

April 21, 2009  
Statesboro, GA

### Regular Meeting

The Board of Commissioners met at 8:30 a.m. in the Community Room of the North Main Annex. Chairman Nevil welcomed guests and called the meeting to order. County Manager Thomas Couch gave the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

Ms. Maggie Fitzgerald, Clerk of the Board, performed the roll call of the commissioners and staff. The following commissioners were present: Chairman Nevil, Commissioner Tankersley, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Thompson, and Commissioner Gibson. The following staff were present: County Manager Thomas Couch, Staff Attorney Jeff Akins, Statesboro Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Director Mike Rollins, Statesboro Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Division Manager Chad Avret, Public Safety Director Ted Wynn, Human Resource Director Heather McNeal, Tax Commissioner James Deal, Tax Assessor John Scott, County Engineer Kirk Tatum, Transportation Director Eddie Smith, Zoning Administrator Randy Newman, and Planning and Zoning Development Director Andy Welch.

The first item of business was the approval of the General Agenda. Chairman Nevil asked for changes or modifications of the General Agenda. Hearing none, Commissioner Tankersley offered a motion to approve the General Agenda as presented. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The next item of business was the approval of the Minutes for the Regular Meeting and Executive Session regarding Real Estate Acquisition held on April 7, 2009. Commissioner Gibson offered a motion to approve the minutes of the meetings as presented. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Chairman Nevil asked for public comments from the audience at large or in writing. There were no formal requests or petitions received in writing. Mrs. Donna Harville, of the Charter Conservatory School, asked to address the Board, and informed the Board about the Charter School. Mrs. Harville explained that the State funded school can now receive funding from SPLOST and E-SPLOST. Mrs. Barbara Reese, also from the Charter School, showed the Board three sketches of their future school, and explained

how the new school would be built to be “green”. Chairman Nevil thanked Mrs. Harville and Mrs. Reese for presenting the Board with more information about the Charter School. With no further public comments, Chairman Nevil stated that the next items of Business on the Agenda would be two formal Presentations.

For the first Presentation, Mr. Ed Sibbald, Executive in Residence at Georgia Southern University, upon invitation by Commissioner Gibson, discussed Bulloch County’s forward economic outlook. Mr. Sibbald stated that the economy, the housing market, and the stock market will slowly begin to rebound in 2010. Mr. Sibbald also stated that Bulloch County needs to continue to grow as the regional hub, especially focusing on the counties that surround Bulloch County.

The second Presentation was delivered by Tax Commissioner James Deal and Tax Assessor John Scott in regards to the Homeowners Tax Relief Grant (HTRG) (See Exhibit #2009-40). Tax Commissioner James Deal briefed the Board about the history of the HTRG, and reiterated that grant has been funded by the State. Mr. Deal confirmed that the State can no longer afford to fund the grant, which means everyone in Bulloch County who received the grant in the past will see about \$161.12 increase on their tax bill for 2009, and citizens of Bulloch County living within the Fire District will also see a \$14.40 increase. Tax Assessor John Scott explained that the State’s elimination of the HTRG will cost the County \$780,179.06. Mr. Scott stated that there is no way to target just the recipients of the HTRG, and if the County M&O were to absorb the loss of HTRG, the adjustments would have to be applied uniformly to all taxpayers. Mr. Scott stated that in order to save every tax payer who benefited from the HTRG \$161.12, the County would have to reduce the millage rate by 2.014 mills, which would create a 3.5 million dollar loss to the County’s budget. In closing, Mr. Scott reminded the Board that the HTRG was appropriated by the State, and that the State can no longer afford to fund the grant. After some discussion, Chairman Nevil stated Mr. Deal and Mr. Scott had presented very useful information that will need to be considered seriously by the Board.

With no items of Old or Unfinished Business, Chairman Nevil stated that the first item of New Business was the discussion and/or action regarding the renewal of a fixed price contract with Hanson Concrete Pipe for concrete pipe used in road maintenance. County Manager Thomas Couch stated that the Contract will be renewed for a period of

one year, until April 30, 2010, with the same terms, conditions, and prices as the original contract. Without any discussion, Commissioner Tankersley offered a motion to approve the renewal of a fixed price contract with Hanson Concrete Pipe for concrete pipe used in road maintenance. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The second item of New Business was the discussion and/or action regarding the Southern Links Golf Course. Commissioner Thompson stated that Dr. Jessie Strickland asked to have this item on the Agenda for discussion. Dr. Strickland explained that the Southern Links Homeowners Association is in favor of the County purchasing the 162 acre golf course for the Recreation Department to manage. Mrs. Cindy Chance stated that a County owned golf course would be a great tool to attract retirees to our area. Mrs. Chance stated that the members of the Homeowners Association support the idea of a Special Tax District to fund the County's purchase of the golf course. Mr. Jamey Cartee stated that the present owners did not live in the county and were not invested on a day-to-day basis with the golf course, and that lack of management was to blame for the closure. Chairman Nevil stated that the Board would brainstorm the information presented. With no action taken, Chairman Nevil called for a five minute recess.

After the brief recess, the third item of New Business was the discussion and/or action to consider the re-allocation of 2002 SPLOST Funds. County Manager Couch explained a SPLOST re-allocation spreadsheet, and stated that the County has an on-going imbalance because of overspending in some funding categories. Mr. Couch stated that the County has the ability by resolution to authorize a re-allocation of funds with the undesignated interest income. Mr. Couch turned over the presentation to Statesboro Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Director Mike Rollins to discuss the future of the Ag Arena, which will be funded by 2002 SPLOST. Mr. Rollins presented the master plan for the Agri Business Center Site from Lose & Associates, but also discussed the possibility of a much smaller scale and less expensive plan for the Arena. After some discussion, Mr. Couch agreed to meet with the members of the Agri Business Center Committee, and present them with new Area plans. No action was taken for this Agenda item.

The next item of New Business was the discussion and/or action regarding the S&S Greenway Project. Statesboro Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Director Mike Rollins stated that the County received two Federal reimbursable grants from the Department of Transportation and two reimbursable grants from the State to fund the S&S Greenway Project. Mr. Rollins discussed the future plans for the S&S Greenway. Mr. Rollins explained in detail the three components of the Greenway: (1) The Gently Road Trailhead, (2) The construction of the trail, and (3) the Pretoria Rushing Road Trailhead. Commissioner Gibson and Commissioner Simmons excused themselves from the meeting. Mr. Rollins also gave the Board a cost projection and expense breakdown for the project (See Exhibit #2009-42). No action was taken for this Agenda item.

The last item of New Business was the discussion and/or action regarding the Boat Landing Project. Statesboro Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Director Mike Rollins stated that when the water recedes and fishing season is over, construction for a new boat ramp, paved parking area, and installation of security lights and trash cans will begin at the Rockyford site and possibly the Williams Landing site. Mr. Rollins stated that using County labor will minimize the cost of the project, and that the estimated cost for each project would be about \$65,000.00. Mr. Rollins acknowledged that the State would pay about \$20,000.00 and the rest of the money would be supplied by SPLOST funds. County Manager Couch stated that the projects cannot begin until money is re-allocated from the 2002 SPLOST for the Ag Arena. Mr. Rollins also stated that the Williams Landing project will require land acquisition for parking and for a better site for the actual ramp. No action was taken for this Agenda Item. With no further discussion, Mr. Couch advocated moving on to Staff and Board Comments. Commissioner Jackson excused himself from the meeting.

Chairman Nevil asked if there were any comments from the staff or Board. Clerk of the Board Maggie Fitzgerald reminded the Board about the upcoming ACCG Annual Meeting, and about filling out a nomination form for the Hospital Authority Board's three appointments. Chairman Nevil thanked the Bulloch County Employee's Relay for Life Team for all of their hard work. Commissioner Tankersley expressed her congratulations to Commissioner Jackson for winning the 2009 Dean Day Award. Commissioner

Thompson asked Mr. Couch to look over the quarterly financial reports to find out why one department over spent their travel budget.

Chairman Nevil asked for additional comments from the Staff or Board. Hearing none, Chairman Nevil stated that the Board needed to enter into Executive Session to discuss Real Estate Acquisition. Without further discussion, Commissioner Tankersley offered a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Real Estate Acquisition. Commissioner Rushing seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously (See Exhibit #2009-43). Commissioner Tankersley, Commissioner Rushing, and Commissioner Thompson, voted in favor of the motion.

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After the Executive Session, Commissioner Rushing offered a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Tankersley seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

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J. Garrett Nevil, Chairman

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Attest: Maggie Fitzgerald, Clerk of the Board