

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

September 14, 2023

5:00 p.m.

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 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Chairman Lee Hearn called the September 14, 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Charles Rousseau

Commissioner Charles Rousseau offered the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Acceptance of Agenda

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

PROCLAMATION/RECOGNITION:

1. Recognition of Leah Williamson, citizen volunteer, for her leadership, organization, and participation in the Water Guardians program.

Water System Engineering Technician Lindsey Choynet, recognized, on behalf of the Board, Leah Williamson, citizen volunteer, for her leadership, organization, and participation in the Water Guardians program. Ms. Choynet stated that Fayette County lakes are at the headwaters of the Flint River Basin. Volunteer efforts aid the water utilities and Georgians living downstream from Fayette County. Water Guardians volunteers are part of a regional effort to keep the drinking water clean and safe for the entire Flint River Basin. The Water Guardians is a volunteer program where local citizens use their kayaks and canoes to remove trash from the local water reservoirs that supply drinking water and walkers clean up the parking lots, stream banks and asphalt paths at the lakes.

Ms. Williamson thanked the Board for the recognition and acknowledged that this was a team effort and a number of volunteers helped make this program a success.

2. Proclamation in recognition of National Recovery Month.

Chairman Hearn, on behalf of the Board, recognized September 2023 as National Recovery Month. He read the National Recovery Month proclamation which acknowledged that this was a time to support and celebrate friends, family, and loved ones in recovery. Citizens are encouraged to support a friend or loved one who may be experiencing addiction.

PUBLIC HEARING:

3. Final Public Hearing for consideration of Resolution 2023-06 adopting the 2023 Property Tax Millage Rate.

Chief Finance Officer Sheryl Weinmann stated that this was the third and final millage rate public hearing and proposed adoption of the 2023 Property Tax Millage Rate. She noted that the first two Property Tax Millage Rate public hearings were held on September 7, at 10:00 a.m. and at 6:00 p.m. She stated that the hearings had been advertised on Wednesday, August 30 and Wednesday, September 6, per state requirement. She continued with an overview presentation to the Board.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the 2022 Digest was \$8.367 billion, the Growth real property increased by \$226 million, personal property had the highest percentage increase at 14.64% for \$85,956,841. The motor vehicle had an increase for the first time at 0.12% due to the increase of the price of vehicles. There was also an increase in the "other" category. The total Growth increase was \$313,539,324.

Exemptions also increased and are reflected as negative because they reduced the digest. Ms. Weinmann stated that Reassessments of real property were increased by \$794,247,449, which showed a positive change in the digest of \$1.027 billion or 12.28%. The 2023 Digest totaled \$9,394,779,107. She continued the presentation showing the change in taxable digest. She stated that it had increased from \$4.3 billion to \$9.3 billion since 2014. This was an increase of approximately 114%.

The proposed 2023 millage rate was 4.034, which was the same from 2022. Fire Services (3.070), Emergency Medical Services (0.500), and 911 Services (0.210) also remained the same. The taxable value was \$175,000, the millage rate remained the same at 4.034, which was an increase in the tax bill of approximately \$60/year or \$5/month. Although, the County had to advertise this as a tax increase, the millage rate remained the same. The digest increased over a billion dollars, so that was the reason for the increase in the tax bill. In the example given, if the home was valued at less than \$450,000, then the tax bill would be less than \$60/year.

Ms. Weinmann stated that Fayette County remained one of the lowest counties for millage rates. Ms. Weinmann offered examples of a residential tax bill for a \$450,000 home value for unincorporated Fayette County, Town of Brooks, Peachtree City, City of Fayetteville and Town of Tyrone showing the distribution of each to Board of Education, County M&O, Fire District, EMS District and 911 District appropriately.

The millage rate in 2014 was 5.714. If the rate had remained the same, the county would have collected another \$81.5 million at this point. Ms. Weinmann stated that this could be looked at as \$81.5 million that would have been used on projects or a \$81.5 million savings to the citizens.

Ms. Weinmann requested that the Board approve the adoption of Resolution 2023-06 to levy the County property tax.

Jessica Wayland stated that she was in opposition of the proposed millage rate. She encouraged the Board to do a rollback, if not a partial rollback. Due to the state of the economy considering high gas prices and mortgage interest rates a rollback would be a sign of understanding and grace to the citizens of Fayette County.

Kathy Vaught expressed her opposition to the proposed millage rate and requested that it be rolled back, in light of inflation. She also issued a special thank you to County Administrator Steve Rapson, on behalf of the Fayette Women's Club, for allowing the Wreaths Across America Mobile Exhibit to be stationed at the Administration Complex in November.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Resolution 2023-06 adopting the 2023 Property Tax Millage Rate. Commissioner Oddo seconded.

Commissioner Maxwell thanked the citizens for their comments regarding the millage rate and noted that the comments had not fallen on deaf ears. He briefly explained what the rate increase meant, who the funds supported and how it would affect the residents.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Resolution 2023-06 adopting the 2023 Property Tax Millage Rate. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Randy Ogino expressed his concern regarding agenda item #10 the Longview Dam project and the purchase of the Phillips Lake Property.

Mr. Rapson stated that item #10 was being acquired to support reconstruction of two county dams. He stated that the Board had initially approved purchase of the Phillips Lake property for about \$1.3M a few years ago, noting that this had been an on-going project for several years. He acknowledged that not including the vicinity map and property map in the agenda backup was an oversight. Mr. Rapson stated that purchasing the property provided the county the flexibility to do whatever they needed with the property to bring the two dams into compliance and sustainably saving the County money. He noted that the house on the property had burned down which contributed to the decrease in the purchase price.

Hank Arnold thanked the Board for their observation of National Recovery Month, which was especially near and dear to him as a person in long-term recovery for the last 13-years. Mr. Arnold relayed the benefits of recovery and the privilege of accessibility to local recovery services and support. He expressed his appreciation to other service providers and allies such as Fayette Factor, Drug Free Fayette, advocate Adam Cane, Talbot Recovery Campus, and In Ryan's Name.

Lee Anne Williams expressed her appreciation to the Board for their awareness, community engagement, and support as it related to addiction, treatment, and recovery in Fayette County.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

4. **Approval of a General Release from the Village Park Homeowners Association ("HOA") in the amount of \$69,726.90; prompted by damage to the HOA-owned pavement within this private subdivision, subsequent to the rupturing of water mains that occurred within the subdivision.**
5. **Approval to award Bid #2283-B: 2017 SPLOST; Stormwater Category II, Tier II; 21SAK Heritage Way Culvert Replacement to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, Blount Construction Company Inc., in the amount of \$178,557.22 and to transfer \$39,000 from 19SBO - Davis Road.**
6. **Acknowledgment of the addition of three new Ford Explorers for School Resource Officers to the county's fleet of vehicles, and to accept the donation of \$174,384.60 from the Fayette County Board of Education to fund the purchase.**
7. **Approval of the August 24, 2023 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes.**
8. **Approval of the September 7, 2023 First Public Hearing Millage Rate Minutes.**
9. **Approval of the September 7, 2023 Second Public Hearing Millage Rate Minutes.**

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

10. **Request to approve Resolution 2023-08 to acquire 292 Longview Road, Fayetteville, Georgia 30215 a.k.a. "The Phillips Lake Property" (Parcel 0544 101 and 0544 008A); located on Land Lot 219 of the 5th District for \$690,000, and to reallocate \$690,000 from 2017 SPLOST project 17SAS to 5509F.**

Comments regarding this agenda item were discussed as part of a response to public comments.

Commissioner Oddo moved to approve Resolution 2023-08 to acquire 292 Longview Road, Fayetteville, Georgia 30215 a.k.a. "The Phillips Lake Property" (Parcel 0544 101 and 0544 008A); located on Land Lot 219 of the 5th District for \$690,000, and to reallocate \$690,000 from 2017 SPLOST project 17SAS to 5509F. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

11. Request to approve Ordinance 2023-09, to amend Chapter 16 - Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions; Article II. -Noise Control; Section 16-39.- Specific public disturbance noise prohibitions and Section 16-42.- Enforcement and appeals and to repeal Section 16-41.- Disturbance permits.

County Attorney Dennis Davenport stated that outlined in the County Code of Ordinances was a process that allowed an individual to apply for a permit to violate the noise ordinance. Before the Board was a revision to the County Code to remove that process.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Ordinance 2023-09, to amend Chapter 16 - Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions; Article II. -Noise Control; Section 16-39.- Specific public disturbance noise prohibitions and Section 16-42.- Enforcement and appeals and to repeal Section 16-41.- Disturbance permits. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS:

Region 6 Mental Health Board

Mr. Rapson advised that they need a selection committee for the Region 6 Mental Health Board.

Commissioner Oddo moved to nominate Vice Chairman Gibbons and Commissioner Rousseau to serve on the Regions 6 Mental Health Board Selection Committee. Chairman Hearn seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Hot Projects

Mr. Rapson stated that the Hot Projects report was forwarded to the Board and included updates on the Redwine Road multi-use path, Inman Road culvert replacement, Lakeview culvert replacement, Redwine Road/Bernhard Road/Peachtree Parkway roundabout, Parks and Recreation multi-use facility, and the Elections building renovation.

ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:

Notice of Executive Session: County Attorney Dennis Davenport stated that there were two items for Executive Session. One item involving threatened litigation and the review of the August 24, 2023 Executive Session Minutes.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:

Commissioner Oddo

Commissioner Oddo wished his brother a Happy Birthday.

Vice Chairman Gibbons

Vice Chairman Gibbons urged all in attendance to remember and keep the families of those who lost their lives on September 11th in their thoughts and prayer.

Commissioner Rousseau

Commissioner Rousseau thanked the citizens who came out in recognition of National Recovery Month and extended a congratulation to those who have been successful in recovery; and encouraged others on the cusp of making that change, to be courageous and seek help.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

One item involving threatened litigation and the review of the August 24, 2023 Executive Session Minutes. Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Board recessed into Executive Session at 5:41 p.m. and returned to Official Session at 6:12 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 passed 5-0.

Approval of the August 24, 2023 Executive Session Minutes: Commissioner Oddo moved to approve August 24, 2023 Executive Session Minutes. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Oddo moved to adjourn the September 14, 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The September 14, 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Marlena M. Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk

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 28th day of September 2023. Attachments are available upon request at the County Clerk's Office.

Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk