

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Monthly Workshop on Monday, January 5, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at the Brooks County Office Building. Commissioners present were: Mr. Claude Butler, Chairman; Mr. S. L. Jones, Vice Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell; Mr. Howard Lawson; and Mr. David Ragsdale. Others present was: Mr. Robert O'Barr, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Mr. Vann Parrott, County Attorney; Mr. Ed Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator; Mr. Ben DeVane, County Engineer; Ms. Bonnell Holmes, Quitman Free Press, and various residents.

Chairman called workshop to order.

Mr. Ed Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator, presented road update for January 2009:

Road Update Report

Grooverville Road (County Road # 275) Phase II - Widening

Ben DeVane reported the DOT grant had been submitted. The total cost of the project is \$1,399,254.50. DOT grant will fund up to \$750,000.00, remaining cost to Brooks County would be \$649,254.50.

Hodges Road (County Road 60) – Improvement

No progress. Mr. Ragsdale is speaking with residents.

River Run (County Road 299) – Pave and Drainage

No progress.

River Lane (County Road 300) – Pave and Drainage

No progress.

Shiver Lane (County Road 184) – Pave and Drainage

On hold.

CSX Crossing #305 – New Bridge

R/W acquisition in progress. Let date July 17, 2009.

Pride Branch #305 – New Bridge

R/W acquisition in progress. Let date July 17, 2009

Dixie Streets - Drainage

Ben DeVane has been busy with getting grant package for Grooverville together to send to DOT.

Dewberry Road – Improvement

Will start improvements after the athletic fields are completed.

Pineridge Heights – Pave and Drainage

Mr. Johnson reported he has deeds, letters have been sent to residence, and meeting has been set for Monday.

Workshop adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Mr. S. L. Jones, Vice Chairman

Mr. Robert D. O'Barr, County Administrator

Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday, January 5, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at the Brooks County Office Building. Commissioners present were: Mr. S. L. Jones, Chairman; Mr. Claude Butler, Vice Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell; Mr. Howard Lawson; and Mr. David Ragsdale. Others present were: Mr. Robert O'Barr, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Mr. Ed Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator; Mr. Ben DeVane, County Engineer; Ms. Bonnelle Holmes, Quitman Free Press; and various residents.

Call to Order/Prayer & Pledge

Chairman called meeting to order and asked Mr. Maxwell to lead all in attendance in Prayer. County Administrator led all in attendance in pledge of allegiance.

Select Chairman and Vice Chair

Chairman turned meeting over to County Attorney. Mr. Parrott opened the floor for nominations for Chairman. Mr. Butler nominated Mr. Jones for Chairman, Mr. Lawson seconded. County Attorney asked for discussion or additional nominees, there were none. Mr. Parrott called for the vote. Mr. Butler, Mr. Maxwell, and Mr. Lawson voted yes, Mr. Ragsdale voted no. Board approved Mr. Jones to serve as Chairman.

County Attorney opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman. Mr. Lawson nominated Mr. Butler for Vice Chairman, Mr. Jones seconded. County Attorney asked for discussion or additional nominees, there were none. Mr. Parrott called for the vote. Mr. Jones, Mr. Butler, and Mr. Lawson voted yes, Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Ragsdale voted no. Board approved Mr. Butler to serve as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Butler commented as outgoing Chairman he appreciated the work the Board has done past two years. He stated the Board has done a lot, but can do more. He stated he appreciated being Chairman and will continue to work for good things in Brooks County.

Chairman Jones stated Board appointments would be done after approval of minutes.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the following minutes as presented, Mr. Lawson seconded:

Monthly Workshop	December 4, 2008
Regular Monthly Meeting	December 4, 2008

Amendments to Agenda

On motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Lawson, the Board approved the following amendments to the agenda: 1) Use of Washington Street Gym for Martin Luther King Day Celebration, 2) Non Brooks County Tags; and 3) Newly Elected Sheriff Mike Dewey.

Public Hearings – None

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Board Appointments

Chairman made the following Board appointments:

Boards/Committees

Brooks County Library Board	Mr. Claude Butler
Brooks County Airport Authority	Mr. S. L. Jones
Brooks County Board of Health	Mr. James Maxwell
Council on Aging	Mr. David Ragsdale
Coastal Plain Area, EOA	Mr. James Maxwell
Chamber of Commerce	Mr. Howard Lawson
Regional Development Center Board	Mr. Howard Lawson/O'Barr
Dept. of Family & Children Services	Mr. James Maxwell
Mid South RC&D Council	Mr. David Ragsdale
	Mr. Johnny Whiddon(At-Large)

On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board approved the Board appointments for 2009.

Chairman made the following assignments:

Building Assignments

County Office Building	Mr. S. L. Jones
Agriculture Building/Annex	Mr. Howard Lawson
Courthouse	Mr. David Ragsdale
Sheriff's Department	Mr. James Maxwell
Road Department	Mr. Claude Butler

On motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Ragsdale, the Board approved the Building assignments for 2009.

Other Appointments for 2009:

County Attorney	Mr. Vann Parrott
County Auditor	Mr. Gary Zeigler
County Engineer	Mr. Ben DeVane
Assistant County Engineer	Mr. Mark DeVane

On motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Lawson, the Board approved to keep appointments as they are for 2009.

Road Projects Board Approval

County Attorney mentioned the two projects on Dixie Road and how Board wants to move forward with land acquisition process. He stated in speaking with Ed Johnson and DOT, as they negotiate with each landowner, they will have a closing, come up with a price based upon

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discussion, and some will be appraised. He inquired whether the Board wants to approve them as they come through or do all at one time. On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board agreed to vote on releasing funds for landowners right-of-way acquisition for two projects on Dixie Road.

Appearances

Mr. William "Bill" Rogers appeared to discuss the need for an Election Board. Mr. Rogers stated he is not here to make any accusation against anyone; and nor is he saying anything is wrong. But he feels it is more prevalent at this time during elections that we need an Election Board. He stated we need some type of guidelines and it is unethical. Mr. Ragsdale thanked Mr. Rogers for coming, and he agrees it is unethical and Brooks County needs an election Board. Mr. Butler stated we will look at cost and infrastructure, and see what can be put in next year budget. Mr. Lawson and Mr. Maxwell agreed this issue should go on the workshop agenda scheduled for January 12, 2009.

Mr. Russ Severns, Brooks County Jail Administrator, appeared to present renewal contract for Georgia Correctional Industries to provide an automated dispensing system for laundry and/or dishwashing equipment for the Jail. The agreement provides the dispensing equipment, and service the equipment, both for routine maintenance and emergencies at no additional cost, all we do is purchase the chemicals. On motion by Mr. Lawson, seconded by Mr. Ragsdale, the Board approved contract renewal for Georgia Correctional Industries to provide dispensing equipment for the Jail.

Old Business

Ag Annex Rental Policy and Intergovernmental Meeting scheduled for workshop on January 12, 2009 at 5:00 p.m.

New Business

Increase Survey Fee on Bridge Replacement @ CR 305/Dixie Road

Board received correspondence from Perry S. Key, Key Appraisals, regarding increased survey fees for bridge replacement at County Road 305/Dixie Road. There are two formats DOT will accept, 388-C a shorter condensed report and 388-N a more narrative report. There are three parcels, two will be \$1,500 each and one is \$2,500 for a total of \$5,500. On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board approved the increased survey fees for bridge replacement at CR 305/Dixie Road in the amount of \$5,500 for three parcels; and will be funded by SPLOST #4.

Out of Town Tags in Brooks

Board discussed hiring an individual to monitor tags for residents living in Brooks County and purchasing tags in other Counties. Counties included are Lowndes, Thomas and Colquitt. Approximately two years ago, an individual was hired part-time in Tax Assessor Office to monitor tags, but position is vacant at present. Chairman stated the Board did not receive any reports or results; and the Board as a whole needs more control of the individual in the position.

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On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Maxwell the Board approved advertising for the position to hire someone to monitor tags of Brooks County residents purchasing tags in Lowndes, Thomas, and Colquitt Counties.

Hagan Farm Bids (County Farm)

Three bids were submitted for Hagan Farm Lease. Errors in the specifications, acreage and cotton base payment yield, were discussed. Mr. Ragsdale stated whatever acreage was cultivated in 2008, should be cultivated in 2009. Board asked County Attorney to review Lease Agreement. On motion by Mr. Ragsdale, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board authorized County Attorney to review Lease Agreement, change to 3 year contract, correct dates, payment due January 15, 2009, and farm what was cultivated in 2008. The bids submitted:

- | | | |
|----|---------------|-----------|
| 1. | Franz Rowland | \$ 16,800 |
| 2. | Russ Butler | 20,028 |
| 3. | Jack Foy | 18,500 |

Mr. Maxwell made a motion to award bid to Russ Butler in amount of \$20,028 for 3 year lease agreement for Hagan Farm (County Farm). Mr. Butler abstained.

Brooks Transit Program Authorizing Resolution

The application cycle for the FY 2010 Rural Public Transportation grants has begun. Board needs to adopt the Authorizing Resolution to submit with application documents to DOT by January 15, 2008. Mr. Maxwell made a motion authorizing Chairman to sign Resolution for Transit Program, Mr. Butler seconded.

Local Government Risk Management Services (LGRMS)

Mr. Rene Azar, Field Representative, LGRMS, made a loss control survey visit for the purpose of becoming familiar with operations and loss control programs. A letter with recommendations to help improve safety and loss control efforts was sent to County Administrator. The recommendation from Mr. Azar stated the Road Department Complex should be fenced to prevent intruders from having access to equipment/vehicles. Mr. Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator, provided cost at \$9.94 per foot for 2,800 feet at approximately \$28,000. County Administrator recommended looking at the project for next SPLOST. Mr. Ragsdale stated the County just paid \$138,000 for liability policy for the whole year and thinks we are covered. And this is something the Board can look at during the budget process this year to see if something we want to do next year.

Tax Commissioner Authorization for Accepting Checks and Distribute Funds

Tax Commissioner provided an Authorization for Board approval to receive checks in payment for taxes and vehicle registrations. On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Lawson, the Board approved authorization for Tax Commissioner.

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Use of Washington Street Gym for Martin L. King Day Celebration

Mr. Maxwell advised the Board Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee approached him to request use of Washington Street Gym for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration on January 19, 2009. Mr. Maxwell made a motion authorizing County Administrator to contact

Boys & Girls Club in regards to use of Washington Street Gym on January 19, 2009 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration.

Tax Penalty for Sales Ratio

On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board authorized payment of tax penalty to Department of Revenue in the amount of \$33,178.00 for sales ration at 27.14% for FY 2007.

Newly Elected Sheriff Mike Dewey

Sheriff Mike Dewey appeared before the Board to inform of changes in the Sheriff's Department. He stated he is looking forward to working with the Board and proud to be here. Sheriff Dewey would like the books audited, and inquired whether the Board want the audit done by County Auditor or an outside Auditor. The Board expressed they have no problem with audit being done by County Auditor, Mr. Gary Zeigler if it can be done in a timely fashion. On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board approved County Auditor proceeding with an audit of the books at Sheriff's Department. County Administrator will get with Mr. Zeigler to look at the time frame in which the audit can be done.

Executive Session

On motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Butler, the Board closed regular session at 7:02 p.m. to go into executive session. Clerk called the roll and all Commissioners were present. Commissioners signed an Affidavit stating the meeting was closed to discuss potential litigation. (See Attachment). On motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Butler, the Board closed executive session to return to regular session at 7:20 p.m.

On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board authorized County Attorney to present an offer of \$7,500 to settle the case of Lance Parson.

Adjourn

On motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Butler, the Board adjourned the regular monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Sanford L. Jones, Chairman

Mr. Robert D. O'Barr, County Administrator

Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk

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The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for a Workshop Session and Special Called Meeting on Monday, January 12, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at the Brooks County Office Building. Commissioners present were: Mr. S. L. Jones, Chairman; Mr. Claude Butler, Vice Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell; Mr. Howard Lawson; and Mr. David Ragsdale. Others present were: Mr. Robert O'Barr, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Mr. Ed Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator; and various residents.

Call to Order/Prayer & Pledge

Chairman called workshop to order and led all in attendance in Prayer.

Amendments to Agenda

Chairman asked for amendments to agenda, there were none. On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Lawson, the Board approved the agenda.

Ag Building Annex Rental Agreement

County Administrator asked Mr. Johnny Whiddon to state his concerns to the Board. Mr. Whiddon stated his and Mr. Mike Smith's biggest concern is storage. Previously he submitted an estimate for approximately \$6,000 for renovations. He commented the building would need a better cleaning before renting to the public, there are no outside lights, which is not safe. Mr. Butler stated the building should be made available to the public because there is very little public meeting space in Brooks County, and he would like to see it remain that way. Mr. Lawson stated to get the building cleaned up and get lights installed. Mr. Ragsdale agreed to getting the lights up. But he is concerned with spending \$7,000 to convert for public use at time of biggest recession and worst year budget-wise. Mr. Ragsdale commented he looked at places available such as churches with fellowship hall, and private business facilities. He stated he is not sure government should get in competition with businesses. Spending money at this point is not in the best interest of Brooks County. Chairman commented, as far as area for meeting rooms, the Fire Departments around the County has rooms with a lot of space, all they would need to do is take fire trucks out. No decision was made due to being in a workshop session.

Office Space for Superior Court Judge at Courthouse

Superior Court Judge, Jim Tunison, appeared to ask the Board to consider office space in the Courthouse to be available and have presence in Brooks County at no cost to taxpayers. Judge Tunison he looked around the Courthouse to try and find an office not being used because he is not looking to displace anyone currently holding an office there. He stated the Courthouse has wireless internet access, he can use laptop, there maybe cost of fax machine and printer or can use what is already there. He looked at the corner office, which is the Law Library. He is not asking to furnish or provide office staff, just Board permission to use as an Judicial office. Commissioners agreed it would be an asset for him to have an office and presence in Brooks County; and will accommodate the Judge.

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Intergovernmental Meeting

Board discussed objectives of the intergovernmental meeting:

- Strengthened communications
- Share current status of agencies
- Pull together
- Include all municipalities (Quitman, Morven, Barwick, Pavo), Board of Education, Fire Coalition, Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, etc.
- Obtain 5-10 year vision
- Choose presenter from each agency
- Set a proposed meeting date
- Icebreaker before meeting

Board also discussed: DOT Grants, Fire Department (ISO rating for reduction in insurance rates), Grant Writer for the County will be discussed during budget process; and a new Agriculture Center.

Election Board

Board discussed looking at this issue during budget process and the cost. Election Superintendent, Ms. JoAnn Collins and Chief Registrar, Ms. Melba Lovett, will look into the process involved.

Sheriff Dues – \$50.00 Per Month

Board discussed whether to continue paying dues for Sheriff's retirement. County Attorney advised if Board pays for one Constitutional Officer, need to pay for all, it is a matter of policy. Mr. Ragsdale stated the Board needs to take a look at and resolve the issue once and for all. Board asked County Administrator to look into the cost and gather facts.

Right of Way Deeds for CSX Crossings to Date

Mr. Ed Johnson presented signed deeds for right-of-way acquisition for disbursement of funds:

CSX Overpass, three deeds out of six were presented:

- Parcel No. 10 – David W. Neely – \$2,560.00
- Parcel No. 6 – Joe Gordon – \$4,270.00
- Parcel No. 5 – Duke Revocable Trust – \$500.00

Pride Branch, three deeds out of eleven were presented:

- Parcel No. 1 – James & Eugene Tucker – \$3,310.00
- Parcel No. 2 – Debra W. Ingram – \$670.00

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Parcel No. 3 – Debra W. Ingram – \$1,220.00

Total disbursements for right-of-way acquisition is \$12,530.00.

Mr. Butler made a motion to close workshop and go into special called meeting at 6:08 p.m.

On motion by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Lawson, the Board authorized Chairman to sign for disbursement of funds of \$12,530.00 for CSX Overpass and Pride Branch for right-of-way acquisition, and funds will come from SPLOST #4. Chairman called for the vote. Mr. Butler, Mr. Lawson and Mr. Maxwell voted yes. Mr. Ragsdale voted no.

County Farm Lease

Mr. Ragsdale stated he requested this item be added to the agenda. He had concerns after the regular meeting on January 5, 2009 after discussion on number of acres on Hagan Farm. After checking with ASCS office, he is not sure where 166 acres came from. Other than that, his concern is the property is owned by taxpayers of Brooks County. It is a revenue producing piece of property and we should get top dollar for every acre being farmed. It is important everyone put in a bid receives equal footing. He is not sure anyone knows the exact acres being farmed. Mr. Butler abstained from discussion, due to his son, Mr. Russ Butler, renting the farm. Mr. Ragsdale thinks it reasonable the County measures and see what was cultivated last year. Chairman stated there is clearly errors on cotton base and crop cultivated.

Mr. Lawson stated he was told by ASCS office the Farm was 166 acres in 2007. Mr. Ragsdale stated he inquired at the ASCS office and Mr. Whitaker denied the information was released to Mr. Lawson. Mr. Ragsdale further stated Mr. Jim Thompson was present with him on that date.

Mr. Ragsdale made a motion to rescind the County Farm Lease bid based on incorrect acreage, Mr. Maxwell seconded. Mr. Butler abstained. The vote was tied, Mr. Ragsdale and Mr. Maxwell yes and Mr. Lawson and Mr. Jones no. Motion did not pass due to a tie. Mr. Lawson stated he was not sure they have right to rescind and re-bid without getting County Attorney's opinion. Chairman also agreed they should seek legal opinion. After lengthy discussion, Mr. Lawson made a motion to authorize County Administrator to get FSA to measure acreage on both farms (Hagan and Fritzke Farm), and seek outside legal opinion, Mr. Ragsdale seconded.

Adjourn

On motion by Mr. Ragsdale, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board adjourned the special called meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Sanford L. Jones, Chairman
Mr. Robert D. O'Barr, County Administrator
Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk

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