief Steve Nichols & EMA April Turner

Ch. Griffith stated he had received a letter from the GA and Federal Homeland Security and the GA Emergency Management Agency congratulating Fire Chief Steve Nichols and EMA Director April Turner about the great job they have done with keeping the County certified for the GEMA/Homeland Security Disaster Map. Ch. Griffith continued to state the letter said we were only one of a handful of counties that are up to standard, and he wanted to thank the Fire Chief and Ms. Turner for the job well done.

Comm. Ausburn stated he got to watch them in action, and he was thoroughly impressed with them and Homer for the efforts for putting out a residential fire the other day.

4. WORK SESSION

a. Fire/EMS: Brush Truck

Chief Nichols stated they currently had 4 brush trucks in the County that they used for wild fires and also used them at stations where they had a lot of EMS calls. The brush trucks ran the EMS calls along with the ambulances and this saved wear and tear on the engines. The brush truck that was located at Banks Crossing was an old truck that came from the Forestry Service. He stated this truck had over 300,000 miles and the engine needed replacing. The options were getting a used engine for \$9,000, a rebuilt motor for about \$17,000 or purchase a new chassis for about \$48,330. He further stated the Commissioners should keep in mind it would still be a Forestry truck and they would not repair it but if it went bad, we would just turn it back in. Chief Nichols stated he was asking the Commissioners what direction they wanted him to go in.

Comm. Ausburn clarified that the skid did not belong to the Forestry Service and Chief Nichols stated yes.

Comm. Garrison asked if the Forestry Service was not doing the program anymore? Chief Nichols stated they were still doing the program, but we were in competition with other counties.

Ch. Griffith stated it was down to either replacing the motor in a truck that we do not own or buy an F250.

The Commissioners asked Chief Nichols to get three quotes on an F250 chassis.

Ch. Griffith stated this item needed to be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

b. Fire/EMS: Blood Products

Ch. Nichols stated that Habersham and Jackson counties carried blood on their trucks. He stated there had been three instances in the last month where they needed whole blood before they got to the hospital. He stated GA Trauma agreed to supply the blood and the County would only have to supply the cooling unit. Ch. Nichols stated the blood supply would be carried on the captain's truck and the cost of the cooling unit would be \$12,261.90.

Ch. Griffith stated this item needed to be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

c. County Code: Noise Ordinance - Ann Sikes Schwartz

Ann Sikes Schwartz - 2469 Samples Scales Road - Stated on March 15, 2025 there was a noise problem with her neighbors that did not end until 1:00 AM in the morning. She stated they played loud music that could be heard up to 2 miles away. She further stated she called E911 twice and was told that Banks County didn't have a noise ordinance. Ms. Schwartz stated she went to see the Sheriff and he told her he could not enforce the noise ordinance because if he had to enforce it for one he had to enforce it for all.

Shelia Neave - 259 Peyton Rd - Stated she lived about 1 mile away and the music was so loud it made her horses run wild. She further stated she had talked to a neighbor that lived close to the loud music and there were strobe lights so bright they couldn't go to sleep. She also stated this had been going on for several years but this time was the longest and loudest time.

Wayne Holcombe - 2473 Sample Scales Rd - Stated the noise was unbearable and his granddaughter could not go to sleep. He stated he called E911 because of the loud noise and the gunshots he heard. He stated he was told by E911 that a deputy came by and couldn't hear anything. Mr. Holcombe further stated that all day Sunday there were gunshots.

Ch. Griffith stated he received calls pretty regularly about loud noises. He stated our noise ordinance highly relied on decibel equipment. He further stated he didn't want to be so restrictive with gunshots because people hunted.

Comm. Gardiner stepped out of the meeting at 3:31 p.m.

Ch. Griffith stated the Noise Ordinance should be added to the agenda for the April 8 meeting.

Comm. Gardiner stepped back to the meeting at 3:34 p.m.

d. The Beatty Team - Mike Beatty

Mike Beatty with The Beatty Team spoke about the services his firm could provide to the County including working with GEFA funding. Service Delivery Strategy planning, grant writing and other services they offered.

e. Hotel/Motel Tax Ordinance Amendment - Public Hearing 4/8/2025, 6:30 p.m.

Ch. Griffith stated the hotel/motel ordinance needed to be updated and the public hearing would be held on April 8, 2025 during the regular Commissioners meeting.

f. Recreation: Infield Batter Box Renovation - Katherine Roberts

Recreation Director Kat Roberts stated the batters' boxes needed to be replaced. She also stated she wasn't aware until later that this wasn't included in the price of the infield mix for the ballfields.

The total cost of the installation of the Turface for the infields and the batters box rebuilds were \$14,605.

Mr. Failyer stated the cost could be paid for from SPLOST renovations.

Ch. Griffith stated this item needed to be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

g. Recreation: Basketball Goals - Katherine Roberts

Ms. Roberts stated she had received 3 quotes for goals at the new basketball court and the purchase of the goals qualified for SPLOST expenses. She stated the goals she felt was the best were made of heavy duty steel and would last alot longer. The price for both goals was \$10,000.

Ch. Griffith stated this item should be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

h. Environmental Services: Vehicle Purchase

Ch. Griffith stated that Environmental Services needed a new vehicle. He stated they had gotten three quotes from Akins Ford, Athens Ford and Jefferson Ford for a 4-Door Crew Cab.

Comm. Ausburn stated he would like them to get quotes from more local vendors and add this item to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

i. Northeast Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Memorandum of Understanding

Ch. Griffith stated this was handled through the State so the County did not need to do anything.

j. Roads & Bridges: Skid Steer Bid

Comm. Gardiner stated he talked to the road department about contacting Bobcat of Atlanta and have them bring out the machines for them to try out. He stated Bobcat of Atlanta had submitted the next two lowest bids. He stated the company that submitted the lowest bid was far away and if something needed to be replaced you would have to drive at least 80 miles to have the skid steer repaired. He continued to say that with Bobcat you could get parts local. Comm. Gardiner recommended that we should disqualify the lowest bid which was the New Holland because of the distance of the vendor.

Ch. Griffith stated this item needed to be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

k. Finance: Purchasing Policies

Ch. Griffith stated our purchasing policy was outdated and the purchase amounts needed to be increased. He stated the attorneys helped draft the new policy and Randy has had some time to go

over it. Mr. Failyer stated he thought the amount on the sealed bid needed to be increased because it was a little low. He further stated you couldn't even purchase a vehicle for that amount.

Ch. Griffith stated he had Sourcewell included in the policy because they were an agency that did the bid process up front and then counties and other governments could purchase under their contract pricing. He also stated this would save time on the bid process.

Ch. Griffith stated this policy did address purchase orders and they had talked about implementing the PO system. He further stated we needed to figure out a way that alot of the legwork was put on the department head and then finance just issues the purchase order.

Ch. Griffith stated this item needed to be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

I. Public Utilities: Neptune T-10 Water Meter ProCoders

Public Utilities Director Chad Wilbanks stated this was for replacement of stock as well as fulfilling work order obligations. He further stated they had about 60 workorders for meters that needed to be replaced and the meters had been on backorders and are now ready to ship.

Ch. Griffith stated this would come from SPLOST in the amount of \$29,100.

Ch. Griffith stated this item needed to be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

m. Public Utilities: Toccoa Pump Station Invoice

Mr. Wilbanks stated this happened before he came to work for Banks County. He did state that the good side of it was the work to the station was complete and was capable to pump about 30,000 gallons a day.

Comm. Garrison stated he specifically asked the previous director that this project would only cost \$35,000 and he was told yes. He continued to state that now we get a bill for \$58,000 and were told that they would get somewhere between a half million to one million gallons of water a day and we were only getting 30,000/gallons per day. Comm. Garrison stated he just wanted to let the voters and constituents know that they were very mislead and he took it personally, He said now the Commissioners were catching grief because they were running low on water.

Ch. Griffith stated that part of this purchasing policy would eliminate this problem. He continued to state that when working with consultants they would have to sign that they understood and would abide by our purchasing policy.

Comm. Ausburn stated this was where we were at and we were misled and the work had already been done. He further stated they were told at the July 9, 2024 meeting that it was going to cost \$35,000. Comm. Ausburn stated they were told at the meeting it would produce 1,000,000 gallons/day and then Mr. Gee changed it to 300,000 gallons/day. He further stated now here we were with a bill that a company had put in the pump station and it had been agreed upon prior to us without our knowledge. We had to pay the bill because the work had already been done.

Ch. Griffith stated keep in mind there was probably an engineering bill to follow.

Comm. Gardiner asked if the water was there, what pumping capacity would the station have?

Mr. Wilbanks stated if the water was there, it would easily pump 300,000 gallons/day.

Comm. Ausburn asked Mr. Wilbanks to go ahead and set up a meeting with the City of Toccoa about water.

Ch. Griffith stated this item needed to be added to the agenda for the April 8, 2025 meeting.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner,
Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Chairman

Deputy County Clerk