

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Lee Hearn, Chairman  
Edward Gibbons, Vice Chairman  
Eric K. Maxwell  
Charles W. Oddo  
Charles D. Rousseau



## FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Steve Rapson, County Administrator  
Dennis A. Davenport, County Attorney  
Tameca P. Smith, County Clerk  
Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk

140 Stonewall Avenue West  
Public Meeting Room  
Fayetteville, GA 30214

## MINUTES

February 9, 2023

5:00 p.m.

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**Welcome to the meeting of your Fayette County Board of Commissioners. Your participation in County government is appreciated. All regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m.**

### Call to Order

Chairman Lee Hearn called the February 9, 2023 meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present.

### Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Eric Maxwell

Commissioner Eric Maxwell offered the Invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Acceptance of Agenda

Commissioner Charles Oddo moved to accept the agenda as written. Vice Chairman Edward Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

### PROCLAMATION/RECOGNITION:

- 1. Presentation from State Court Judge Jason Thompson of the Accountability Court updates and strategic planning efforts for Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2024. This item was tabled at the January 26, 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting.**

State Court Judge Jason Thompson along with Accountability Court Coordinator Christa Grayson provided the Board a brief Accountability Court update and overview. Judge Thompson began the presentation with the viewing of a short video of actual Accountability Court participants. The video outlined from the perspective of the participants how vital and impactful the Accountability Court was. Ms. Grayson highlighted both the DUI/Drug Court and Veterans Treatment Court programs, the treatment plans and requirements, and program goals. She noted several events and activities the Accountability Courts participated in to include an Easter basket giveaway for participant's children, a Recovery and Paint event, the annual Kickball game, and the Dragon Boat Race. Ms. Grayson acknowledged a \$2K donation from the Rotary Club of Peachtree City, which was used to fund the Matrix curriculum. An evidence-based curriculum that taught participants what it means to be in recovery and how to recover. Ms. Grayson stated that Accountability Court staff participated in the "Shatterproof" Rise Up walk for addiction to raise addiction awareness in November 2022. She continued stated that as apart of the program participant had to complete 20 hours of public/community service. Last year Accountability Court partnered with Promise Place coordinating a Holiday giveback gathering essential need items for members of the community. Ms. Grayson stated that Fayette County DUI/Drug Court held its 20<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony. Judge Jason Thompson concluded expressing her pride in the Accountability Court programs, the team he worked with and the participants that this program helped. He thanked the Board as well as staff and other agencies for their support.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

The following citizens gave comments in favor of option #1- the renovation of East Fayette Elementary to provide for a new Department of Public Health building: Jack Bernard, Paige Muh, Dr. Mariam Gwaltney, Major Michael Wayney, Osohey Asighi, Jan Swift, David Brill, and Hasina Grimball. Comments reiterated two major concerns: the need for continuity of care in a singled roofed facility and more accessible mental health services in Fayette County. Option 1 would help streamline health care by housing Public Health, mental health, and WIC services.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Commissioner Oddo moved to approve the Consent Agenda as written. Vice Chairman Gibbons moved seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

2. **Approval of staff's request to approve the annual Budget Calendar for Fiscal Year 2024, which begins July 1, 2023 and ends June 30, 2024.**
3. **Approval of the January 26, 2023 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

4. **Request to approve Option #1; the renovation of East Fayette Elementary to provide for a new Department of Public Health building or Option #2; the reallocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to Fire/EMS Training Facility, Sheriff's Tactical Training Course and \$1.5M towards renovating the existing Department of Public Health at Stonewall. This item was tabled at the January 26, 2023 meeting.**

County Administrator Steve Rapson provided the Board with an overview of the analysis done regarding the Fayette County Health Department. Mr. Rapson stated that initially they attempted to value engineer the proposed new Health Department building which costs had ballooned to about \$25M-\$27M when including furniture, fixtures, site improvement, etc. He stated that he had reached out to the Governor's Office requesting \$5M in funding for the new health facility, with no success. He stated that he met with the Fayette County School Board and evaluated two sites the East Fayette Elementary and the Fayette Intermediate School. In addition, the Board also directed staff to find an additional option to use the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds if the Health Department option fell through. He continued stated that via the site evaluation with Fayette County School Board, it was determined that the East Fayette Elementary School was the better site and option 1 was developed featuring that building for Board review. Mr. Rapson stated that option 2 was how to allocate the ARPA funds if the East Fayette Elementary renovation option was not approved by the Board. He noted that the American Rescue Plan Act funds had a two-year utilization commitment deadline, with very specific usage criteria. He stated that via the ARPA funds \$7M had been allocated to the proposed new Health Department building which could be used for the East Fayette Elementary renovation or the funds could be allocated for public safety projects throughout the county. Mr. Rapson stated that as an overview of option 1 in considering the renovation of East Fayette Elementary there was a commercial grade kitchen that would remain untouched and gymnasium that could be used for some storage but would remain intact. He continued stating that the renovations would affect the remaining 48,834 sq ft. which was about 40% more space than the proposed new Health building. He noted that the additional space would allow for expanded services, however building logistics and functionality would have to be developed. Mr. Rapson stated that the building was made of concrete block, the roof was scheduled to be replace in 2028, there was no sprinkler system, and the fire alarm status was unknown, the bathrooms would require a complete renovation and room size and layout would have to be redesigned. The building was constructed in 1955 and was structurally sound. He noted that the building appraised for \$4.7M in 2021. He briefly reviewed the potential layout of the renovations to co-locate the various Health Department services. Mr. Rapson overviewed the revenue sources for this project. He stated that Fayette County had allocated \$2M, Board of Public Health allocated \$1M, ARPA funds allocation was \$6.9M, Woolsey contributed their share of ARPA funds to the County totaling \$62K, along with remaining ARPA funds totaling \$33K, the Women, Infant, and Children program (WIC) committed to a contribution of \$883K. He noted that all these funds were in the bank with the exception of the WIC contribution. As a part of this evaluation

process, he stated that they reach back out to the Department of Public Health regarding funding, and they made an additional commitment of \$450K which would be funded over 2-years. He stated that the County's shortfall would come out of the General Fund. Mr. Rapson also highlighted that the purchase price of the East Fayette Elementary School was \$3M over 2-years from the Fayette County School Board. This was the same building that had appraised in 2021 for \$4.7M, this was a savings for the County. He noted that this was a demonstration of a great partnership and service to the community. Continuing the review of project expenses Mr. Rapson stated the Jefferson Architects and Morgan Mill Consulting costs for the proposed new Health Building were sunken costs. He continued stated that the total cost estimated for the East Fayette Elementary renovation for the Health Department was \$16.6M. In breaking down this cost by allocations he stated that Fayette County would contribute 43.4% about \$7.2M, ARPA funding allocation was 42.6% at \$7M, WIC contribution was 5.3% \$883K, and Department of Public Health would contribute about 8.7% with \$1.45M. Mr. Rapson stated that in looking at Fund Balance for the County there was an unassigned fund balance of \$7.8M, which was what the County stated the fiscal year with. He continued explaining that the Board recently approved the Animal Control Building totaling \$1.45M and for the new Health Building renovation project they would need to allocate \$3.9M in FY23 and \$1.3M in FY24, which would sure up the shortfall previously mentioned. He stated with this in mind if approved the unassigned Fund Balance would be \$1.2M at the end of FY24, he noted this was extremely conservative estimate. Mr. Rapson briefly reviewed option 2 which would allocate \$3.5M to the Fire and Emergency Management Services training facility, \$2M to the Sheriff Tactical training Course and \$1.5M to the Department of Public Health at Stonewall renovation project. Mr. Rapson stated that holistically speaking he felt that Option #1; the renovation of East Fayette Elementary to provide for a new Department of Public Health building would be what was best for Fayette County.

Commissioner Oddo asked what the size of the current Health Department space at the Administration Complex.

Mr. Rapson stated that currently the Health Department was about 7000 sq ft.

Commissioner Oddo stated that logically there was no way to house the Health Department at the Administration Complex and gain the comparable amount of space as at the East Fayette Elementary School.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Option #1; the renovation of East Fayette Elementary to provide for a new Department of Public Health building. Commissioner Rousseau seconded.

Commissioner Maxwell expressed his appreciation to the Fayette County School Board for their partnership and support of this project. Commissioner Maxwell stated that he was not happy with how the presentation was presented because he felt there was an additional option, which was the construction of new a Health Building. He stated that in his mind there was no question regarding the need for a new Health Department. He stated that his option 1 was the new building that was consulted on to be designed near the Justice Center. He stated that that was the option he was primarily interested in. Commissioner Maxwell stated that if he voted against this item he was not voting against the need for a new facility because he understands that, but he does not feel that this proposed option 1 was the best decision for this Board to make. He noted that he felt the State of Georgia could have assisted with funding. He stated that he would feel much more comfortable with developing a plan on how to construct the new building near the Justice Center, as opposed to the renovation of an old building.

Commissioner Oddo stated that he understood Commissioner Maxwell's position and acknowledged that he would like to construct a new building as well. He reiterated the fact that if the ARPA funds were not used by the deadline they would be lost and if a new building could not be developed in that timeframe the County would have to raise even more funds. Commissioner Oddo stated that once the renovation of the East Fayette Elementary were completed for the Health Department, it would free up valuable space here at the Administration Complex. He also noted that the renovation would most likely happen a lot faster than a new building construction. Commissioner Oddo stated that one reason this option was possible was because the Board along with County staff worked diligently and used County funds wisely, they rarely raised taxes, and were fiscally responsible. He expressed his appreciation the Fayette County School Board for their support and partnership. He stated that this was an excellent opportunity to fill an absolute need that would service the community now.

Commissioner Rousseau expressed his appreciation to the citizens who were in attendance and who had relayed their concerns, thoughts, and desires for their community to the Board. He stated that he shared Commissioner Maxwell's sentiments noting

that they sounded like familiar refrain because he had spoken about the same topics in the past time and time again. He stated that he wished he had had Commissioner Maxwell's vote when determining where the ARPA funds should be allocated initially with this same line of thinking. Commissioner Rousseau stated that funding could have been shifted and the option of a new Health Facility should have been option 1. He stated that these were additional options to satisfy the need of the community for an appropriate Health facility. He stated that in his opinion he felt the Board was falling short. Commissioner Rousseau stated that he mentioned in the past that if the Board could construct a facility for "dogs and cats but cannot build one for people that was a serious issue". Commissioner Rousseau stated that he was not particularly interested in the current options, considering the original plan to construct a new facility. He stated that he felt the Board missed the mark and a unique opportunity. He thanked the Fayette County School Board and Fayette Factor as community partners who was helping us meet the needs of the citizens in this community which was critical. Commissioner Rousseau reiterated his disappointment with these options especially when he provided alternate options as it related to the use of funding for new water meters. Those funds could have been transferred into this project and used to make the construction of a new Health Facility a reality. He also noted his disappointment in a missed opportunity of having this projected included in the SPLOST. However, the need for elevated service was now and waiting was not an option. Commissioner Rousseau publicly thanked Dr. Townsend, Ted Toals, and Jack Bernard with Public Health Board for their hard work and dedication. He also expressed his appreciation and thanks for several other partners in the Fayette County community.

Mr. Rapson stated as clarification that the ARPA funds had to be encumbered by 2024. He also stated that the Mental Health portion of renovation of East Fayette Elementary, would be twice the size it would have been at the new Health Department Facility. Mr. Rapson also noted that with 40% more space this would provide more flexibility on-site. Mr. Rapson provide a quick analysis of an "option 3" which would consider the construction of a new Health Department "shell" with the development of the building as the funds were saved and made available.

Chairman Hearn expressed his appreciation to Dr. Patterson and Mr. Grey with the Fayette County School Board for their partnership and support in working with us. Chairman Hearn stated that this option may not be his favorite choice, however it was a good option and would be a nice facility.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Option #1; the renovation of East Fayette Elementary to provide for a new Department of Public Health building. Commissioner Rousseau seconded. The motion passed 4-1, with Commissioner Maxwell voting in opposition.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 5. Consideration of Resolution 2023-01; the acquisition of a 54.0-acre parcel located at Land Lot 249 of the 13th District, known as 1404 Helmer Road (parcel 13-04-077), on the south side of Helmer Road, west of Georgia Highway 85, owned by Judson W. Byrd and Macie W. Byrd in the amount of \$170,000.00.**

Mr. Rapson stated that this item was for the acquisition of a 54.0-acre parcel located at Land Lot 249 of the 13th District, known as 1404 Helmer Road (parcel 13-04-077) in the amount of \$170,000.00.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Resolution 2023-01; the acquisition of a 54.0-acre parcel located at Land Lot 249 of the 13th District, known as 1404 Helmer Road (parcel 13-04-077), on the south side of Helmer Road, west of Georgia Highway 85, owned by Judson W. Byrd and Macie W. Byrd in the amount of \$170,000.00. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS:**

**A: Contract #2114-S: AT&T Megalink**

**B: Contract #2186-B Crack Sealing Services**

**Hot Projects**

Mr. Rapson provided a report to the Board that included updates on the Redwine Road multi-use path, the Parks and Recreation multi-use facility, the Elections building renovation and Ebenezer Church Road bridge replacement.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:**

**Notice of Executive Session:** County Attorney Dennis Davenport stated that there were four items of consideration for Executive Session. Two items involving real estate acquisition, one item of threatened litigations and the review of the Executive Session Minutes for January 26, 2023.

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:**

**Commissioner Oddo**

Commissioner Oddo wished everyone a Happy Valentine Day.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Two items involving real estate acquisition and one item of threatened litigations and the review of the Executive Session minutes for January 26, 2023.** Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Board recessed into Executive Session at 6:17 p.m. and returned to Official Session at 6:48 p.m.

**Return to Official Session and Approval to Sign the Executive Session Affidavit:** Commissioner Oddo moved to return to Official Session and for the Chairman to sign the Executive Session Affidavit. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

**Approval of the January 26, 2023 Executive Session Minutes:** Commissioner Oddo moved to approve January 26, 2023 Executive Session Minutes. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0-1, Chairman Hearn abstained.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Oddo moved to adjourn the February 9, 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

The February 9, 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

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Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk

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Lee Hearn, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February 2023. Attachments are available upon request at the County Clerk's Office.

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Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk