

Jasper County Board of Commissioners
April 1, 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 Ledford, District 5

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

Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve the following minutes:

- Work Session Minutes- February 26, 2024
- Regular Meeting Minutes- March 6, 2024
- Work Session Minutes- March 13, 2024

Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve Check #s **70574-70784**. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Public Hearings: None

Citizen Comments:

Rob Alexander spoke in favor of the county purchasing an RA-400 Pothole Patcher truck. Mr. Alexander stated that it is a one-man operated truck and he watched as a Putnam County employee used the same type truck. He said it took approximately 10 minutes to fix the hole and move to the next one. Mr. Alexander suggested the county give serious consideration to purchasing one, maybe two if possible.

County Commissioner's Items

Commissioner Jernigan- Spoke in favor of purchasing RA-400 Truck. Commissioner Jernigan said that he and Public Works Director Michael Walsh went to Walton County to see theirs in action. He said that the county really needs one. He said it does a fantastic job and he hopes to get the purchase of one approved.

Commissioner Jones- None

Commissioner Ledford- None

Commissioner Gray- None

Commissioner Henry- None

Business Items:

Item 1: Appointment to Development Authority of Jasper County Board:

Roy Kelly and Steve Jordan seeking reappointment, and Michelle Coward seeking appointment. Michelle Coward was not able to attend the April 1st BOC meeting.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to table the appointment for Michelle Coward until the May 6th meeting. Commissioner Gray seconded motion passed unanimously.

Roy Kelly stated that he has served on the board for several years as a non-voting member and four years as a voting member. Mr. Kelly said he would like to serve one more term is hopes of helping to bring industries to the area and add jobs. Commissioner Gray asked what kind of industry he want to bring to the area and if Mr. Kelly was familiar with the Jasper County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Kelly said he was some-what familiar with the plan and it is the intention of DAJC members to adhere to that plan while bringing in industries. Mr. Kelly said that he would like to see clean industries that will enhance the community by adding jobs. He said they have to look at each business separately case by case.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to appoint Roy Kelly to the Development Authority of Jasper County. Commissioner Ledford seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Steve Jordan stated he has served on the board for several years and would like to serve one more term to help David Dyer continue to bring industry and jobs to Jasper County. Commissioner Gray asked Mr. Jordan to elaborate on things that are currently in the works with the DAJC. Mr. Jordan said he would not because of non-disclosure agreements. He said that such agreements prevent members from discussing deals until complete. He said the board always adheres to Jasper County Comprehensive Plan in everything thing they pursue. Commissioner Gray said that Mr. Jordan has served on the board for many years and he wanted to know if he believed in term limits.

Mr. Jordan asked if the Board of Commissioners had term limits. He said that setting term limits for boards was the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Jordan also said that he would like to see more people get involved especially young people, but there just doesn't seem to be an interest. Mr. Jordan said that he is one of three people who applied for three openings on the board. Mr. Jordan said he would like to see new members bring new ideas, but he doesn't feel like he is out of idea just because of his age. He said that the older board members don't believe they have all the answers, but they are not stale either. Mr. Jordan said he understands the need for limits he just feels like he and other member have accomplished a lot in his time on the board. He said he serves on the board for the Bank of Monticello and they have term limits. He is not against term limits at all. Mr. Jordan said he feels he still has things to offer.

Commissioner Gray then asked if the DAJC had funds in the Bank of Monticello. Mr. Jordan said absolutely not that is a conflict of interest and I would never do something like that.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to appoint Steve Jordan to the Development Authority of Jasper County Board. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Ledford. Motion passed 4-1, Commissioner Gray opposed.

Item 2: Appointment to Planning and Zoning Appeals Board: Jennifer Allen seeking reappointment to the board. Mrs. Allen said she feels they have a good working board and try not to be to lenient of the ordinances. She said there are times when it is necessary. Commissioner

Ledford asked if this would be her second term and Mrs. Allen said yes it would be her second term.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Jennifer Allen to the Planning and Zoning Appeals Board. Commissioner Jernigan seconded motion, motion passed unanimously. Jennifer's term will expire July 2026

Cyndi Johns seeking appointment but was not in attendance. Commissioner Jernigan made a motion to table appointment until May 6th meeting. Commissioner Gray seconded motion, motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Appointment to Recreation Board: Rachelle Stanionis, Ashley Henderson, and Melissa Strozier all applying for the Recreation Board. Rachelle Stanionis was not in attendance.

Ashley Henderson told the Board of Commissioner's that he is passionate about helping kids develop their skills and becoming the best they can be. He said the he wants to see kids become whatever they want in life and have a good time learning skills. Mr. Henderson said his interest in becoming a board member is not just because he is the Head Football Coach at the high school, but also because he has three young children who are very active at the Recreation Department. He said that he would like to help have clinics and camps to help kids in our community learn proper skills for playing sports at a higher level in the future. Mr. Henderson said the camps he is hoping to have would be free for children in the community. His goal to create an environment that will not only develop strong players for future wins but also be a better experience in general.

Commissioner Gray stated that the county would eventually like to expand the recreation department. He asked Mr. Henderson what his thoughts are on getting the school system in involve in a joint effort to build a larger shared facility.

Mr. Henderson said that are several opportunities the he knows about that the recreation department could benefit from. He mentioned 3rd party organization such as Atlanta Falcons and programs they offer. He said that we are a small community and if everyone is on board with a larger shared facility he sees no reason why it couldn't work. Mr. Henderson said we have a lot of land and a lot of kids and the recreation department is the feeder system for the schools. He believes that getting coaches involved to teach techniques used in the schools for each sport is important.

Melissa Strozier Stated that she is interested in serving on the Recreation Board because she wants to help kids in our community. Mrs. Strozier said that she disagrees with making a joint facility for the schools and the county recreation department. She said that it would cause issues and children playing for the recreation department would be placed last to use the facilities. She said that she has seen it happen in other areas and its unfair. Younger children should have a separate facility.

Commissioner Jones said she would recuse herself from voting as she serves on the Recreation Board and feels it is a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to appoint Ashley Henderson to the recreation board. Commissioner Gray seconded, Motion passed unanimously.

Item 4: Appointment to Public Facilities Authority Board: Howard Fore is currently a member of the Public Facilities Authority and wishes to continue serve. Mr. Fore said he has enjoyed serving and it has been an eye-opening experience.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to reappoint Mr. Fore to the Public Facilities Authority, Commissioner Jernigan seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Item 5: Capital Expenditure Request – RA-400 Truck Mounted Road Pothole Patcher:

Steve Young with Reynolds One spoke about the pothole patching truck. He stated that the truck is a one-man operation and it is possible to repair as many as two hundred potholes in a day. Mr. Young said there would be routine maintenance required on the hydraulics and greasing the fittings. Mr. Young said the company will provide training at time of delivery of truck. The truck uses an emulsion tank that is compatible with what the county currently has. Mr. Young said this is a permanent fix not just a band aid that will have to be redone in a few months.

Commissioner Jernigan said that we currently have six employees working on potholes. This machine will allow for five of those employees to work on others project. Commissioner Jernigan Motioned to use 2018 SPLOST balance and ARPA funds to purchase the new Pothole Patcher truck

Other County Commissioners had several questions and concerns. Commissioner Gray asked if it would be better to save the money until the county could afford to pave roads instead of just patch? Commissioner Gray asked why the current patching machine could not be used year-round if it was basically the same type of operation. Commissioner Gray also asked if it could be bid out with other companies. Commissioner Jones asked if Mr. Walsh had an employee in mind to operate the truck and a backup driver.

Commissioner Ledford asked if the operator would be required to have a CDL? Commissioner Ledford asked Public Works Director if he felt this would be a purchase that benefits the county? Chairman Henry said this is a major and expensive purchase. He asked if it would be the only item Public Works would need to get county project done for the new budget year.

Public Works Director Michael Walsh stated that the purchase of this machine is a no brainer for him. He said this machine is very efficient and would be used almost daily. He said the only time he could see it not being used would due to weather conditions. Mr. Walsh said the machine does the same thing as the machines the county currently has but its more efficient. Public Works receives one complaint after the other and they are unable to repair and maintain roads properly and timely with the current machine. He said they spend days getting it to run, fix a few potholes and return to the garage to fix something else. Mr. Walsh said they spend days working on the machine for it run a short while before it must be worked on again. He said the current machine does not have that same type of heater as the newer machine so in colder weather it cannot be used. Mr. Walsh said he has an employee in mind to operate the new machine if purchased. He said the gentleman is very responsible and takes pride in his work. He said he would have a backup operated trained so there was never a time when they would not be able to operate the machine, due to employee being absent. Mr. Walsh said after seeing the one in Walton County he very confident a new machine would last for several years he said 15 years at least. He said the one in Walton County is thirteen years old and is in great condition and has a long life left.

County Manager Mike Benton said that the bid for the machine was from Sourcewell. He said the price given for the machine is a good price. Sourcewell is a company that has already don't the research for the best competitive price on products to save time for government and other non-

profit organizations. Mr. Benton said that paving road will not eliminate the need to patch and repair potholes. We can not pave roads fast enough so there will always be a need for constant repair work Mr. Benton said.

Chairman Henry called for a second to Commissioner Jernigan's motion.

Commissioner Ledford said that he feels more discussion is needed and motioned to table, Commissioner Gray seconded motion to table, motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Jernigan saying he was reluctantly voting. He believes delaying the purchase will possibly cost the county more money.

Item 6: Request for Senior Center Improvements- Parking Lot Surface, Stormwater Drainage and Back Lot Grade: Chairman Henry said that after he met with Senior Center Director Brenda Jacobs about her concerns he spoke to the company working at the jail about preparing a bid for the Senior Center. He is hoping it will save money since they are side by side and the equipment is already in place. Chairman Henry agreed that the work is necessary and told Mrs. Jacobs if grading was needed she would need to contact Robert Jordan. Mrs. Jacobs said it is her goal to make the Senior Center a safe environment while utilizing all the property around it. She said she would like to have the back yard graded to create a safe area for games and exercise with a trail for walking. Mrs. Jacobs said the back yard is not safe as it is. Mrs. Jacobs met with Mr. Jordan and he was going to prepare three set of plans and three bids. She is still waiting to hear back from him. County Manager Mike Benton said that Mr. Jordan has been working on the bids. He stated the stormwater drainage is the most serious of the issues and Mr. Jordan has that bid prepared. Chairman Henry said the Commissioner need to see that bid to get the ball rolling. Mrs. Jacobs also mentioned the windows being sealed closed and it being a hazard. She said Fire Chief Chris Finch was there to look at them, but she hasn't heard back from him. Chairman Henry said he would reach to the Fire chief.

Item 7: 2024 LMIG - Wild Rd Bids: Pittman Construction was the lowest bidder for this project. The county engineer recommended using Pittman to resurface Wild Rd. County Manager Mike Benton said the pricing fits the budget for this project. He said the money for the new SPLOST should be available by the time this project is scheduled to begin.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to award the 2024 LMIG Project to Pittman Construction. Commissioner Jernigan seconded motion.

Commissioner Gray stated he does not normally like to go with the lowest bid. Chairman Henry stated the county has used Pittman several times and never had an issue. Mr. Benton said that the county has used one of the other bidding companies with a higher bid and had several issues with them in the past.

Chairman Henry called for a vote motion passed unanimously

Item 8: Sands Drive Park Pavilion Bids: County Manager Mike Benton recommended The Trezz Group to build Sands Park Pavilion. He said they are the low bidder, they are local, and they just completed the new dugouts for the recreation department. Mr. Benton said funding for this project will come from impact fees. Commissioner Jones asked if The Trezz Group builds Pavilions. Mr. Benton said they do all sorts of projects, but their main business is building commercial airport hangers all over the country. Chairman Henry said they need to move forward with this project, but they would need updated pricing for accessories such as picnic tables and benches.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to award Sands Park Pavilion shelter project to The Trezz Group with a request for updated accessory pricing, Commissioner Gray seconded motion, motion passed unanimously.

Item 9: GDOT Local Road Assistance Administration Funds: County Manager Mike Benton explained that the state has a new program to help with county road repairs. LRA funds for Jasper County would be \$801,261.06 with no county match required. The county will need to list in detail the road or roads the county intends to repair with LRA funds. Commissioner Gray asked if funds could possibly be used to purchase equipment to repair roads such as the Patching Truck. Mr. Benton said he believed so, but he would need to do some research to be sure.

Commissioner Gray motioned LRA project funds be used for purchasing the Patching Machine and repaving Whip-Poor-Will Rd. pending answer as to what the funds can be used for. Commissioner Jernigan seconded motion, motion passed unanimously.

If funds cannot be used for equipment Public Works Director Michael Walsh will supply a list of roads in need of repaving for Commissioners to review.

Item 10: Support Letter for Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Request for FY 2025 Congressional Funding: NEGRC is asking Chairman Bruce Henry to sign a letter in support of their organization. They will send the letter to Washington to request Federal funding to repair their building. They have requested that the Commissioners add a section describing what they have done that has benefitted Jasper County. The NEGRC helped with our Comprehensive Plan, redistricting, and wrote letters to help get two CDBG grants.

Commissioner Ledford said NEGRC has done a lot to help our county and he made a motion for Chairman Henry to sign the requested letter with additions. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Item 11: Free C&D Material Tipping for Jasper County Residents – Discussion: Commissioner Jernigan said he has received several calls and emails from citizens asking for free dump month. Public Works Director Michael Walsh said the EPD is strictly enforcing C&D only. Mr. Walsh said the county currently only has 4 containers for all other items and they fill up quickly. Mr. Walsh said there is a posted list of accepted items. Mr. Walsh stated in the past citizens either did not know about or simply ignored guidelines and dumped everything together. At that point the county is stuck with it. Mr. Walsh stressed that it must be separated and dumped in correct locations.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to have free dump month in May for C&D only. Commissioner Ledford said he would prefer to wait until they have a better plan in place to prevent crowding and overflowing Containers. Chairman Henry agreed that they needed a better plan. Commissioner Gray seconded motion passed three to two (Henry & Ledford opposed).

Item 12: Schedule Work Sessions and Called Meetings as Needed

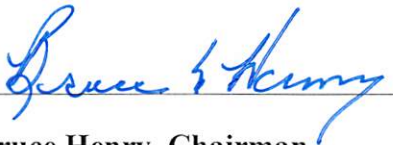
County Manager Mike Benton said that there is a work session scheduled for April 19th for budget discussion and can add items if needed. Chairman Henry asked about the short-term rentals and the plan to have it finalized before Memorial Day. Mr. Benton said they must give at least a 30 days' notice of the Public Hearing so it will run in the paper. He has it set for May 6th Meeting with plan for action from county commissioners.

County Attorney Items: None

County Manager Update: County Manager Mike Benton gave updates on building permits and completed road work. Mr. Benton said he is still waiting for numbers from ACCG to give update on the county employee retirement plan. He met with the Tax Assessor and the digest is now complete so drafting to new budget will begin March 26th- April 12th. Budget draft will be presented at April 19th work session.

Executive Session: Chairman Henry requested an executive session to discuss real estate. Commissioner Jernigan motioned for executive session to discuss real estate, Commissioner Ledford second. Motion for work session passed unanimously.

Adjourn: Commissioner Ledford motioned to adjourn at 8:34. Commissioner Jernigan seconded motion, Motion passed unanimously


Bruce Henry, Chairman


Sheila Belcher, Clerk