

**Jasper County Board of Commissioners**  
**March 4, 2024**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**6:00 P.M.**

Chairman Bruce Henry called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Bruce Henry, Chairman; Steven Ledford, Vice Chair; Don Jernigan; Sheila Jones and Asher Gray

Staff: Mike Benton, County Manager, Sheila Belcher, Clerk- Administrative Services Director, Larissa Ruark, Chief Accounting Officer, Doug Attaway- Planning and Zoning Director,

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Invocation:** Commissioner Gray, District 4

**Agenda Approval:** Commissioner Gray motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Ledford seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda:**

Commissioner Gray motioned to approve the following minutes

- Regular Meeting Minutes February 5, 2024

Commissioner Ledford seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve Check #s 70346-70573. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

**Public Hearings:** None

**Citizen Comments:**

- **David Thompson** – Gave handouts and spoke on the traffic around the square. The landfill will add to the traffic if it is outsourced. Adding a lane to the square will not help the flow of traffic when tractor trailers are still using the square. Used Eatonton as an example.
- **Mary Patrick** – Spoke against outsourcing the landfill. “What if company running it goes out of business. Remember all the thriving companies that crashed in 2008. A 30-year contract is a bad idea. Keep landfill in house and open 5 days a week and consider allowing non-resident dumping pickup truck size loads.”
- **John Henderson** – Running for Chief Magistrate give his history and qualifications and asked for citizen support.
- **Gail Harrell** – City Council member spoke on the traffic on the square. Wants the city and the county to work together to resolve issue. She said changes will require city approval as they are concerning city streets.
- **Mark Logan** – Spoke against outsourcing the landfill as it will cause damage to the county roads costing the county more money in repairs and road maintenance. Outsourcing will also add to traffic issues. He said open landfill 5 days a week in house and hope to break even.

- **Chris Lawrence** – Spoke against outsourcing the landfill saying it will become a trash mountain. He used Athens as an example saying they promised it would not smell as a C&D landfill but it smells horrible and so will ours. He said he is concerned about chemicals leaking in the water sources. Stating the EPA is already investigating our landfill.
- **Jason Bunn** – Spoke against outsourcing the landfill. He said that it will be the first thing people see when they drive into town. He also said it would become a rash mountain. He wants the landfill to be ran in house.
- **Amy Gude** -Spoke against the landfill being outsourced. She said she would like to see it ran in house and open up jobs for county residents. She said she does not want the landfill opened up as a dumping ground for other counties. Mrs. Gude said she would like to see all Official work together in a civil matter to get things done to benefit all citizens.

### County Commissioner's Items

**Commissioner Jernigan-** Commissioner Jernigan asked County Manager Mike Benton to give an give any new information about the county employee pension plan he has been working on when he gives his updates. Commissioner Jernigan mentioned that the county will be getting a new fire truck delivered in a few months. He stated that they may want to start looking at ordering a new ambulance now. It takes about a year to get the ambulances in once ordered. Commissioner Jernigan also spoke in favor of keeping the landfill in house and opening five days a week he said he would like to see the county break even or maybe make a little bit of money.

**Commissioner Jones-** None

**Commissioner Ledford-** Commissioner Ledford said he has received several calls about the county dirt roads and the condition they are in. He said the are now washed away back to nothing but dirt. He wants to get a cost for hiring a sub-contractor to repair and maintaining dirt roads. He said that it should be included in the FEMA funding. County Manager said that they have a July time frame for the FEMA funding but he can get a cost possibly by May.

**Commissioner Gray-** Commissioner Gray said he would like to see the county website updated to show a list of all the boards and authorities with members listed and their term expiration date. He also wants meetings and other county events placed on the calendar. He said doing so will make it easier for residents to find information regarding boards and meetings. Commissioner Gary also asked Mike to add 911 EMA and county employee retirement plan to his County Manager update.

**Commissioner Henry-** None

### **Business Items:**

**Item 1: Appointment to Board of Assessors:** Larry Smith seeking reappointment. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to reappoint Larry Smith to the Board of Assessors Commissioner Ledford seconded motion, motion passed unanimously.

**Item 2: Appointment to Planning and Zoning Board:** Julie Bennett seeking reappointment. Mary Patrick seeking appointment and Bobby Jacobs seeking appointment but did not show up

for the meeting. Commissioner Ledford asked Mary Patrick if she was seeking reappointment to the Variance Board. Mary Patrick responded “no not this evening.”

Commissioner Gray motioned to appoint Julie Bennet and Mary Patrick seconded by Commissioner Ledford. Chairman Henry requested appointing separately. Commissioner Gray said they had a motion and a second motion passed (with a vote in favor from Commissioner Jernigan. Commissioner Henry commented that it wasn't the he was against the motion he just thinks the should have been done separately.

**Item 3: Appointment to Planning and Zoning Appeals Board:** Chairman Henry requested a motion to table as applicant was unable to attend. Commissioner Jernigan Motioned to table the appointment, Commissioner Ledford seconded, passed unanimously.

**Item 4: Appointment to Recreation Board:** Chairman requested a motion to table as applicant did not show up. Commissioner Ledford motioned to table, Commissioner Jernigan seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**Item 5: Appointment to Public Facilities Authority Board:** Commissioner Jernigan seeking reappointment, Howard Fore, James Thiele, and William Nash seeking reappointment.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to reappoint James Thiele to the Public Facilities Authority Board, Commissioner Gray seconded, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to reappoint William Nash to the Public Facilities Authority Board, Commissioner Jernigan seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to table reappointment of Howard Fore as he was unable to attend the meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gray, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ledford Motioned to reappoint Commissioner Jernigan to the Public Facilities Authority Board, Commissioner Gray seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**Item 6: Appointment of Voting Delegate for Consideration of Three Statewide Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission Members and Regional Advisory Council Members.** Captain Billy Bryant seeking appointment for Voting Delegate. Captain Bryant was recommended by Sheriff Donnie Pope. He has nineteen years in law enforcement and over ten years in narcotics.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Captain Billy Bryant for Voting Delegate, Commissioner Gray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 7: Discuss Comments from the February 26, 2024 Public Hearing on Landfill Operations:** Chairman Henry spoke about landfill meeting. He said citizen do not want to privatize the landfill. Commissioners all agree it should not be privatized. After a long conversation Chairman Henry said they would schedule a work session.

**Item 8: Bear Creek Marina Alcohol License Renewal:** Mr. Wright Owner of Bear Marina requested to have his license fees waived for 2024. Fees were paid in 2023 but his business was a total loss due to tornado damage. He never opened in 2023.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve alcohol license. Commissioner Gray seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gray motioned to waive alcohol license fees for 2024. Commissioner Ledford seconded motion, motion passed four to one. Commissioner Jernigan opposed.

**Item 9: Downtown Monticello Traffic Pattern:** After a discussion and suggestions of how to do to reduce traffic and delays on the square City Council member Gail Harrell again stated it must be approved by the city. Mrs. Harrell stated the city wishes to work with the country to resolve the issue. She said that the City is trying to get GDOT involved again. Chairman Henry said the BOC would be waiting for an invite to meeting with the City of Monticello and GDOT once the city gets it scheduled.

**Item 10: ACCG Georgia County Internship Program Grant Agreement:** Chief Accounting officer Larissa Ruark asked BOC to approve a summer intern. The money is a grant that the county has already been approved to receive.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve. Commissioner Gray seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**Item 11: Human Resources and County Boards Report:** HR Director Sheila Belcher gave quarterly update on newly hired and terminated employees for December 2023 through February 2024. Ms. Belcher gave an update on current number of employees full and part time. She gave and update on current job vacancies for the county and upcoming board openings.

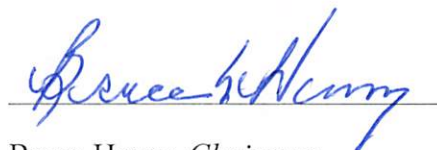
**Item 12: Schedule Work Sessions and Called Meetings as Needed:** Short-term rental Work Session scheduled for Monday March 11, 2023 at 6 p.m.

**County Attorney Items:** None

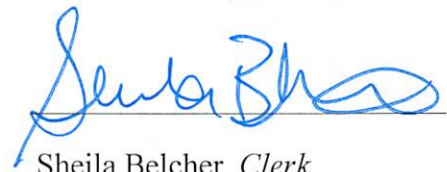
**County Manager Update:** Mr. Benton gave updates on building permits, No Thru Truck signage, new hire, completion of dugouts, construction of several county roads, and employee retirement plan.

**Executive Session:** None

**Adjourn:** Commissioner Jones motioned to adjourn at 7:48 p.m. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, passed unanimously.



Bruce Henry, *Chairman*



Sheila Belcher, *Clerk*