

July 15, 2024

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 15th day of July 2024, 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 Jeff Burrough and Jim Borden.

Chairman Miller inquired of County Attorney Lindsey Smith if they had a quorum and Attorney Smith answered in the affirmative.

Chairman Miller read a statement by the Walker County Commission as follows: "We condemn the despicable act of violence perpetrated against former President Donald Trump this past weekend in Butler, Pennsylvania. We're grateful to those who courageously put themselves in harms way to protect the lives of others and extend our prayers and condolences to the family of Corey Comperatore who lost his life during the shooting. We wish a speedy recovery to President Trump and others who were injured. Though the free exchange of ideas has always been a hallmark of American life, violence against elected officials and political candidates has no place in our society and should be condemned. We hope that, despite our political differences, we can seek common ground and pursue unity and civil discourse as we move forward with this tragic event. Let us just continue to remember those families and former President Trump in our prayers."

Reverend James Johnson, Senior Pastor at Jasper First Methodist Church, gave the invocation and Eddie Miller led the pledge of allegiance.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATION:

David Knight, Executive Director of the Walker County Development Authority thanked the Commission for letting him be here and stated that they greatly appreciate the support that the Commission has given to the Development Authority over the years. Mr. Knight stated; "We're here to talk about a new program, something that I mentioned to the Commission before, that we would be working on. The State of Alabama has a program called Growing Alabama. And Growing Alabama allows taxpayers with enough tax liability to invest in a certified economic development organization to help fund industrial development projects. We made an application to the Growing Alabama Program in May to help us with what we anticipate will be the cost of grading and working on this new piece of property that we have purchased. We've already identified and lined up the tax donors. The State of Alabama, the Department of Commerce has submitted our application to the Renewal Alabama Commission, who has the final say and they approved our application in June. We were actually allocated the full request from our application, so within the next 30 to 60 days

we will be receiving \$4.7 Million from the tax donors to help the grading project on our new County Industrial Park. If y'all will go back and remember, we talked about being able to take what you give us and leverage it and grow that and have a positive benefit for the community. So, we've taken that \$300,000 for the initial purchase, secured the \$340,000 in SEEDS money and now this \$4.7 Million in Growing Alabama money, so a total of around \$5 Million in outside funds to help us build this new park."

Mr. Knight also thanked Senator Greg Reed, Representative Woods and Representative Wadsworth as they played a big role in helping them secure this funding and for being very supportive of their organization. He went on to explain how the process works and that they will be finalizing site infrastructure plans in the next month or two and hope to see work begin out on the site probably in late October.

Chairman Miller thanked Mr. Knight and commended him on his vision for Walker County.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to Approve the Agenda, to Approve the Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2024; Approve the New Vendor List and to Approve the Claims Against the County for June, 2024.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

REPORTS FROM STAFF:

County Administrator Amy Frederickson stated, "Two things of note today, it's the last day for department heads to submit the fiscal year 2025 budget proposals. Once those have been submitted, we will schedule a time to meet with everyone individually and talk those over. Secondly, the last employee wellness screening is set for July 27, Thursday of this week. We need to really encourage an 80% or higher participation rate and I ask that all the employees that did not get one to participate in this program. It's essential for us to maintain our discounted medical coverage. That's it for me."

County Engineer Glenn Peek stated, "We've recently completed various roads around the Oakman area, currently working on Liberty Hill Road and are putting estimates and plans together for other roads to be paved using Rebuild money in each district. And that's all I have at this time."

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval for the Simple Grants to move forward with Grant Research on: (a) USDA Grants, AG Center and Tractor Procurement; (b) Grant Research for Archive Project; (c) BIL Airport Terminal Grants; (d) Foundation Grants.

After Chairman Miller let the Commissioners know that they have the information in the packets before them and the Chairman explaining each section, and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve to allow Simple Grants to move forward on Grant Research on: (a) USDA Grants, AG Center and Tractor Procurement; (b) Grant Research for Archive Project; (c) BIL Airport Terminal Grants; (d) Foundation Grants.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(2) Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of how check is received and distributed to District Three Volunteer Fire Departments from Southern Natural Gas Company, LLC.

Commissioner Borden explained that the Commission had received a donation check from Kinder-Morgan to help out the Community in District Three. He stated that he had spoken to the State Auditors on how to proceed to disperse the money out to the fire departments. He said the State recommended that the money be put in the general fund and the money tracked with the equal amounts of checks that are dispersed.

(Commissioner Borden gave a thank you and much praise to the Volunteer Fire Departments)

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to proceed as the State Auditors recommended and to deposit the \$15,000 into the General Fund and to disperse equal payments to each of the Fire Departments in District Three.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(3) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval for the FY2025 Transportation Grant Application.

After explanation by the Director Deidre Tatum, who presented a handout to the Commission, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve the FY 2025 Transportation Grant Application.

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

Three: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(Chairman Miller stated to Ms. Deidre Tatum that she does a great job and they appreciate her.)

(4) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval for EMA Assistant Director Position.

After explanation by EMA Director Regina Myers and input by Chairman Miller, Commissioners Burrough and Borden and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve an EMA Assistant Director position.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(5) Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to purchase mowing machine from Energreen.

After explanation by Chairman Miller about the equipment and suggesting from what funds the purchase to be paid, input by County Engineer Glenn Peek, input by Commissioner Burrough and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to purchase a Mowing Machine from Energreen.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(6) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to change polling place (3) from Bethel Assembly of God to Edgil Grove Baptist Church.

After explanation by Probate Judge Lee Tucker and input by Commissioner Burrough, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve the polling place change from Bethel Assembly of God to Edgil Grove Baptist Church.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(7) Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Purchase 2016 Silverado 1500 2WD Regular Cab Truck for Solid Waste Department.

After explanation by Chairman Miller and input from Solid Waste Director John Dunagan, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve to Purchase one 2021 International for Solid Waste Department.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District Two: Aye; District Three: 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 of Equipment Refinance through Pinnacle Bank and to Purchase one 2021 International Side Loader for Solid Waste Department.

After explanation by Chairman Miller and input by Solid Waste Director John Dunagan and Commissioner Borden, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to Approve the Equipment Refinance through Pinnacle Bank and to Purchase one 2021 International Side Loader for Solid Waste Department.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District Two: Aye; District Three: 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 Discussion and Approval of ACCA Legislative Committee Nominations.

After a brief discussion amongst themselves, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to nominate Chairman Miller again to the ACCA Legislative Committee.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Walker County Transportation public hearing was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. and no one presented to speak to the matter. Therefore, Director of Public Transportation for Walker County, Ms. Deidre Tatum, presented the FY 2025 Transportation Grant Application under item 3 of the Agenda.

2. County Engineer Gleen Peek stated: "We had a petition to vacate a portion of Walker Circle from Phillip Smith, Veronica Smith, Jimmy Sims and Jimmy Pope. The section of Walker Circle to be vacated starts in the SW corner at Parcel 3.002 in Section 34, Township 12 South, Range 9 West and going southeasterly approximately 1120 feet to the northern property line of parcel 18.000 of Section 34, Township 12 South, Range 9 West, this section of Walker Circle is also referred as the 'tail of Walker Circle'."

After Commissioner Burrough stated that this is in his District and he sees no reason not to allow the petition and County Attorney presenting a proposed Resolution, and no citizen coming forward when Chairman Miller inquired if any citizens were present who would like to speak to this matter, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to pass the proposed resolution.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Burrough thanked everybody for being here and participating in their meetings and bringing things to the agenda. He said, "It's vitally important that everybody here understands what we're doing and trying to improve our county. I guess one thing I just wanted to mention is that I was actually watching the news the other night when the assassination attempt happened. I mean, I just could not believe what I was seeing. You know, I knew most people in this room grew up to respect their elders, respect older people and these military presidents, and I guess the world has just changed. It's way different outside of Walker County or inside Walker County, but I just could not believe what I was seeing. I hope that at this time, maybe the people of this country, the churches, you know, we can start, I know there's three or four states that have mandates on putting the Bible back into the school, teaching them in school. I hope Alabama will just follow suit with that. Bringing God and our Flag back to the school system would be a good start." He offered prayers for everybody that was involved in the assassination attempt.

Commissioner Burrough thanked David Knight and Kerri for all the work they do. He stated that he was glad to support their efforts trying to bring Walker County a new industrial site that we can be proud of.

Commissioner Burrough further stated that his District has several road projects that are ongoing and completed, that he was glad to get the Oakman area done outside the city limits, that it was much needed. (He and Engineer Peek had a conversation about having Wiregrass come to Patton Hill.) He stated he wanted to include Patton Hill when Wiregrass comes back around. He stated that the mowing season is here, that due to gas prices, they try to cut twice, around the end of July and end of September to last all the way to next year. He warned that the mowers were going to be out and to be respectful of the tractors and try to watch those areas where the men are working.

Commissioner Borden thanked everyone for being here. He thanked David Knight for the work he does to help advance this county. He thanked a couple of mayors from the county for being here and the citizens. He stated, "As along the lines as the Chairman read earlier, my personal opinion, I pray for this county, this state and this country. We live in one of the greatest countries on the face of the earth. We live in this great country because of our Constitution; Our right for free speech; Our right of assembly; Our right to vote. We vote our representation in. And y'all all have heard this through the media, violence gets you nowhere. Just because a person is elected into an office as they said they've put a bullseye on Trump – an elected official – but I do the best I can for the citizens of Walker County and for my District. Sometimes the rhetoric gets out there a little far, as Commissioner Burrough said, something has changed. I think we've got to get back to the basics of humanity. Just because you're a citizen you don't have a right to go out here and make threats. You have to live within the bounds of the law and that freedom of speech and that right to vote, that right to bear arms, that gets a little fuzzy in there sometimes. We're all human beings. I don't think there's a man on this panel here that intentionally does something and try to make a bad decision for the county as a whole." He offered his prayers up and asked that the people pray for the firefighter that lost his life, his family and the others that were wounded during the shooting. He said it's a scary thought that this sort of thing can happen when you go out to a public assembly. He said it's a different world than when he grew up when he was in his 20s and 30s.

Commissioner Borden stated, "Again, the machine that we purchased is going to help greatly on work on our right of ways. I get a lot of requests from the school board about the limbs on the roads. This is not going to be an overnight cure all. It's going to take years of it. As example, 350 miles of road in District Three, that means you have 700 miles of right of way. It's like trying to cut the right of way, if you can do a mile, anywhere from a quarter of a mile to a mile a day, from here to Washington D.C. It's a massive undertaking. But we will do the best we can with it. He gave an update on paving in District Three. He reminded employees of the importance of the health screening.

Commissioner Burrough added that Deidre does a great job and he doesn't think she gets enough recognition and he thanked her.

Chairman Miller stated, "I, too, would like to thank everyone for attending and caring about your county. We spoke about the events today. I, too, was deeply saddened by the events in Butler, Pennsylvania. And I condemn that assassination attempt on Former President Trump. I extend my prayers to the family of Mr. Corey Compatore, who was killed; Mr. David Dutch and Mr. James Copenhaver, who were injured during this horrific event. Violence has no place in American politics. Candidates should not fear to go into a political rally and they shouldn't fear for their lives when you give a speech. Families shouldn't have to worry about whether they can go to that event

and come back. You know, America needs to return to God and we need to love our fellow citizens. I stand with President Trump and wish him a speedy recovery."

I, too, would like to say to each and every one of you, pray for our country; pray for our state and our county and each other. We can have differences of opinion, but when it's said and done, we're just plain old same thing, human beings, just living the life that God has given us. With that, we'd entertain a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURN:

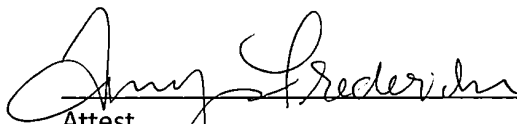
Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden, that this meeting be adjourned to reconvene at the next regularly scheduled meeting or at the call of the Chairman.

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

With no opposition the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Read and Approved:


Chairman


Attest