

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024
5:00 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting, Monday, January 8, 2024, at 5:00 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 Timmy Lucas (via telephone) Commissioner Jerry Pope
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	None
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager Scott Moye; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
PRESS	Danny Bartlett, WJH
INVOCATION	The invocation was waived from the Work Session
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was waived from the Work Session

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Commissioner Burse to approve the agenda as presented, with Commissioner Lucas seconding the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye, Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

GUEST SPEAKER: None

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – COURTNEY RODRIGUEZ

Human Resources Director Theresa Bailey and County Manager Scott Moye presented Ware County Solicitor’s Office employee Courtney Rodriguez as the County Employee of the Month. She was given a \$100 check in appreciation for her dedication and loyalty.

CONSENT ITEMS:

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Work Session

December 11, 2023

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye, Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

AGENDA ITEMS

Commission Member Appointments for Calendar Year 2024:

A. Vice – Chairman – Ware County Board of Commissioners

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Burse made a motion to appoint Commissioner Lucas as Vice-Chairman of the Ware County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Barnard seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

B. Ex-Officio Member to Downtown Waycross Development Authority

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Burse made a motion to reappoint Commissioner Pope to the Downtown Waycross Development Authority. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

C. Southern Georgia Regional Commission Board of Directors

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to reappoint Chairman Thrift to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Board of Directors. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

D. Ex-Officio Member to the Member of the Waycross-Ware County Library Board

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Pope made a motion to reappoint Commissioner Lucas to the Waycross-Ware County Library Board of Trustees. Commissioner Barnard seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

Agenda Items

A. Banking Services Proposal Acceptance

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to accept Ameris Bank's banking services proposal. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

B. Resolution 2024-01: Establish 2024 Qualification Fees for Ware County Elected Officials

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to accept the qualifying fees as set in Resolution 2024-01. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

C. Resolution 2024-02: Support for Mental Health Bill - ACCG

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to table this resolution until the Commission can get more information. Commissioner Pope seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

D. Right of Way Deed Acceptance – LeJuene Road & Alton Circle

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to table this item until the County Attorney could determine who actually owns the roads in question. Commissioner Pope seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

E. Airport Hangar Lease Agreement Rate Increase Approval

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to accept the rate increase. Commissioner Pope seconded the motion. It was determined that Commissioner Burse was trying to ask a question during the discussion. Commissioner Burse stated that he wanted to propose increasing the rate on the non-hangar rentals to an amount even higher than the amount proposed by administration. Commissioner Lucas amended his motion to include that the rate increase would be for the air hangars only; not the two non-aviation hangars. Commissioner Pope seconded the amended motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

F. Appointment – Waycross/Ware County Land Bank Authority

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to appoint Debra Giddens to the Waycross/Ware County Land Bank Authority. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

G. Appointments – Ware County Board of Assessors

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to reappoint Bobby Wright and Jacob Strickland to the Ware County Board of Assessors. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

G. Road Closing Application – Ed Davis Road

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to close Ed Davis Road as stated in the Public Hearing. Commissioner Pope seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion

Commissioner Pope said this is probably only the second time he has ever voted to close a road. He supports Commissioner Barnard’s motion because of where this road is. Commissioner Barnard said there is a mile-and-a half of dirt road with no houses, and it runs through two bays. He said it would take a lot of money and dirt to make it a passable road like a County road should be. There is only two-tenths of a mile difference in travel if this road is closed, and there is no emergency hazard. A discussion ensued with another homeowner who owns property that he wants to develop, but closing the road would not allow access to that property. Other citizens said he would have access via Hasty Road.

Chairman Thrift asked Mrs. Jeffords if she would be open to the road being closed up to her property line. She said because it would become a dumping site.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-no; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-no; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-no.

After the vote to close the road was unsuccessful, Mrs. Wright asked the Commission what she needed to do if she decided to close the road up to the property line as previously mentioned. Attorney Herzog told her she would have to start the application process again.

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Pope asked DWDA Director Jason Rubenbauer to give an update on what is going on with DWDA. Mr. Rubenbauer advised that a large delegation from the City of Waycross and Ware County is going to the Chamber Eggs and Issues event in Atlanta in observance of the opening of the 2024 Legislative Session. He also said he hopes to be making a couple of announcements soon. Chairman Thrift asked him for an update on Admares. Mr. Rubenbauer stated that they are still in the design phase. Everything is still a go, but it will be a while before the dirt moves.

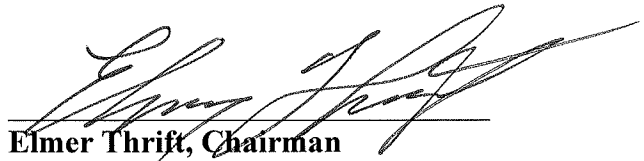
Chairman Thrift brought up the local roads project: Slash Pine Road, Banks Lane & Road, Wadley Rd, McDonald Rd, Gibbs Lane, Paschall Rd, and Cornelius Rd. He asked what the Commission wanted to do. Commissioner Burse asked if a rough estimate was available. The Chairman said there were figures, but they must be going to pave them with gold. He said Cornelius Road is where the farmers are, and they are always calling about because they haven’t seen anything happen. He said the Commission had agreed to do something about it last time, but nothing has happened. “..If not gonna pave roads... need to elect a whole new group of Commissioners.... if we

ain't gonna pave roads..." Commissioner Barnard called County Engineer Wallace up to get estimates for roads from last meeting. Wallace said amounts are a little high due because it's a little hard to predict cost right now due to some changes in the market, and he doesn't know how that will affect future pricing. Chairman asked about Cornelius Road. Wallace said the County only has prescriptive easement. Commissioner Barnard said he would like for the County to move forward with getting the ¼ mile stretch of Cornelius road paved. Commissioner Pope stated he is in favor of paving since part of this road has already been paved, but asked Engineer Wallace about adding how many residences per road to this paving list. The Chairman said some roads don't have many residences, but are used as through roads and have a lot of traffic. He told the Engineer that he would get with him about the list. Then he asked the County Manager if there are some funds available. County Manager Moye said yes, and the largest pot is the Regional TSPLOST Discretionary Fund.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Burse made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting with Commissioner Pope seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

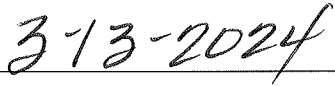
Date proposed to be approved: March 11, 2024



Elmer Thrift, Chairman

ATTEST: -


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk



Date

