

**CAMDEN COUNTY, GEORGIA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2010, 6:00 PM**

A regular meeting of the Camden County Board of County Commissioners was held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 5, 2010, in the Board of County Commissioners' Meeting Chambers of the Government Services Building, Woodbine, Georgia.

Chair Rainer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Director of Solid Waste Lannie Brant delivered the invocation.

Chair Rainer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Chair David L. Rainer; Vice-Chair Katherine Nisi Zell; Commissioner Willis R. Keene, Jr.; Commissioner Charlene Sears; Commissioner Stephen L. Berry; County Administrator Steve Howard; County Attorney Brent Green, and Interim County Clerk Kathryn Bishop.

Agenda Amendments:

None.

Motion to Adopt the Agenda:

Commissioner Keene made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to adopt the agenda as amended.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

- December 15, 2009 Regular Meeting minutes

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the December 15, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes.

The motion carried unanimously.

Presentations:

- Proclamation recognizing Wildcat Appreciation Day.

Commissioner Sears read the Proclamation recognizing Wildcat Appreciation Day. Keith Post, representing Wildcat Appreciation Day, announced that the parade will commence, Saturday, January 16, 2010 at 10:00 AM in downtown Kingsland. He stated that it will be a great day to celebrate the accomplishments of the Camden County Wildcat Football Team.

- Recognizing Diana Smith for 5 years of service to Camden County.

County Administrator Steve Howard presented Diana Smith with a certificate recognizing 5 years of service to Camden County. He stated that Diana Smith has been an asset to Camden County and she will be truly missed. He wished Mrs. Smith the best of luck in her future endeavors.

- Recognizing Board of Assessor Chair Robert Rudolph for 19 years of service to Camden County.

Commissioner Keene presented Board of Assessor Chair Robert Rudolph a certificate recognizing 19 years of service to Camden County. Commissioner Keene thanked Mr.

Rudolph for his dedicated service to the citizens of Camden County.

Mr. Rudolph stated that the Appraisal Staff at the Board of Assessors office should be thanked because of their continued dedicated service to Camden County.

- Annual Performance Review of the Camden County Strategic Plan.

County Administrator Steve Howard and Strategic Planning Director Diana Smith presented a power point presentation to the Board regarding the Annual Performance Review for Camden County.

County Administrator Steve Howard stated that 2009 has been an award winning year for Camden County and he gave the board an overview examining the extent of the goals achieved for 2009. He explained that they will continue to expand Camden County's Strategic Planning horizon.

Public Comments:

Scott Henning, Woodbine

Mr. Henning stated that he wished to speak regarding the proposed addition to the existing jail in Woodbine. Mr. Henning stated his concerns regarding the addition and he suggested possible solutions to the Board for long term solutions with overcrowding at the Camden County Detention Center. He further stated that residents in Woodbine were firmly against such addition. He asked the Board to take this into consideration and think carefully in deriving a decision regarding the Jail.

Regular Agenda

1. Approve and authorize the Chair to execute Tax Release Applications.

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell to approve and authorize the Chair to execute Tax Release Applications.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Appoint Paul Fortier, District 1, to the Board of Assessors.

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to appoint Paul Fortier, District 1, to the Board of Assessors.

The motion carried unanimously.

3. Consideration of Requests for Ad Valorem Tax Refunds.

- Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the request regarding Personal Property (Equipment) P1 200431 to waive the penalty in the amount of \$895.59 if the remainder of the bill (to include the interest & cost) is paid within 30 days.

The motion carried unanimously.

- Commissioner Keene made a motion, seconded by Vice-chair Zell to approve the request regarding Parcel 134 029 and consider the 2008 taxes have been paid in full as of to date.

The motion carried unanimously.

- Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to deny the request for Parcel 082 092 regarding refund of difference in Homestead Exemption.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Berry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to amend the agenda to add item 4, the approval of a Resolution, to be forwarded to the

Board of Assessors, requesting the performance review of Administrative Staff & the Chief Appraiser within the Board of Assessor's Office, as well as renumber the agenda accordingly.

The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of a Resolution, to be forwarded to the Board of Assessors, requesting the performance review of Administrative Staff & the Chief Appraiser within the Board of Assessor's Office, as well as renumber the agenda accordingly.

Commissioner Berry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to approve a Resolution, to be forwarded to the Board of Assessors, requesting the performance review of Administrative Staff & the Chief Appraiser within the Board of Assessor's Office, as well as renumber the agenda accordingly.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. Consideration of Jail Project Options.

County Administrator Steve Howard gave the Board an overview of the current Status of the Jail Project.

Sheriff Gregory stated that several years ago everyone agreed that the Jail was over crowded. He explained that this issue has been discussed for years and brought to light by the former Sheriff, Bill Smith. He stated that now the issue of overcrowding has become a safety issue for staff within the jail. He stated that officers are risking their lives everyday and as Sheriff he has a duty to protect those officers as well. He asked the Board to make a decision regarding this issue tonight so he may know where the Board stands.

Chair Rainer stated that every avenue should be looked at before adding on to the existing jail.

Sheriff Gregory stated that it has been a full year of discussion regarding this issue.

Chair Rainer stated that when the report from the Department of Corrections is completed then a decision can be rendered.

Commissioner Sears stated that a decision should be made on how to proceed. She stated that people should not have to work in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, as well as the inmates should not be subjected to the same.

Sheriff Gregory stated that on November 3, 2009 the Board said if the study was not completed the issue would be voted upon. He explained that inmates have filed numerous lawsuits regarding the unsafe and unsanitary conditions of the jail.

Commissioner sears stated that a decision should be made tonight and Sheriff Gregory should be allowed to go forward and utilize SPLOST monies to construct the addition onto the existing jail. She asked that if the Oak tree could be saved to please take that into consideration.

Commissioner Berry asked if the Board was going to make decisions and totally ignore the people of Woodbine speaking out against the proposed addition onto the existing jail. He explained that he served on the committee to move the jail to Woodbine and he was the lone vote against the current site where the jail sits today. He stated that the Board and Sheriff could call it what they wanted but the proposed addition is nothing more than a shed. He stated that the only way to control your jail is to control your beds.

Sheriff Gregory stated that he does not like the public being told untrue things.

Chair Rainer asked the Sheriff to allow Commissioner Berry time to speak and then he will be allotted time to speak as well.

Commissioner Berry stated that the current situation is not Sheriff Gregory's fault but he does not agree that other options can't be looked at to resolve the overcrowding issue.

Commissioner Keene stated that this is the most peril subject and he explained that he wants to do the best thing for the people of District 1, but he is not convinced that adding on to this facility is the answer. He stated that this is a no-win situation and at some point the process of moving the jail out of woodbine must be entertained. He stated that he proposes to take some action tonight due to the fact the County runs the risk of having a Judge come in and make these decisions for the taxpayers.

Vice-Chair Zell stated that she does not know if there is a right thing to do regarding this issue, but if the report cannot be completed the some action must take place.

Commissioner Berry stated that he and Chair Rainer gave their word to the Mayors of the three (3) cities that they would not use the SPLOST VI monies to add on to the existing jail facility but to only use the money for improvements. He asked the Board what would be the outcome if the report findings reveal discrepancies in policies and bonding issues through the courts. He stated that the Board has the power to control this issue and it is through the checkbook. He stated that the Board should not do this and explained that it is going to be a bad, bad decision.

Sheriff Gregory stated first to the citizens of Woodbine that he would love to add on to the jail a different way but it is not financially feasible at this time. He stated that he ran for office on the word that he is the taxpayer's friend and five (5) different Sheriff's have build this same jail in neighboring counties. He stated that he could construct the addition for \$1 million dollars but the \$1.4 million dollars is to dress it up for the citizens of Woodbine.

Commissioner Keene stated that he disagrees with Commissioner Berry's statement of using the checkbook against the judges. He asked that when the study is complete if it is possible to authorize funding in stages such as tier 1, 2, and 3.

Chair Rainer stated that he did not think completion of the design and building the jail could be finalized before that report is submitted.

Commissioner Berry stated spend no money.

Commissioner Rainer asked the Sheriff if the Board authorized the process to begin with the stipulation that a concept plan will have to be brought back to the Board that validates the project is acceptable.

Sheriff Gregory stated no, that was not acceptable.

Commissioner Berry stated that there was no lawsuit filed.

Vice-Chair Zell asked County Administrator Steve Howard if the Department of Corrections understood the need for this study.

County administrator Steve Howard stated yes the Department of Corrections was aware of the need for Camden County to have this study conducted but they already have other entities scheduled ahead of Camden County that must be completed first.

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to authorize the spending of \$1.4 million dollars of SPLOST VI funds to construct an addition on to the current jail facility.

So voted:

Chair Rainer - No

Vice-Chair Zell - Yes

Commissioner Keene - Yes

Commissioner Sears - Yes

Commissioner Berry - No

The motion carried 3-2.

6. Resolution authorizing release of bonds.

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to approve the Resolution authorizing the Chair to execute the release of the bonds.

The motion carried unanimously.

7. Approval to move forward with the development of an Ordinance regarding the existing Timber Tax.

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell to approve to move forward with the development of an Ordinance regarding the existing Timber Tax.

The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

- Calendar - December / January

Interim County Clerk Kathryn Bishop read the calendars for January & February 2010.

- County Administrator's Report

County Administrator Steve Howard reported the following:

- He announced the results of the Camden County H.O.P.E. Committee Food Drive.
- He announced the release of the 2009 Annual Report.
- He announced that Camden County is working heavily in efforts to support the promotion of the Census 2010.
- He announced the "Bring One for the Chipper" campaign in efforts to recycle real Christmas trees will be Saturday, January 9, 2010 and the drop off location is at Howard People's Park located on Gross Road in Kingsland.
- He announced the kick off of the Citizen's Academy 2010.
- He announced the launch of the Showcase Camden County Photo Contest 2010.

Additional Public Comments:

Janet Heath, Woodbine

Mrs. Heath stated that she is disappointed about the decision made by members of this Board regarding the addition to the existing jail. She stated that she appreciated Commissioner Berry's comments. She stated that her biggest fear is that Sheriff Gregory will have the trees cut down immediately. She explained to the Board that this issue is not going away.

Pastor Kevin Mach, Camden Avenue Church of God, Woodbine

Pastor Mach introduced himself to the Board and stated that he is the new Pastor at Camden Avenue Church of God located in Woodbine. He stated that he will be attending many more meetings and he wished all here tonight to leave here in brotherly love.

Scott Henning, Woodbine

Mr. Henning expressed his displeasure with the decision made tonight regarding the approval of SPLOST VI funding for a \$1.4 million dollar addition on to the existing jail facility.

Matt Jordan, Woodbine

Mr. Jordan stated that he is concerned that the Board did not even entertain the option of moving the jail to an alternate location and a long term solution. He urged the Board to consider other solutions to the jail overcrowding.

Staci Bowick, Support Services Director

Mrs. Bowick stated that she wished to express her thanks to Diana Smith for her years of service to Camden county and she wished her the very best.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell to adjourn the January 5, 2010 meeting. The vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



David L. Rainer, Chair



Kathryn A. Bishop, Deputy Clerk