

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023
3:30 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session, Monday, December 11, 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.

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

AGENDA ITEMS:

A. Resolution 2023-35: Authorize Board of Assessors to Administer Refunds Under O.C.G.A 48-5-380

This resolution is to authorize the board of assessors to administer refunds to disabled veterans who have overpaid property taxes. Chief Appraiser Billy Carter of the Tax Assessors office was unavailable to attend the meeting, so Tax Commissioner Roger Collins spoke to the Commission. He stated that a resolution isn't necessary as he is the one who cuts the checks for tax refunds as required by law. Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog asked that this item be pulled from the agenda to allow her time to research the matter. The Chairman agreed.

B. Resolution 2023-36: Adopt a Revised Language Access Plan (LAP) for 2023 CDBG Project

Manager Moye told the Commission that a Language Action Plan is needed to qualify and utilize federal funds for projects. It must be done for every CDBG project. Commissioner

Pope asked if the LAP is a required as part of the CDBG process. CM Moye stated that it is. He explained that its purpose is to provide language assistance to residents with Limited English Proficiency who may be recipients of the CDBG grant.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

C. Airport Hangar/Facility Lease Cancellations

This item is to cancel the lease agreements with Pyrotecnico Fireworks and Scotbilt Homes, Inc. to create more aircraft storage space. The termination will have to be a 90-day written notice. Airport Manager Frank Bartanowitz explained to the Commission that according to Georgia Code Ch. 14 Airport duties meaning that it must be operated as an airport, not a storage depot. Only aircraft and aircraft related equipment can be stored there. Scotbilt originally leased a hangar due to storm damage (emergency use). Per Airport Manager Bartanowitz these hangars are too small to house aircraft. He said it will take an engineer to determine how to convert them to large aircraft hangars. Commissioner Burse asked if these two storage building being leased are actually hangars. Mr. Bartanowitz said they were originally built as Army vehicle hangars and later became helicopter hangars.

Commissioner Burse asked if these leases are terminated if he had a plan to replace the \$100 per month income from each lease. Mr. Bartanowitz stated he doesn't have a plan at this time. He said the hangar will have to be upgraded to fit a plane as it was originally built for a helicopter. The lessee or lessor can give 90-day notice of intent to vacate/terminate lease. The Commission asked him to get a plan together and bring it back to the Commission.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

D. Resolution 2023-37: Approve GDOT LMIG Road Resurfacing Project List

The County Engineer Brandon Wallace told the Commission this is the list from last month to look at and give input. If approved, the resolution is ready to submit with the application to GDOT.

The Chairman asked if the approximate cost is \$2.6 million. County Engineer Wallace said that is the amount. Chairman Thrift then asked County Manager Moye if the County has that much available. He said yes and asked Engineer Wallace to explain the LMIG funds. Mr. Wallace said there are unspent funds from the 2022 LMIG that could go with this to limit the local funds needed for LMIG resurfacing project.

Commissioner Burse said during the last discussion about Sycamore Street and Reynolds Street, it was noted they are in the City and that maybe the City could add some funds. Engineer Wallace said that is possible because neither of those roads are very expensive, but they are both in very bad shape. Commissioner Burse agreed they are in bad shape, and noted that you have to dodge potholes on Sycamore Street when heading to Kroger which is a thriving business. Engineer Wallace said he would be willing to touch base with the people at City Hall to see if something could be worked out because these roads definitely need fixing.

Commissioner Pope stated his brother works in the engineer department at the City of Waycross and has said when these type of situations arise to notify him, and he will do what he can to work with the County.

Commissioner Barnard asked if Jamestown Road and Swamp Road would also be on list. Chairman Thrift asked if Reynolds Street is the one behind the old Coley's and then asked if it was in the County. He was told it is, but it is also in the City. There are several dips and potholes, especially at the intersection in front of donut shop and at intersection by Hog N Bones. County Manager Moye stated there is a lot of traffic on that road, especially at that intersection.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

E. Resolution 2023-38: Approve Amended and Restated Consent Order with Georgia DOR

County Manager Moye told the Commission that this is a resolution approving the amended consent with the Georgia Department of Revenue in order for the Tax Digest thresholds to be made and corrected. It gives a one-year extension to the time period based on the information provided by Billy Carter. They expect to be finished by September, which is less than a year. This resolution is to approve that amended consent order.

Chairman Thrift asked if it is just buying an extension. County Manager Moye said yes.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

F. Appointment – Waycross-Ware County Development Authority

WWDA Director Jason Rubenbauer explained that the WWDA advertised an open position. They reviewed the applicants and their qualifications. They are presenting Thomas Wesley for appointment. He has work force experience. He is the dean for technical programs at Coastal Pines Technical College. He would replace Daniel Morris who has fulfilled his terms. Commissioner Burse stated he knows that Mr. Wesley is very involved. Commissioner Pope said that he is fine with the selection.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

G. Money Market Investment Proposal

County Manager Moye told the Commission that proposals for investment had been solicited for the County's General Fund. Three banks were contacted: Truist, Prime South, and Waycross Bank and Trust. The hope was to invest the money locally. The recommendation is to go with Waycross Bank and Trust and invest reserve funds in the Money Market Account at 4.75% guaranteed for the first 90 days.

Commissioner Burse asked if the interest rate changes wouldn't the rate on the Money Market Account change as well. County Manager Moye explained that the MMA rate could fluctuate up and down with the market after the first 90 days. If the interest rate seems to drop significantly, CM Moye stated he would bring this item back before the Commission.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:

CM Moye said he had an update from Practical Design Partners who is designing the Albany Avenue overpass. They have been in communication with CSX. The original proposal had been to put a through street under the overpass. However, CSX owns that property, so that eastern

quadrant will not work. The southern portion of Garlington Avenue may be connected to Waller Street on the western side.

Commissioner Barnard asked if it was ever determined who owns the intersection. CM Moye said that CSX has concurred that they do not have ROW across Albany Avenue. The original plan will continue but will minimize the wall length and stay out of the right of way.

Chairman Thrift asked about not being able to go under the bridge. CM Moye stated that he is hopeful west side access under the overpass will work out. Commissioner Pope asked if this will reduce the size of the bridge or the cost of the project. CM Moye said that is possible, and PDP is looking at that right now. It should make the project go faster. He said they are hoping to get the project to the bridge designers and stay on the 24-month schedule.

Commissioner Barnard asked about getting a cost. CM Moye stated they are having to finish the design, such as the through roads, to determine the cost.

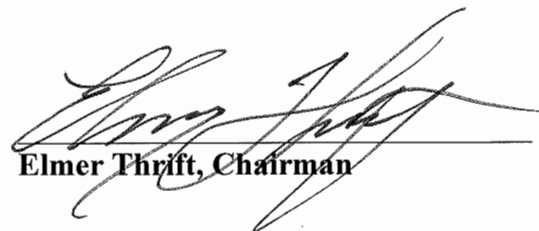
COMMISSION COMMENTS:

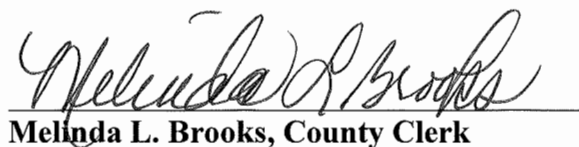
Chairman Lucas asked about SPLOST money earmarked for radio towers (emergency responders). CM Moye stated there was about \$3.6 million budgeted in the very first failed SPLOST. It was pulled from the second SPLOST that also failed. The third SPLOST was successful. Commissioner Lucas said Sheriff Royal paid \$15,000 from his budget to have a study done to show what was needed. Commissioner Pope said AT&T did a study for the SPLOST proposal. This information was added to the SPLOST referendum, but the citizens voted it down.

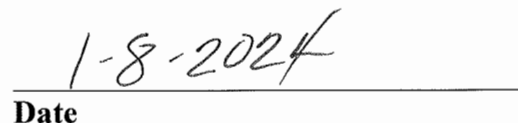
ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Commissioner Burse to adjourn the Work Session, with Commissioner Pope and Barnard seconding the motion at 4:15 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Date proposed to be approved: January 8, 2024


Elmer Thrift, Chairman


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk


Date

