

**MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023  
3:30 p.m.**

**The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session, Monday, May 8, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. in the Ware County Commission Chambers, 305 Oak Street, Suite 201 Waycross, Georgia 31501 with Chairman Elmer Thrift presiding.**

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	Chairman Elmer Thrift
<b>COMMISSIONERS PRESENT</b>	Commissioner Steve Barnard, Commissioner Leonard Burse, Commissioner Jerry Pope, and Commissioner Timmy Lucas
<b>COMMISSIONERS ABSENT</b>	None
<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	County Manager Scott Moye; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
<b>PRESS</b>	Danny Bartlett
<b>INVOCATION</b>	The Invocation was given by Commissioner Leonard Burse
<b>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>	The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Elmer Thrift
<b>GUEST SPEAKER(S):</b>	None

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

- A. 2023 CDBG Conflict of Interest Statement**  
County Manager Moye explained that this statement is required by federal law. The Commission, any appointees, agents of the County, consultants, and various others have to state if they have a conflict of interest in the CDBG project (paving and drainage work in Bennett Subdivision) which consists of Mockingbird Lane, Cardinal Drive, and Wren Avenue. Any person in the CBDG project or their immediate family who own property on these three roads have to make it known and cannot participate in discussions. Commissioner Barnard asked about the construction part of the project. CM Moye told him that the project hasn't been bid yet, nor has the grant been awarded. The grant application will be submitted by the first part of June. It will be September or October before the grant application will be awarded or denied. He further explained that during the Regular Meeting, each Commissioner will have to state whether or not he has a

conflict of interest which will become part of the minutes. The copies go with the application.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**B. Resolution 2023-11: Authorize 2023 Community Development Block Grant Application**

CM Moye told the Commission this Resolution is to authorize the submission of the CDBG application. CM Moye reminded them that Southern Georgia Regional Commission is preparing the CDBG application. This Resolution would authorize SGRC to submit the application on behalf of Ware County. Chairman Thrift asked if the item is the same as far as if a Commissioner owned land, he couldn't vote. Mr. Moye said that is correct.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**C. Resolution 2023-12: Approve Contract with SGRC for 2023 CDBG Administration**

CM Moye told the Commission that this Resolution is to approve a contract for Southern Georgia Regional Commission to do the CDBG administrative work, including reporting, financial reports, and drawdowns to have money sent from DCA (Department of Community Affairs). Commissioner Barnard asked if the area canvas had been completed. CM Moye told him it had. He said the survey shows that roughly 75% of the residents fall into the low to moderate income bracket which makes it qualify for CDBG. Commissioner Pope asked if this area is in Jamestown. Mr. Moye said it is.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**D. Resolution 2023-13: Approve Contract with CrowderGulf for Disaster Debris Removal**

CM Moye said this is for a contract extension for the company that takes care of the County's debris removal after disasters as needed. He asked EMA Director Jonathan Daniell to come up and explain. Mr. Daniell explained that this is a one-year extension of a standby contract that FEMA requires the County to have in place for time of inclement weather. Once an emergency has been declared, the contract is activated and FEMA will cover the cost of debris removal. He said at this point the County has no money involved, and there is no cost until/unless the County chooses to activate the contract.

Commissioner Pope asked him if there is no contract, would there be no reimbursement. Mr. Daniell told him that was correct. A contract has to be in place to get reimbursed by FEMA.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**E. Resolution 2023-14: Approve Agreement with YMCA for Bailey Street Park Pool Operation**

CM Moye told the Commission that this item is an agreement supplied by YMCA for consideration by the Commission. He said at this point, there is no set security as the City cannot devote an officer to be at the pool during the hours of operation, but there is one on patrol in the area. However, the contract from YMCA requires on-site security. Commissioner Burse said he reached out to the new City Manager and explained the dilemma with getting the pool operational in time for summer. The Manager was to get

with the Police Chief, once he returns from vacation, to see about the City's participation in providing security for the Bailey Street pool. He acknowledged that providing for security wasn't included in the recreation department budget because the issue arose afterwards. He mentioned to the Attorney that the section regarding providing a uniformed County deputy may need to be changed to just provide security because it could be the City or another agency that would be on site. Asst. County Attorney Herzog said there is another version of the contract with some other changes, and she will make sure the Commissioners get a copy. She also said that the issue of security can be reworded. Commissioner Burse asked if using a licensed private security firm would be an option since security is the contingency issue. Attorney Herzog said that might be an option if the City or County couldn't provide an officer. Commissioner Lucas said if the security guard isn't certified, he would have no arrest powers and would have to dial 9-1-1 for assistance.

Commissioner Pope asked if the Police Chief had promised to provide off-duty police officers. CM Moye said he would provide them at the rate of \$40 per hour. Commissioner Pope said he agreed with the other Commissioners regarding the City paying half of the security cost at a pool in the City, especially since the YMCA will not operate the pool without security in place. Commissioner Barnard that the Sheriff's Office doesn't have enough manpower to supply an officer but would only charge \$30 per hour.

#### **Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

#### **F. Resolution 2023-15: Approve Purchase of Weather Tracking System for Recreation Department**

Recreation Department Director Lance Adamson told the Commission that the current weather system that the Rec. Dept. has is outdated and is not tracking the weather and lightning strikes like it should. As an example, he said a couple of weeks ago during a Miracle League game the storm was over the field before the siren sounded. He said it is important to get the system updated for the safety of the citizens who participate in events at the Rec. Dept. He said that a representative of Weatherstem was at the meeting to give more information. Commissioner Barnard asked if the school system had the same weather system. Mr. Adamson said the school uses the DTN system which only has a flashing light. The Rec. Dept. system has a siren. He said he had to check with the school recently to know if he needed to pull players off the field. Commissioner Barnard asked if the Weatherstem system could be positioned where it could monitor the high school and recreation field so the school system and County could share the bill. He said he couldn't answer that, but there are several components to this system that can be shared by other departments.

Chairman Thrift asked EMA Director Jonathan Daniell to come up and talk about this weather tracking system. Mr. Daniell said this is a multi-feature, web-based system and well received by the EMA community. It is similar to the DTN program but is a little cheaper. Commissioner Barnard asked if EMA could use this system. Mr. Daniell said yes. He said EMA uses the DTN system, but it is limited in what it will do especially compared to Weatherstem. He told the Commission that he could use the new product and would no longer have to use the DTN system which costs about \$1500 per year. Mr. Will Oberschlake, a representative of Weatherstem, told

the Commission that this system gives a live feed update on weather which is open to the public. There is forecasting data, exact

sensors, lightning detection, web bolt globe temperatures. This can be set up for the recreation fields, pools, community, EMA, EMS, Sheriff's Office, and others to have access. He added that it has a customizable notification platform. All data comes in at .8 seconds which means it is live feed. The system includes a weather station at the Rec. Dept. along with a blast (sire) system. It is solar powered and runs off of a cellular battery. There is no limit on the number of administrators that can have access.

#### **Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

- G. Resolution 2023-16: Approve MOU with the Georgia Recreation Parks Association**  
Recreation Department Director Lance Adamson explained to the Commission that the Rec Dept. was awarded a \$50,000 grant for the summer learning program. There are certified teachers on hand to provide the instruction. Commissioner Burse asked where the learning would take place. He responded that there are two summer camp locations: Trembling Earth and Memorial Park. He said the MOU is basically the guidelines that the Recreation Dept. is already following.

#### **Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

- H. Discussion & Possible Action Concerning Board of Election Appointments**  
Chairman Thrift asked Board of Elections Supervisor Carlos Nelson to explain this item. Mr. Nelson stated that per the new local legislation (422) the local Republican party and Democrat party are to offer to the Commission a list of nominations for appointment to the Board of Elections. (He mentioned there is no local certified Democrat party, only a state level Democratic Committee.) He said there are four positions to be filled. Two of them will fill the unexpired two-year terms, and two will be four-year terms.

Commissioner Burse said he would like for the public to know that this bill changing the way board members are chosen is not a result of anything happening at the election board. Legislators say it is based on a court case and is to prevent the Democrat or Republican party appointing someone who is considered a private party. He said he felt that it would be in the best interest of the County to keep the board as is because everything is going fine with no issues.

Chairman Thrift asked if the term lengths would be two or four years. Mr. Nelson advised that the terms are for four years. Two expire in June 2023, and the other two terms will expire in two years. The Chairman then asked if someone could be appointed who is not currently on the board. Mr. Nelson told him that is up the Commission.

Commissioner Pope asked if the present judge had been appointed by a Superior Court judge. Mr. Nelson said that was correct. Commissioner Pope asked if that happened because the Board couldn't agree on someone. Mr. Nelson said at that time, it was two and two. Each party had submitted one name to Judge Gillis who made the appointment. He said this board will have to decide to reappoint the current or to select a new one. If there is a tie, the Commission will be the one to appoint the Chairman.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**I. Appointment: Unison Board of Directors**

Chairman Thrift read the agenda item stating a letter from Tiffany Henderson, CEO of Unison Behavioral Health, requesting that Carlos Nelson be reappointed to the Board of Directors. Commissioner Pope said he was good with the reappointment. Chairman Thrift called Mr. Nelson to the front and asked if he would accept the reappointment. Mr. Nelson informed the Commission that he was just named Chairman of the Board at the board retreat two days prior to this meeting. He said he would be willing to continue on this path as Unison does good work in the community.

Commissioner Barnard asked Ware County Republican Party Chairperson Debra Giddens to give her viewpoints. Mrs. Giddens stated that she had emailed a letter with four recommendations for the board to the Commission and the County Manager. The WC Republican Party met on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and selected four nominees for the Commission to consider.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**COUNTY MANAGER ITEMS:**

CM Moye told the Commission that the bids for repairing the Bickley tennis courts would be coming in Friday.

**COMMISSIONER ITEMS:**

Commissioner Lucas said he had received a call from a business owner on Albany Avenue who was told his business was on fire. When he arrived at the scene, it was actually the business across the street had burned, but the fire department had already put out the fire. He was very impressed.

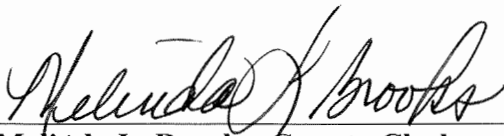
CM Moye asked the Commission if the Election Board Appointments needed to be on the agenda for the regular meeting. Asst. County Attorney explained that due to the new legislature that all four posts need to be appointed, even the ones that are midterm. The item was added to the agenda.

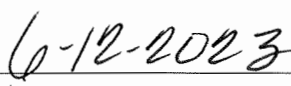
**ADJOURN:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Burse to adjourn the Work Session, with Commissioner Lucas seconding the motion at 4:30 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Date proposed to be approved: June 12, 2023

  
Elmer Thrift, Chairman

  
Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

  
Date