

July 7, 2015
Statesboro, GA

Regular Meeting

The Board of Commissioners met at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the North Main Annex. Chairman Nevil called the meeting to order and welcomed staff. Commissioner Mosley gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Olympia Gaines, Clerk of the Board, performed the roll call of the commissioners and staff. The following commissioners were present: Chairman Nevil, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Gibson, and Commissioner Ethridge (came in at 5:56pm) The following staff were present: County Manager Tom Couch, County Attorney Jeff Akins, Assistant County Manager Andy Welch, Chief Financial Officer Whitney Richland, Public Safety Director Ted Wynn, Transportation Director Dink Butler, County Engineer Kirk Tatum, Statesboro-Bulloch Parks and Recreation Director Mike Rollins, Solid Waste Director Fred White, Statesboro-Bulloch County Airport Director Kathy Boykin, GIS Technician/Address Coordinator Shannon Mixon, Purchasing Manager Faye Bragg, Management Analyst Cindy Steinmann, Chief Deputy Jared Akins, Corporal Bob Dinello, and Deputy AJ Wright.

Chairman Nevil asked for changes or modifications of the General Agenda. Mr. Couch asked to modify the agenda by removing the New Business item and deferring it to the next meeting on July 21, 2015. Commissioner Thompson offered a motion to approve the General Agenda with the modification. Commissioner Gibson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge voting in favor of the motion.

Chairman Nevil asked for public comments from the audience at large or in writing. Mr. Bill Francisco expressed his concerns about the conditions of the county dirt roads and the proposed FY2016 budget allocation for the transportation department; Mr. Jimmy Hayes expressed his concerns with the condition of the dirt roads; Mr. Gary Mosley expressed his appreciation towards the roads department for their assistance with the roads and his desire to see more changes with the way road improvement issues are handled. Chairman Nevil thanked them for their comments and stated the County has been frugal with the tax payers' money and the resources that the County has.

Chairman Nevil stated the next item on the agenda was for a Public Hearing and Action on the proposed abandonment of County Road No. 201 a/k/a Bradley Road. Chairman Nevil called on Mr. Couch to initiate discussion on the matter. Mr. Couch provided a brief summary of the issues with Bradley Road. Chairman Nevil called for a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Gibson offered a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Mosley seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge all voting in favor of the motion.

Chairman Nevil asked for public comments concerning this matter. Mr. James Anderson acted as agent for Mr. Andy Hendrix, who filed the petition to have Bradley Road closed. Mr. Anderson stated Mr. Hendrix would like for the road to be closed for irrigation purposes and believed that the road was not being used by the public. Mrs. Nan Rushing and Mr. Tony Nevil spoke in opposition to Bradley Road being closed due to the road being used by neighbors and other farmers in the area. Commissioner Thompson referenced a letter signed by various individuals desiring to keep the road open to the public. Chairman Nevil called for a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Thompson offered a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Simmons seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge all voting in favor of the motion.

Without further discussion, Commissioner Thompson offered a motion to keep County Road No. 201 a/k/a Bradley Road open. Commissioner Gibson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge all voting in favor of the motion.

Chairman Nevil stated the next item on the agenda was a proclamation presentation to the veterans commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. No one from the Veterans group was present at the meeting. Chairman Nevil called for a motion to postpone the presentation until the next meeting on July 21, 2015. Commissioner Gibson offered a motion to postpone the Veterans presentation until the next meeting on July 21, 2015. Commissioner Ethridge seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge all voting in favor of the motion.

Chairman Nevil stated the next item on the agenda was Public Comments from James Woodall. Mr. Frances Johnson stated that he was representing Mr. Woodall and asked that all Confederate flags be removed from the meeting room as a matter of decorum, citing County Ordinance Sec 2-28(i) as the basis. Chairman Nevil deferred to the County Attorney for guidance on the request presented. Mr. Akins explained that banning the flags could implicate the First Amendment. Mr. Couch reminded the audience of the rules of decorum by reading Sec 2-28(h)(i) of the County Ordinance. After much deliberation, Commissioner Simmons offered a motion to have the flags removed from the room. Commissioner Mosley seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge all voting in favor of the motion.

Mr. Woodall expressed his concerns of why the Confederate statue should be removed from the Bulloch County Courthouse lawn and recommended replacing the statue with something that was representative of the diversity within the community. Mr. Woodall asked if the Board would consider establishing a committee comprised of GSU students, faculty, and community residents from both sides to begin discussion on what could be done to resolve the current issue. Rev Jane A. Page, Mr. John Nwosu, Mr. Jonathan McCollar, Stanley Thomas, Averia Jefferson, Melissa Miller, Ashley Madison, and Shelia Francois were present and expressed their agreement with Mr. Woodall concerning the removal of the Confederate statue from the courthouse lawn. Mr. Michael Mull stated that he opposed the removal of the Confederate statue. Mr. Deke Cox, Ms. Connie Hayes, Mr. Jimmy Hayes, Ms. Judy Womack, Dr. Ruth Green, Mr. Thomas Turner, and Ms. Shannon Sorrell were present and expressed their opposition concerning the removal of the Confederate statue from the courthouse lawn.

Chairman Nevil thanked the citizens for their comments and attendance at the meeting. He stated the next item on the agenda was to approve the Consent Agenda as follows: (1) approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting and Executive Session held on June 16, 2015 and the Special Called Meeting held on June 23, 2015; (2) approve appointment of Mrs. Joyce Smith to the Region 5 DBHDD Board; (3) to authorize the County Manager to sign a contract renewal for an annual contract (\$1234.80) on batteries to be used in County-owned equipment by Fleet Maintenance (See Exhibit #2015-084); (4) to authorize the County Manager to sign a contract renewal for an annual contract (\$1428.14) on filters to be used in County-owned equipment by

Fleet Maintenance (See Exhibit #2015-085); (5) to approve the purchase of football equipment from BNS Sports (See Exhibit #2015-086); (6) to approve a revocable license to Bulloch County Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc (See Exhibit #2015-087). Without further discussion, Commissioner Simmons offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Mosley seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge all voting in favor of the motion.

Chairman Nevil called for general comments or statements from the commissioners and staff. The commissioners thanked everyone for their attendance, and thanked everyone for sharing their comments and opinions. Commissioner Mosley stated it may be beneficial to have a committee or group representative of both sides to discuss the issue concerning the Confederate statue. He stated that Bulloch County is a great county to live in and he feels open dialogue is necessary in matters such as this to maintain the standard that Bulloch County stands upon. Commissioner Simmons stated he felt that progress was made with the ability of both sides being able to discuss an issue involving race with civility and decorum. Commissioner Gibson stated that a group or committee may be helpful in resolving the issue presented. Mr. Akins stated that he appreciated the civility and debate from both sides. Chairman Nevil thanked everyone for being civil and said that he believes progress has improved regarding race relations, but this progress has not reached where we would like for it to be.

Hearing no further comments from the Board or Staff, Chairman Nevil stated that there was no further business expected for the open session of the regular agenda and the Board must close the meeting and enter into Executive Session to discuss Personnel Matters. Chairman Nevil called for a motion to adjourn into Executive Session in accordance with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3 (b) (2), and other applicable laws, pursuant to the advice of County Attorney Jeff Akins, for the purpose of discussing and deliberating on Personnel Matters. Without further discussion, Commissioner Mosley offered a motion to adjourn and enter into Executive Session to discuss and deliberate on Personnel Matters (See Exhibit #2015-088). Commissioner Ethridge seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Mosley and Commissioner Ethridge voting in favor of the motion.

The meeting was reconvened, and Chairman Nevil asked if there were any further comments from the commissioners or staff. Hearing no further comments from the commissioners or staff, Chairman Nevil asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Simmons offered a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mosley seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Mosley and Commissioner Ethridge voting in favor of the motion.

J. Garrett Nevil, Chairman

Attest: _____

Olympia Gaines, Clerk of the Board