

August 18, 2009
Statesboro, GA

Special Called Meeting

The Bulloch County Board of Commissioners, Town of Register, Town of Brooklet, Town of Portal, and the City of Statesboro met at 1:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Agri Business Center. Bulloch County Chairman Garrett Nevil welcomed guests and called the meeting to order.

Ms. Maggie Fitzgerald, Clerk of the Board of the Bulloch County Commissioners, performed the roll call of the elected officials. The following elected officials were present for Bulloch County: Chairman Garrett Nevil, Vice-Chairman Roy Thompson, Commissioner Anthony Simmons, Commissioner Jan Tankersley, Commissioner Robert Rushing, and Commissioner Walter Gibson. Present for Town of Brooklet: Mayor Joe Grooms, Mayor Pro Tem Russell Davis, and Council Member Randy Newman. Present for Town of Portal: Mayor Larry Motes and Council Member Clint Lovett. Present for Town of Register: Mayor Katie O'Grady. Present for City of Statesboro: Mayor Bill Hatcher, Mayor Pro Tem Joe Brannen, Council Member Tommy Blich, Council Member Travis Chance, and Council Member Will Britt (arrived late). The following staff were present: Bulloch County Manager Thomas Couch, Bulloch County Staff Attorney Jeff Akins, City of Statesboro City Manager Shane Haynes, Town of Register Administrator Mandy Pilz, Bulloch County Clerk of the Board Maggie Fitzgerald, City of Statesboro City Clerk Sue Starling, Town of Brooklet Deputy Clerk Lori Prosser, Bulloch County Deputy Clerk Christy Strickland, City of Statesboro Administrative Assistant Sherry Phillips.

After Roll Call, the first item of business was the appointment of a Presiding Officer. City of Statesboro Mayor Bill Hatcher offered a motion to appoint Bulloch County Chairman Garrett Nevil as Presiding Officer. Bulloch County Commissioner Jan Tankersley seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The next item of business was the appointment of a Recording Secretary. City of Statesboro Mayor Bill Hatcher offered a motion to appoint City of Statesboro City Clerk Sue Starling as Recording Secretary. City of Statesboro Mayor Pro Tem Joe Brannen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The next item of business was the appointment of a Parliamentarian. Bulloch County Commissioner Anthony Simmons offered a motion to appoint Bulloch County Staff Attorney Jeff Akins as Parliamentarian for the meeting. Town of Brooklet Council Member Randy Newman seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The next item of business was the approval of the General Agenda. City of Statesboro Council Member Tommy Blich offered a motion to approve the General Agenda as presented. City of Statesboro Mayor Pro Tem Joe Brannen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Presiding Officer Bulloch County Chairman Garrett Nevil stated that the next item of business was Opening Remarks from the Chief Elected Officials. Bulloch County Commissioner Anthony Simmons offered a motion to open the floor to the Chief Elected Officials for Opening Remarks. Bulloch County Commissioner Walter Gibson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

With the floor open, Presiding Officer Bulloch County Chairman Garrett Nevil asked the Chief Elected Officials to proceed with their opening remarks or pass to the next official. First, Mr. Nevil called on Town of Brooklet's Mayor Joe Grooms who passed on Opening Remarks. Second, Mr. Nevil called on Town of Portal's Mayor Larry Motes who passed on Opening Remarks. Third, Mr. Nevil called on Town of Register's Mayor Katie O'Grady who passed on Opening Remarks. Fourth, Mr. Nevil called on City of Statesboro's Mayor Bill Hatcher who stated that we are all here to hear a presentation, and that he looked forward to hearing the Presentation. Last, Mr. Nevil passed on the Opening Remarks.

The next item of business was the introduction of Guest Presenters. Bulloch County Manager Thomas Couch introduced Billy Hickman as the Citizen's Group Representative, David Lynn for University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, and Dave Wills of Association of County Commissioners of Georgia.

Mr. Couch asked Mr. Hickman to begin his presentation. Mr. Hickman stated that he and Terry Reeves were asked to chair the consolidation committee by the Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Hickman explained how the Community Retreat representatives from the City, County, and other governing agencies asked the Chamber to pursue the consolidation effort, and then appointed a task force to

nominate a Chairman. Mr. Hickman continued stating that he and Mr. Reeves agreed to chair the effort together, and that they will work with the committee that will be formed if the consolidation study is approved. In conclusion, Mr. Hickman discussed several reasons why the Chamber would like to move forward with the study.

Next, Mr. David Lynn for University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government presented an overview of governmental consolidation power point slide show. Mr. Lynn discussed the two types of governmental consolidation, why there are so few consolidated governments, consolidations in larger communities, the pros and cons of consolidation, frequently asked questions, why so many attempts at consolidation fail, the typical sequence of events, and issue assessment.

After Mr. Lynn's presentation, Mr. Dave Wills of the Association of County Commissioners explained that he was a Webster County Commissioner when his county was consolidated. Mr. Wills stated that all the elected officials needed to consider issues such as the motivations behind the push to consolidate, do people in the community have the leadership skills in place to advance the idea of consolidation, and if the community really supports any type of consolidation. After considerable discussion from the Mr. Lynn and Mr. Wills, Presiding Officer Chairman Nevil moved forward to the next item on the Agenda.

The next item on the Agenda was open discussion between elected officials, ex-officio staff, and the presenters. Presiding Officer Chairman Nevil called for a motion to proceed with the Open Discussion. Bulloch County Commissioner Jan Tankersley offered a motion to open the floor for open discussion between the elected officials, ex-officio staff, and the presenters. Bulloch County Vice Chairman Roy Thompson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

With the floor open for discussion, Mayor of Register Katie O'Grady and Mayor of Portal Larry Motes both asked questions regarding the process of voting for or against consolidation. Bulloch County Commissioner Jan Tankersley asked about how a functional consolidation would affect House Bill 489. Mayor of Register Katie O'Grady asked questions regarding improved ambulance service and other services and about voting within districts or at large for elections. Mr. Earl Dabbs discussed how consolidation would improve economic development in Statesboro/Bulloch County. City

of Statesboro Mayor Hatcher asked Mr. Billy Hickman and Mr. Terry Reeves who is serving on their Consolidation Study Committee. City of Statesboro Council Member Will Britt and Town of Brooklet Council Member Randy Newman both asked questions regarding how consolidation would benefit their cities. Town of Portal Mayor Larry Motes asked several questions about annexation in regards their water system. Bulloch County Commissioner Anthony Simmons asked a question about having the minority districts redrawn for consolidation. City of Statesboro Mayor Bill Hatcher stated that economic development and the division of SPLOST funds are two major reasons why we should move forward with the Consolidation Study. Bulloch County Commissioner Roy Thompson stated that the study is warranted.

Without further discussion from the between elected officials, ex-officio staff, and the presenters, Presiding Officer Chairman Garrett Nevil opened the floor for Public Comments. Mr. Jimmy Hayes, Mr. Francis Johnson, and several other citizens asked questions regarding the possibility of consolidation. Mr. Nevil closed the floor for the open discussion by stating that this is the information gathering stage, and that moving forward with the consolidation study will help answer the questions and find solutions for the future.

With no further discussion or comments, Presiding Officer Chairman Nevil called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. City of Statesboro Mayor Bill Hatcher offered a motion to adjourn the meeting. Town of Brooklet Council Member Randy Newman seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

J. Garrett Nevil, Chairman

Attest: Maggie Fitzgerald, Clerk of the Board