

WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING HELD

MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2023 AT 4:30 P.M.

The White County Board of Commissioners held a combined Work Session & Regular Meeting on Monday, August 28, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room at the Administration Building. Present for the meeting were: Chairman Travis Turner, Commissioner Terry Goodger, Commissioner Lyn Holcomb, Commissioner Edwin Nix, Commissioner Craig Bryant, County Manager Billy Pittard, Finance Director Jodi Ligon, and County Clerk Shanda Murphy.

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Dean Dyer provided the invocation.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to adopt the minutes of the July 31, 2023 Public Hearing / Work Session / Called Meeting, the August 7, 2023 Regular Meeting, and the August 21, 2023 Called Meeting and Executive Session.

Chairman Turner read the following statement: *“In reference to land use agenda items #5 - #6 – Georgia Zoning Procedures Law (O.C.G.A. 36-66-1, et seq.) requires a public hearing be advertised and held prior to any proposed zoning decision with a minimum of 10 minutes (per side) for both proponents and opponents to present data, evidence, and opinion. This requirement was met for the following items at the public hearing held at the Planning Commission Meeting on July 31, 2023. All information presented was then forwarded to the Board of Commissioners”.*

Mr. John Sell, Director of Community, presented the land use application filed by Michael Caudell to request a conditional use permit 147 Sara Lane Sautee Nacoochee, Georgia. Tax map and parcel 055D-094. Total acreage is 0.927. The proposed use was to place in short-term rental program. Present zoning is R-1, Residential Single-Family District. He stated the property is located in a subdivision which does allow for short-term rentals and Mr. Caudell had been renting the property prior to receiving a notice regarding the county’s requirements for short-term rentals at which time he discontinued his advertisement. The Planning Commission held a public hearing for the application, at which there was no opposition and the Planning Commission recommended approval of the application. Mr. Michael Caudell stated that he lives at the property on a part-time basis, and he could provide records verifying the lodging taxes were paid on his previous rentals, however he did not have any rentals over the summer as he was working on coming into compliance with the county regulations.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to approve the land use application filed by Michael Caudell for a conditional use permit 147 Sara Lane Sautee Nacoochee, Georgia. Tax map and parcel 055D-094. Total acreage is 0.927. The approved use is to place in a short-term rental program within the present zoning of R-1, Residential Single-Family District – pending Mr. Caudell providing records of the lodging taxes paid to White County for his prior rentals.

Mr. Sell presented the land use application filed by Scott & Judy Hancock to request a conditional use permit at 1304 Highway 17 Sautee Nacoochee, Georgia. Tax map and parcel 071-009. Total acreage is 16.86. The proposed use is to place in short-term rental program. Present zoning is A-1, Agriculture Forestry District. He stated the property is not located in a subdivision and there is a cabin and a house on the property. The cabin is a short-term rental, and the house is the Hancock’s residence. He advised they had been renting the cabin for two and one-half years and just became aware of the regulations. Mr. Sell said the Planning Commission held a public hearing on

the application at which there was some opposition stated. Ms. Judy Hancock explained that the property is a working farm and they had renovated the 1844 cabin – which has a maximum occupancy of two (2) people. She said people love to come stay there and experience the farm. Chairman Turner asked Ms. Hancock if they planned to add any additional short-term rentals to the property. Ms. Hancock stated that was not possible due to no additional septic being available since the property is in a flood zone. Commissioner Bryant stated that he had received several calls from members of the community who opposed approval of the short-term rental. He also asked Ms. Hancock to explain why she had been opposed to the event venue that was previously proposed across the road from her, since she was operating a short-term rental. Ms. Hancock stated that the proposed venue which she opposed was totally different than her two (2) person short-term rental and she objected to the venue due to concerns about noise and traffic. She also stated that the venue property would have been zoned commercial, which did not fit in the Santee Nacoochee Valley that residents wanted to preserve.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to approve the land use application filed by Scott & Judy Hancock for a conditional use permit at 1304 Highway 17 Santee Nacoochee, Georgia. Tax map and parcel 071-009. Total acreage is 16.86. The approved use is to place in short-term rental program. Present zoning is A-1, Agriculture Forestry District – pending verification of records that lodging taxes had been paid and with the approval being for only the one (1) 1844 cabin.

Mr. Sell presented the three (3) proposals received for repairs to the White County Transfer Station floor. He stated that the proposals had been reviewed by Civil Engineer Lance Wilkes. Mr. Wilkes spoke and advised that the lowest cost proposal by Impact Concrete provided the best solution by replacing one-half (1/2) of the concrete slab and the entire rear one-fourth (1/4) where the fraction of the heavy equipment had worn away the concrete. Mr. Wilkes advised that the expected service life of the repaired concrete floor would be ten (10) years. He also confirmed that the ideal plan would be to start the work on Thursday morning and reopen the center on the following Monday morning. Chairman Turner asked that at least three (3) weeks' notice be given to commercial haulers and the public.

Upon a motion made by commissioner Goodger, seconded by Commissioner Nix there was a unanimous vote to award the contract for repairs to the Transfer Station floor to Impact Concrete in the amount of \$74,902.00 – to be paid from the Solid Waste Fund.

Mr. Pittard presented a grant application for the Enotah Judicial Circuit for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds. He advised that the grant is two (2) parts – one is a continuation of three (3) previous grant cycles related to personnel expenses associated with addressing the backlog of cases caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the other part will fund improvements to audio/visual systems for courthouses in White, Lumpkin, and Union counties. Chief Judge Joy Parks stated that the total amount being applied for the Enotah Circuit would be \$2,295,520. She also explained that the audio/visual component would include cameras, screens, an annotation system, equipment for the hearing impaired, streaming capabilities. Judge Parks advised that the equipment would be standardized across the circuit counties for ease of operation. Mr. Pittard stated this was a 100% (reimbursement) grant and White County would receive \$40,000.00 for being the fiscal agent.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Holcomb, seconded by Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to approve the grant application for the Enotah Judicial Circuit for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds in the amount of \$2,295,520.00.

Mr. David Murphy, Director of Public Safety, presented a proposed Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the White County Board of Education for designation of an area at the Central Office for a secondary / back-up

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and 911 Center. He stated that a back-up location for these functions is a critical part of the county's emergency plan and the technology available at the Central Office was far better than the technology at other previously designated sites and he would be working with the Board of Education to identify potential grant funding to equip the facility with a generator.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the White County Board of Education for designation of an area at the Central Office for a secondary / back-up Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and 911 Center.

Mr. Murphy requested that the Board designate a training area for public safety – including Fire, EMA, and Law Enforcement per the creditable ISO criteria. He informed the Board of an area on the Yonah Preserve property that met all the requirements and had already been used for some previous training exercises. He stated that this is a secure location and he had worked with the Special Agent in Charge at the Drug Task Force to ensure their use would not disrupt the operations of the task force.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Nix, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to designate the identified (secure) training area for public safety – including Fire, EMA, and Law Enforcement per the creditable ISO criteria.

Mr. Joel Witcher, IT Director, presented a contract for the replacement of the county's information technology back-up system. He explained that the system backs up 40+ servers on the county's network and the current system keeps increasing in cost with no improvements. He proposed switching to Rubrik Hardware and Software Solutions – which would save money and provide better features. Mr. Witcher stated that Rubrik focuses on ransomware, provides American based customer service, and is CJUS certified. He advised that there are two (2) options for funding the system – in a lump sum or finance over a three (3) year period – with the total cost being \$60,919.00 (lump sum) or \$65,273.88 (financed) and the lifespan of the system was seven (7) years.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Nix, Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to approve the purchase of the Rubrik Hardware and Software Solution for the replacement of the county's information technology back-up system to be financed over a three (3) year period through budgeted funds.

Mr. Derick Canupp, Director of Public Works, presented the bids received for right of way vegetation control program. He recommended the on-call contract be awarded to ChemPro Services at \$98.75 per mile up to \$6,320.00 per year. He advised that this is a pilot program included in the current budget and the application would be done twice per year on the designated roads.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Holcomb, seconded by Commissioner Nix there was a unanimous vote to award the contract for the pilot right of way vegetation control program to ChemPro Services.

Mr. Canupp presented the bids received for the county road signage project related to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Roadway Safety Grant Project which would replace signage on 23 designated county roads. He recommended the contract be awarded to the low bidder Yunex Traffic based on the bid amount of \$165,766.45.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to award the contract for the county road signage project related to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Roadway Safety Grant Project which would replace signage on 23 designated county roads to Yunex Traffic based on the bid amount of \$165,766.45.

Ms. Barbara Overton, Director of Senior Services, made a presentation to the Board concerning the option of applying for Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Transit Program Section 5311 Funding for support in providing transportation services for White County. She incorporated information from a recent transit study conducted by Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC). She explained the need she has seen for public transit services in White County and the lack of solid referrals for those with the need for transportation. Following explanation of that grant funding available and the transit services provided by other counties in the region – Ms. Overton estimated that White County would need two (2) transit vans, one (1) full-time employee, and one (1) part-time for this type of operation. She explained that the funding for the vehicles would be 80% federal 10% state and 10% local – with two (2) vehicles costing the county \$20,000.00 – and the operations budget would be funded 50% through the grant as well. Ms. Susan Cremering spoke in support of a transit program, stating that a recent survey done by the GMRC included 71% of respondents being from White County. Following discussion there was a consensus of the Board that funding for the capital expense would be discussed during the FY 25 budget process with operational expenses being considered in the FY 26 budget process – and the grant being applied for accordingly.

Ms. Jodi Ligon presented the monthly financial status report (see attached).

Chairman Turner opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Robert Sloane recommended the county contact neighboring counties to assist while the Transfer Station was closed for repairs.

Ms. Bobbie Easterday, 171 Stansel Road Cleveland, Ga – expressed concern regarding the number of short-term rentals and wineries in White County.

Ms. Susan Cremering, 203 Bittersweet Sautee Nacoochee, Ga – expressed the importance of a historic overlay being implemented in the county. She also advised the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) short-term improvement plan is open for public comment. She said she had contacted State Representative Stan Gunter regarding legislation requiring VRBO, Airbnb, etc. to provide a list of short-term rentals by address with the monthly remittance of lodging tax.

Mr. Mike Bush, 1437 Panorama Drive Sautee Nacoochee, Ga – expressed the need for a roundabout at Hwy 75 and Duncan Bridge Road, based on traffic volume and safety.

With no additional comments, Chairman Turner closed the floor.

Chairman Turner asked District Commissioners for any comments – Commissioner Bryant asked that Mr. Pittard get with staff to review insurance documentation and licensing for three (3) short-term rentals in Panorama Estates.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Goodger, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb, there was a unanimous vote to enter into Executive Session in order to discuss matters of personnel.

-See The Following Closed Meeting Affidavit-

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Nix, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb, there was a unanimous vote to exit Executive Session.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Goodger there was a unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting.

August 28, 2023 – Work Session & Regular Meeting Minutes (continued)

The minutes of the August 28, 2023 meeting were approved as stated this 2nd day of October, 2023.

WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

s/Travis C. Turner

Travis C. Turner, Chairman

s/Terry D. Goodger

Terry D. Goodger, District 1

s/Lyn Holcomb

Lyn Holcomb, District 2

s/Edwin Nix

Edwin Nix, District 3

s/Craig Bryant

Craig Bryant, District 4

s/Shanda Murphy

Shanda Murphy, County Clerk