

January 6, 2025

At a scheduled meeting of the Walker County Commission held in their offices in the Walker County Courthouse Annex, Jasper, Alabama, at 9:30 a.m. on the 6th day of January 2025, 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, County Administrator Amy Frederickson called the roll and Commissioners present were John Dunagan, Jeff Burrough, Jim Borden, and Steven Aderholt.

Commissioner Burrough gave the invocation and Commissioner Borden led the pledge of allegiance.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATION: None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to Approve the Agenda, to Approve the Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 16, 2024, the New Vendor List for December, 2024 and Claims Against the County for December, 2024.

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.

REPORTS FROM STAFF:

County Administrator Amy Frederickson stated, "Good morning and I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. Glad to see everyone here today. I'm looking forward to the results of this meeting and I think Walker County employees have a lot to look forward to in the meeting."

County Engineer Glenn Peek stated that he didn't have anything at this time, that what he has will be discussed in the Agenda.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Contract with Sain Associates, Inc for the Development of the Walker County SS4A Safety Action Plan (SA Project# 240333) in Conformance with the Requirements of USDOT's SS4A Planning Grant.

After explanation by County Engineer Glenn Peek, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden, to approve the contract with Sain Associates, Inc. for the Development of Walker County SS4A Safety Action Plan (SA Project #240333) in Conformance with the Requirements of USDOT's SS4A Planning Grant."

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(2) Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of the Following Annual Bids:

- a. Bid # 835: Annual Bid for Traffic Striping
- b. Bid # 836: Annual Bid for HDPE Double Wall
- c. Bid # 837: Annual Bid for Corrugated Metal Pipe
- d. Bid # 838: Annual Bid for Emulsified Asphalt
- e. Bid # 839: Annual Bid for Bituminous Surface Treatment
- f. Bid # 840: Annual Bid for Bituminous Plant Mix
- g. Bid # 842: Annual Bid Annual Bid for Stone
- h. Bid # 843: Annual Bid for Cold Mix Patching Material

After explanation and recommendation by County Engineer Glenn Peek of each of the bids and much discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to approve Bids (a) through (f) as follows:

- a. Bid # 835: Ozark Striping
- b. Bid # 836: J & G Culverts
- c. Bid # 837: J & G Culverts
- d. Bid # 838: Vulcan Asphalt
- e. Bid # 839: Charlie Watts
- f. Bid # 840: Wiregrass Construction

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.

An additional motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Dungan to approve as follows:

g. Bid # 842: District One & District Two: Wiregrass; District Three: Wade Sand & Gravel.

h. Bid # 843: District One & District Two: Advanced Asphalt Products; District Three: Wade Sand & Gravel & District Four: Advanced Asphalt Products.

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.

(3) Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Proposal by Southern Heating & Air, LLC, to install Commercial HVAC System in the Library Building for \$15,000.00.

After explanation by County Administrator Amy Frederickson and input by Chairman Miller that he would contact the City of Jasper to see if they would assist, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to Approve the Proposal by Southern Heating & Air, LLC to install Commercial HVAC System in the Library Building for \$15,000 and give Chairman Miller the Authority to contact the City of Jasper to see if they wanted to assist and effectuate the necessary paperwork to effectuate any paperwork concerning such agreement, if any.

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.

(4) Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Sell by Public Auction through GovDeals.com:

- a. Damaged and/or Worn Garbage Cans;
- b. 1990 International Dump Truck, VIN# 1HTSHNERXMH340706;
- c. 2004 Mack Front Load Garbage Truck, VIN# M2K189C7M025201;
- d. 2008 Wilkins Walking-Floor Trailer, VIN# 1W91C48268M28830;
- e. 1999 Galbreath Walking-Floor Trailer, VIN# 1G9514825XB157112;
- f. John Deere 544D Front-Loader.

After explanation by Chairman Miller, motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to Approve to Sell by Public Auction through GovDeals.com the property listed above.

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.

(5) Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Proposed Walker County Pay Increase of \$2.00 per Hour & Proposed Amendment to Rule 8 of the Walker County Civil Service Rules & Regulations for the Combined Purpose of Encouraging Competitive Workforce Development and Employee Retention; Changes Effective Upon Joint-Approval by the Walker County Civil Service Board.

After explanation by County Chairman Miller, input by Administrator Amy Frederickson and much discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve the Proposed Pay Increase of \$2.00 per Hour & Proposed Amendment to Rule 8 of the Walker County Civil Service Rules & Regulations for the Combined Purpose of Encouraging Competitive Workforce Development and Employee Retention; Changes Effective Upon Joint-Approval by the Walker County Civil Service Board.

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

With three Ayes and one Nay, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(6) Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Budget Amendment to County Departmental General Fund & Solid Waste Fund Expenditure Budgets to Off-Set December Employee Bonuses Paid by the Solid Waste Employee Bonus Fund.

After explanation by County Administrator Amy Frederickson, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve the Budget Amendment to County Departmental General Fund & Solid Waste Fund Expenditure Budgets to Off-Set December Employee Bonuses paid by the Solid Waste Employee Bonus Fund.

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.

(7) Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to In-Service Transfer Ms. Kimberly Whitehead to the Position of Real Property Appraiser, Step 9, in the Re-Appraisal Office within the Revenue Department, Effective January 8, 2025.

After explanation by Revenue Commissioner Jerry Davis, motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded (reluctantly) by Commissioner Burrough to Approve to In-Service Transfer Ms. Kimberly Whitehead to the Position of Real Property Appraiser, with one year experience, the Re-Appraisal Office within the Revenue Department, Effective January 8, 2025.

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.

(8) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Hire from the Eligible Register Ms. Faye Comer in the Full-Time position of Administrative Secretary/Accounts Payable Technician in the Commission Office, Effective January 8, 2025.

After explanation by County Administrator Amy Frederickson, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve to Hire Ms. Faye Comer in the Full-Time Position of Administrative Secretary/Accounts Payable Technician in the Commission Office, Effective January 8, 2025.

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

With one Recusal and three Ayes, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(9) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Hire Ms. McKenzie Clark to the Part-Time Position of Revenue Clerk within the Revenue Department, Effective within the Revenue Department, Effective January 6, 2025.

After explanation by Revenue Commissioner Jerry Davis, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to approve to Hire Ms. McKenzie Clark to the Part-Time Position of Revenue Clerk within the Revenue Department, Effective January 6, 2025.

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.

(10) Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Hire Ms. Bethany Haun as a Full-Time Common Laborer in the Solid Waste Department, Effective January 8, 2025.

After explanation by Chairman Miller, motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve to Hire Ms. Bethany Haun as a Full-Time Common Laborer in the Solid Waste Department, Effective January 8, 2025.

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.

(11) Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Request to Hire Mr. Chase Alexander Howard as a Part-Time Jailer at the Walker County Jail, Effective January 8, 2025.

After explanation by Sheriff Nick Smith, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to approve Request to Hire Mr. Chase Alexander Howard as a Part-Time Jailer at the Walker County Jail, Effective January 8, 2025.

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.

(12) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Request to Hire Ms. Tabitha Marie Dupree-Allen as a Part-Time Jailer at the Walker County Jail, Effective January 8, 2025.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to approve Item 12 as they did Item 11, Request to Hire Ms. Marie Dupree-Allen as a Part-Time Jailer at the Walker County Jail, Effective January 8, 2025. the same as Item 11.

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.

(13) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Hire Ms. Madison Miles as a Full-Time Appraisal Clerk in the Re-Appraisal Department, Effective January 8, 2025.

After explanation by Revenue Commissioner Jerry Davis, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve to Hire Ms. Madison Miles as a Full-Time Appraisal Clerk in Re-Appraisal Department, Effective January 8, 2025.

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.

(14) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Request to Hire Ms. Madison Sargent in the Full-Time Temporary Position of Communications Officer and to Hire Mr. Braxton Bridges in the Full-Time Temporary Position of Jailer. Both Temporary Hires are Effective January 8, 2025, pending the Establishment of a Full-Time Eligible Register for these Positions and shall not exceed 120 days.

After explanation by Sheriff Nick Smith, input from Civil Service Board Member Eddie Miller and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve the Request to Hire Ms. Madison Sargent in the Full-Time Temporary Position of Communications Officer and to Hire Mr. Braxton Bridges in the Full-Time Temporary Position of Jailer. Both Temporary Hires are Effective January 8, 2025, pending the Establishment of a Full-Time Eligible Register for these Positions and shall not exceed 120 days.

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.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Dunagan stated that he wanted to add item 15 to the agenda to give the Chairman the authority to close the courthouse due to upcoming expected wintery weather, but after discussion from Commissioner Aderholt who stated that the ACCA required them to have an emergency hearing, no motion was made to add item 15 to the agenda and the statement was withdrawn by Commissioner Dunagan.

Commissioner Dunagan stated, "I want to thank everybody for coming. I hope everybody had a great and blessed Happy New Years and Christmas. I'd like to thank all of our employees. They are all valuable. We appreciate everything y'all do." He stated that he and his crew are out doing some shoulder clipping and ditch cutting and to please be mindful and slow down. He stated, "We've all got family to go home to, but we try to clean the roads to make District One a little bit safer. I'd like to thank the Volunteer Fire Departments, EMA, 9-1-1 for the work y'all do during these storms. Me and my crew have been out last night and y'all are appreciated. So, just thank you for coming and I hope everybody has a blessed and safe day and watch the weather."

Commissioner Burrough stated, "I also would like to thank -- mostly we have employees in the crowd and I want to thank each of y'all for the jobs you do. And, like I said, I've been here, this is my third term and every person I've worked with on this Commission has always been mindful trying to help our employees. That's our number one goal is to always keep y'all first. I hope in the future we can have different revenues to where we can, you know, make this more than a every twenty-year deal. Other than that, I want you to maybe, Glenn, give an update on Gibson Hill."

County Engineer Glenn Peek gave an update stating that the bridge is closed currently and needs some repair work on the substructure. He stated, "We're currently waiting on ALDOT to give us some recommendations of different ways to possibly fix it." He stated that if it is not an extreme repair that sixty days -- if they will only have to go in and do some welding and patching to that pile, then sixty days should be it." A brief discussion continued between Commissioners Burrough and Dunagan, Chairman and County Engineer Glenn Peek.

Commissioner Burrough continued with an update on the buildings, Fire and Rescue building, they've come along, the Coroner's Office Building. He asked if they were waiting on heat and cooling. Chairman Miller stated that both buildings have heating and cooling, that it just lacks the connecting of the sewer system and a plumber is going out this afternoon or tomorrow to look at what it is going to take to get that hooked up. And once that's hooked up then it's a matter of just days for turning it over to the Coroner and Fire Department.

Commissioner Burrough stated, "That's just something I wanted to add to keep an update on some of these things. There are some things we're proud that's positive in

this County that we've been able to accumulate and get funds to do these things to help some certain organizations. A lot of it through grant money and some of it through our

own end. I appreciate all the fire rescue people that helps us. And like I said, these storms, we've got some coming up this week, they're going to be trees that hit the ground and Tim, he was here. I don't know if he's still here. We appreciate his office and they sort of direct traffic pretty well to get people out and if it gets real bad Regina is on call, too. Anyway, I appreciate everybody for coming and I'll turn it over to Jim."

Commissioner Borden stated, "I can't add a whole lot to that, other than we do pay our employees. We have discussed this since we did this Condrey Study deal back earlier last year. Our pay rates were fairly low. I find it just in my personal four years on the job, it is hard to find people to come to work for \$12 to \$13 an hour. We have guys that have been there for several years and they're making, \$15, \$16 an hour. These are skilled – these are truck drivers, motor grade operators. These people just don't walk in off the street and you put them on a piece of equipment. You've got to be able to attract employees. Another thing is, our first responders. They were out last night, I was out with them around 12:00 last night with the storm, but all of our first responders, i.e., our volunteer fire departments. My support goes out to them, my thanks goes out. They help -- untold nights that they're out with trees that fall from county line to county line to clear limbs in this county. There literally could be hundreds of trees a year that have to be removed out of the road. But just a thank you to all of those people that volunteer for that. And that's a key word in our first responders that are volunteers. They're volunteering to do this. Without the people that take a little pride and care in their communities to step up, you know, most people don't want to get out of bed at 2:30 in the morning in an ice storm or a thunder storm and go cut trees out of the road. These guys do. So, hats off to those. Just upcoming year, I've been working with our Engineer Glenn, we've got a project down at Tubbs Hill that should be finishing up here in the next month and a half, hopefully two months at the outset."

County Engineer Glenn Peek added, "They have finished the concrete."

Commissioner Borden continued, "And you said the other day, it has to cure for a certain number of days, because this is going to be a heavy load culvert. So, we'll get all of that going. I'm going to work with him on some other road projects I've got. We're going to try to come up with some more paving in District Three this coming year. Again, just thank everyone for being here."

Commissioner Aderholt stated, "Again, thank everybody for being here. Congratulations to our county employees on your new raise. I will speak to the pay scale, I think it's a dismal low, has been for years. I wish we could do more than \$2 an

hour raise. I'm not against it, but at the same time I'm optimistic but I'm cautious. Our revenues are flat and they have been flat for many years. I want to be above what's the confidence in the near future, hoping that maybe we can come into some kind of new revenue cycles in the next couple of years. We need to seek every option possible.

Again, I think they're worth more than \$2 an hour. I think it should be at a minimum another \$2 an hour on top of that. We need to move in that direction as soon as possible. Because again, finding employees in this environment that we're in, even a \$2 an hour raise is still going to be tough. Again, I thank all our county employees for what they do, all our responders, everybody that works hard everyday to do what you do for the county. I understand we're looking forward to a brighter future, but I'm hoping to bring in more revenue in the future, so we'll be in a more solid financial footing for our County."

Chairman Miller stated, "All right. I'll continue on a little bit of what Mr. Aderholt is talking about. Our revenue stream, I want to remind everybody and, of course, we certainly understand and know that the Board of Educations need all the money that they're getting and then some. But our two cents sales tax that's Walker County's. That two cents we collect yearly to the tune of between twenty and twenty-one million dollars. The County Commission gets six thousand dollars a month to collect that money, which is seventy-two thousand dollars for the year that comes to the Commission. The Walker County Board of Education gets some 15.5 or 6 million. The Jasper City Board of Education gets some 5 million to 6 million dollars. So, that's where your sales tax money goes. The County does not have that money to put on the roads. So, that's why we're really short funded for the County. That's why we need a new revenue stream as they're talking. But that's in the future. I'd like to thank our Industrial Development Board, Mr. Knight, for a good job that he does. And just keep up the good work on the projects that he's got going. And the things that he's helped bring to this County. Our Fire Departments, we certainly want to acknowledge that the first responders do a great job, our Sheriff Department, the Police Departments across the County, the Employees of the County, we really appreciate y'all. This is something we've worked hard on. We'd love for it to be a lot more, but as far as what the County, at this time, can afford, we pretty much pushed it to the limit. We're working hard in looking and thinking about different funding. I certainly want to commend the elected officials for working with us to help bring things back into line so that this could be done also. I'd like to commend Ms. Amy, she has put in a lot of hours working on this raise and on these changes that we need to make to make that happen. Certainly, our Road and Bridge Department working on these grants. Ms. Janet back there, she works hard on them, Mr. Peek, we appreciate them. Then, I certainly realize and understand that this County is moving forward and I hope all of the citizens of this County understands it is this Commission's hope and wish that this County moves further into getting the roads fixed and these things that we need to change to help our Community grow and thrive in

the next coming four years. With that, I would entertain a motion to adjourn."

ADJOURN:


Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt 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