

March 7, 2022

At a scheduled meeting of the Walker County Commission held in their office in the Walker County Courthouse Annex, Jasper, Alabama, at 9:30 a.m. on the 7th day of March 2022, Chairman Miller gave the welcome and called the meeting to order.

After Chairman Miller gave the invitation for comment from citizens and other elected officials, the County Administrator called the roll and commissioners present were Keith Davis, Jeff Burrough, Jim Borden and Steven Aderholt.

Reverend Paul Mason gave the invocation and Probate Judge Lee Tucker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Wayne Jones gave an update on the bags of litter and cans and said thanks to ADEM and the Health Department they have got some of the garbage and major dumpsites cleaned up. He said he appreciated everyone helping him do what he is doing. He said that the whole month of April they will be having cleanup, that he is going to help coordinate that, that they are going to do a kickoff on the PALS Program maybe the first weekend in April, that he will be going to Montgomery to get the bags and that the Commission will be involved also. He said he was going to try to get all the communities and the volunteer fire departments to help with the cleanup.

Josh Stewart from ADEM explained that there are programs to help with cleanups, one is the Scrap Tires Program and another is the Unauthorized Solid Waste Dump Program. He explained the regulations for the Programs and said the funding comes from the dollar per ton tipping fee that is at all the Alabama landfills, disposal facilities. A portion of that pot of money and some recycling grant money goes for illegal dump reimbursements, contracted cleanups and administrative costs.

He stated that if the Commission goes into an agreement with them they can be reimbursed for collection, management, disposal and any other associated costs if these scrap tires are removed from county property or rights-of-ways. The contract period for these is three years, which will be 2021-2024, you can enter into it at any time, but will renew in 2024, with each county having \$150,000 available with no matching fund requirement. The county will furnish the labor, equipment, personnel and resources and will need to submit the receipts to ADEM, whereupon, the county will be reimbursed if they have entered into the program agreement. He said there are currently 45 counties enrolled, that he works out of the Decatur field office and that they have field offices throughout the state and typically there is going to be one inspector in each one of the

offices, with each office servicing about 15 to 20 counties. He stated that the county could also be reimbursed if partnering with civic organizations, such as, adopt-a-stream, adopt-a-mile, river-keepers and if they have a cleanup project going on, they can go and do their thing and the county can handle the transportation and disposal side of it and then be reimbursed from ADEM for those activities.

For the county to participate they must enter into an Interagency Cooperative Agreement, which is basically a contract between ADEM and the County Commission. It's a mutual partnership, where the workers will act, in a sense, as a contractor.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to amend the agenda to add Item 10 – Lease Transfer for a Hanger at the Airport and to approve the agenda as amended.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the minutes for February 22, 2022, and Claims Against the County for February, 2022.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

REPORTS FROM STAFF:

County Engineer Mike Short stated that he wanted the Commission to know the roofing supplies for the library have been moved on site and if the weather will cooperate, they should be getting started on that this week.

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion for Courthouse Doors & Annex Opening/Closing Discussion.

After explanation by Chairman Miller and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the locking of the courthouse doors at 4 o'clock.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of the Pals Participation Approval.

After explanation by Commissioner Burrough, input from Wayne Jones, County Attorney Richard Fikes and County Administrator Robbie Dickerson, and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the Pals Participation with April the 2nd as the Walker County Cleanup Day.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioners Aderholt and Borden (simultaneously) to open discussion of Payroll Direct Deposit Approval.

After explanation by County Administrator Robbie Dickerson and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the Payroll Direct Deposit.

With a brief discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Brown's Bridge Agreement Approval.

After explanation by County Engineer Mike Short, input from Commissioners Borden, Aderholt and Davis and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve the Brown's Bridge Agreement.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough for Solid Waste Scale Installation Quote Approval.

After explanation by County Engineer Mike Short, input by Chairman Miller and County Administrator Robbie Dickerson and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve the Solid Waste Scale Installation Quote and do a budget amendment for the regular funds of the Solid Waste.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Davis to open discussion of the part-time Deputy Coroner position approval and Budget Amendment.

After explanation by Coroner Joey Vick, input by County Administrator Robbie Dickerson and County Attorney Richard Fikes and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve Danielle Calloway as a part-time employee, \$12 an hour, 29 hours a week.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of the Beechtree discussion and approval.

After explanation by Beth Bailey from Beechtree, input by County Attorney Richard Fikes and Brandon of QCHC and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve the Beechtree Agreement.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Davis to open discussion of the Redistricting Contract Approval.

After explanation and recommendation by County Engineer Mike Short, input by County Attorney Richard Fikes and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the Redistricting Contract.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Chairman Miller stated that, "Today Walker County Commission has the opportunity to make history with ARPA funding for our county road system, each district needs funding year after year to bring our county roads up to what each citizen of the county deserves, but today I ask each commissioner to vote to approve the one-time 6.8 million dollars (1 million seven hundred thousand for each district) to go along with their

yearly funding, approximately \$898,000 a year. There are many other needs in our county which we could work on with our annual county budget, but today can be historical and advance our communities and build confidence in this Commission as, I, as Chairman, recommend you approve the 6.8 million for roads, how do you as each district commissioner stand with your community. I need a motion to open for discussion.” Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of the ARPA funding.

After statements made by Commissioner Borden, he stated, “That being said, I would make a motion that –”

Commissioner Davis stated, “Hold up. All of us want to speak on that.” After statements from Commissioner Davis, input from Commissioner Burrough and recommendation from Commissioner Davis, input from County Administrator Robbie Dickerson, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the 6.8 million dollars (1.7 million dollars per district) ARPA funding and to approve an available funding of \$700,000 to each district today for projects in the districts (Funds will go into the 298 Fund) and the additional funding of one million dollars to be allocated when the funding comes in June 1st. 2022.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of the Airport Hanger lease transfer.

After explanation by County Engineer Mike Short and County Attorney Richard Fikes stating that he has prepared an assignment of Hanger Lease which requires the consent of the Commissioner, stating that Joseph Carter Realty Investments will acquire the lease subject to the existing terms and be bound by the existing terms of the existing lease, which is what has been done in every situation, and after a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve the Airport Hanger Lease Transfer.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Abstain; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With one abstention and Three Ayes, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Davis stated, “Again, going on ten years now, my first comment in Commissioner comments is number one, thanking you for being here, but number two, saying that this Commission works for you. You hire us and you fire us. So, I’ve said that

now going on ten years and I'll keep saying it at the end of each Commission meeting as long as you have me sit in this seat. I appreciate you so much for your attendance and coming out. I appreciate Wayne and Josh and the things that ADEM is doing. And Lee the work that you've got going on and projects trying to work on. And Sheriff Smith, I really appreciate you and the things that you do. Joey, I had no idea it was 250 calls in a year, man. You're doing something every day. Just about every day you have a call to go to. And I appreciate you so much for your service and what you do. And Judge Williams congratulations on your appointment. I appreciate what you do so much too. David Knight, thank you. Just going around the room, y'all, y'all just hang on with me. I appreciate everyone and what you do and continue to pray for this Commission and the things that we do. This much needed road funding will, in District One, be used for Asphalt projects, something that we just don't have funding to do like we want to, with Asphalt per mile being \$160,000 a mile. So, you can take the 1.7 and divide that by 160 and you can go ahead and tell we're probably going to get about ten miles of paving with that. So, that's the number one goal is, if it's asphalt road, put it back asphalt at some point. We're trying to do that. So, bear with us. Smith Lake Dam Road will be the number one project on getting finished. We've got five miles left of it. The first six miles ended up costing about 1.1 million dollars to pave and striping, so the additional six and the new gas prices that we've got, thanks to Washington, will be probably 1.1 million, too, Mike or close thereto. That will leave District One with about \$600,000 to try to allocate toward some other projects in the next few months or year or so. Again, thank you so much for your attendance. Continue to pray for us. I appreciate you so much."

Commissioner Burrough stated, "As usual he runs a little long for me."

Commissioner Davis stated, "I actually was short."

Commissioner Burrough stated, "I know Lee has done lots and lots of work with trying to keep his Probate Office getting updates on -- or restoring a lot of records and stuff like that and he's always there when we need him. And then, I want to thank the Sheriff too, him and Wayne coordinated with me this past week to help a situation where we have log trucks that are pulling out and dragging mud out on the road. And, you know, to me it's not that we're trying to deter people from doing any type logging or anything like that, but you, we've just got to do things in the right way and I sure appreciate y'all having my back and taking care of those situations this week. It was handled really well and I appreciate it. And then Brandon sitting back there behind him, you can't see Brandon, but wow at how much better our inmate medicals are going. I mean, they're saving us money and I appreciate him, you know, sticking in there and doing the job that he does. Anyways, everybody else I appreciate you coming. And Josh and Wayne you know I've talked to you already. I appreciate everything you're doing. But getting back to our ARPA money, some of us have been spending some on some roads, and I'm just going to point at myself, boy I definitely need it because I'm already in the hole. And I need to get dug out. But we've got roads like he says that needs asphaltting. You know we each have plans of these roads that are like main arteries, but what this money can do, it can give us the money to take care of those main arteries."

Then that will relieve us of our yearly money that we have to get on these secondary roads, I call them, because there are so many of them. I know Jim has got way more than the rest of us in District Three that need the attention. And, you know, we're going to look forward to using this money to, you know, relieve what we already get, so we can help those second roads, you know, the roads that are not just traveled every day, but they're beat up and worn out. You know, I'm just excited about that, excited about the bridge project for him. You know, Keith mentioned Smith Chapel Bridge in my district that is long overdue, it's been going on the same length of time as Brown's Bridge, I guess. A lot of property condemnations that we had to do to get it to be let and it's coming soon after. Right, Mike?"

County Engineer Mike Short stated, "That is correct."

Commissioner Burrough stated, "You know I can report that Smith Chapel Bridge is no longer there. I mean, you've got these scrap metal people that's stealing and stuff like that. The whole bridge is gone. There ain't even none of it in the water. So, that's less cleanup we've got to start out with. But anyway, Chairman thank you for your thoughts and time you put into this. And like I said, we've got our regular general fund money that we hope we can help these other projects with."

Commissioner Davis stated, "For the record, I think Jeff went longer than I did. Note that in the minutes."

Commissioner Burrough stated, "Brandon, if you've got some news stand up and share it with us."

Brandon from QCHC stated, "I do. I've got some good news. I don't know if I'm on the record. When we come and presented to you guys, ladies and gentlemen, the first quarter is normally when we bid on this, you know, we set you up for – try to get as close as we can, but I bring good news, we're in at a seventeen thousand, ninety-four dollar and ninety-six cents (\$17,094.96) credit. So that will come off of the next check that the Commission writes or the County writes to Quality Correctional Health Care. So, we will deduct that. We'll start on the next quarter. Here's your reconciliation. This will be every report, everything that was bought for that jail through medical, whether it was staffing, you have your staffing matrix in the back to where they clocked in, who clocked in, how long they worked, how much they're paid, what their hourly rates – there's no hidden cost. Just like we promised it. So, you'll see this report."

Chairman Miller stated, "We thank you very much for that and any time you want to come back with good news, You're Welcome."

Brandon from QCHC stated, "We love bringing good news, so I'll leave this for you guys when we get done."

Commissioner Borden stated, "Commissioner Davis, I just want to apologize on behalf of Mr. Burroughs for going so long. I'm just going to turn the tape recorder on and replay what's been said so far and say I agree. Again, thank everyone for being here. Today was an exciting day for me personally for me as being the Commissioner of District Three. I look forward to great things. I believe we've got better and greater things ahead. Mr. Tucker, we met the other day, had some discussion. I want to thank you for inviting me to come and look and see what your ideas were. Again, just thank everyone for being here and with that, everybody just be safe, continue to pray for the country, the county, and the world as a whole."

Commissioner Aderholt stated, "I can adlib these gentlemen's comments over and over again, so many good things are going on in the county. And I think it's a trajectory that we want to see and that's what we're fighting for in Walker County is to continue down a good trajectory and a good path. I'd like to say also, thank you Mr. Jones, Mr. Stewart for the work that y'all are doing. Again, this is a tremendous turn in the county in regards of litter and things like that. I don't think everybody always recognizes and realizes how much hard work goes into that, but I know personally what you guys are doing and thank you personally from me. Again, I go around the room as well, Judge Tucker does a fantastic job at the Probate Office, as well as looking forward to the future and trying to make Walker County a better place. Judge Williams congratulations on your appointment. I can just go on and on. I'm thankful for everybody that's here. One issue that I did want to bring up, there was a couple of meetings ago, I was not able to be here because of the COVID, not because I had something else to do, where the Commission looked at our legal position in relation to Solid Waste. I wasn't able to be here during that vote and I would like to ask in the next Agenda that we go back and just revisit that issue. That was certainly the Commission's right to look at it then, but that's, again, my request is that we go back and look at it and allow all of the Commissioners to vote, that can be present at the next meeting.

Road funding, hallelujah. We've got some money to do something with. Again, as these gentlemen said it's not the end all, be all answer, but it's a big answer for a lot of roads that have needed attention for a long time. I don't want to be bleak by any means, Psalms 37:4 Trust God and Do Good, but we are entering some difficult times as fuel prices rise, so is the cost of everything else. So, I'm thankful for the funds that we're getting, but I still realize that it's a matter of COVID. A lot of people lost lives. This country is being transformed in such a way because of pandemics. Those funds were meant for relief. I know road paving won't relieve all problems that were created by COVID, but I'm at least thankful for the Federal Government coming to their senses and letting us use this for something besides Broadband and Sewer. Walker County has needs and road funding is vitally important for all four districts. It seems the counties were kind of last pickings when it comes to Federal Funding or State Funding in a large

part to get money to be able to do something with. Coal tax has evaporated and other funding sources have kind of declined over time. Our general revenues are up, but as a matter of road funding we've been limited for a long time. So, I'm really thankful for these funds. I'm thankful and looking forward and going forward in 2022, 23, 24 and beyond. Thank you for all the hard work that y'all do, as well. I know nobody sees a lot of that in the background meeting, but thank you for my co-commissioners and everybody here today."

Commissioner Borden stated, "There's one other apology I need to make. Mr. Jones, I will try not to call you on Saturdays and Sundays anymore. I think I'm the culprit there."

Mr. Jones stated, "If you don't, you'll be the only one."

Commissioner Davis stated, "The next County Commission meeting is on AEA. Monday, I will be out of town on a 25th year Anniversary Trip."

Chairman Miller stated, "I, too, would like to say thank you to Mr. Knight. David Knight does a great job. Our Sheriff, Nick Smith, does a great job. Mr. Tucker, I know you've got a lot of things on your plate. We appreciate all you do. Judge Williams, we thank you and congratulations on your appointment. And Mr. Jones, Mr. Stewart, thank y'all for what y'all do for the county and state. And Mr. Short, Mr. Fikes, works hard for this county. Mr. Vick, I know you've got boo-coos and boo-coos of calls. We do appreciate what you do. That funding for your vehicles and coroner's office and the mobile morgue and everything is still in the works and still working. The automobiles are ordered. We're just waiting on them. I think we have a May 7th date on them being made. Everybody else that's here today, thank you for coming. Thank you for John, for what you do in Solid Waste. Each one of you commissioners. You have a lot of work to do in the next coming months and years to work on these roads. We appreciate y'all. And most of all today, want for each and every one of us to remember Ukrainians. They stand in real hurt today. So, each and every one us lift that country up in our prayers. With that, I would entertain a motion."

Commissioner Burrough stated, "Chairman, I want to add a prayer list. Joey has got a brother that has some health issues, and he's one of my closest friends. And I want everybody to pray for him if you can."

Chairman Miller stated, "Remember these, ladies and gentlemen."

With that, I'd entertain a motion to adjourn.


ADJOURN:

Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Davis, that this meeting be adjourned to reconvene at the next regularly scheduled meeting or at the call of the Chairman.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Read and Approved:


Chairman


Attest