

**CAMDEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2003, 6:00 P.M.  
WOODBINE, GEORGIA**

A regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2003, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room at the Courthouse in Woodbine, Georgia

Present: Commissioner Stephen L. Berry, Commissioner David L. Rainer, Commissioner Sanford S. Feller, Commissioner E. B. Herrin, Jr., Commissioner Preston Rhodes, County Attorney O. Brent Green, Interim County Administrator Penny Woodard.

Commissioner Rainer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.  
Reverend Elliott Foss, Waverly United Methodist Church, delivered the invocation.  
Commissioner Rainer led the Pledge of Allegiance.  
The roll call indicated all Commissioners present.

**AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**

Motioned by Mr. Rhodes and seconded by Mr. Feller, and voted unanimously to add item 1., Resolution Supporting Legislation by the City of St. Marys to create the St. Marys Convention and Visitors' Bureau Authority, to the agenda.

**PRESENTATION: None**

**WORK SESSION:**

- **Discussion on creation of Citizens Advisory Committee**

Commissioner Feller briefed Board members on his proposal of forming a Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Feller said the committee would be advisory in nature, and would be formed for the purpose of reviewing and improving the existing county budget. The officers of the Committee would be elected by the citizen members, with one commissioner serving as a liaison between the Committee and local government.

Mr. Feller believes the number of people who would volunteer to serve on such a committee would be talented and skilled, and would produce innovative budget strategies to share with the Board. Mr. Feller recommended that the Committee could produce a budget report to the Board within 120 days of its creation.

Chairman Rainer said he had some reservations about such a committee, but was keeping an open mind. Mr. Feller said he hopes his fellow Board members will revisit his suggestion at a future meeting.

- **Mid-year Finance Review**

Finance Director Mike Fender passed out a budget review document relating to the mid-year financial status and briefed the Board on the status of solid waste funds to date. General Fund collections are just over \$8 million dollars at present, and expenditures are at about \$8.5 million. The difference is due to the fact that tax bills went out late, and revenue from tax dollars is still being received. Mr. Fender believes that by June 30<sup>th</sup>, the general fund balance will stay about the same, the curbside and unincorporated services fund balance should increase somewhat and solid waste funds will increase significantly.

- **PSA Funding Method**

Commissioner Rhodes, who sits on the Public Service Authority [PSA] Board, spoke about the PSA funding method. Mr. Rhodes said the City of St. Marys wanted the PSA funding formula changed, but other officials who sit on the PSA Board, including Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Berry, believed that the current method should remain unchanged.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Mr. Freddie Prescott of Bull Head Bluff stated that Bull Head Bluff Road had been graded by the county for 40 years, and that the county stopped maintaining the road last year. He would like the county to consider maintaining the road again. Mr. Rainer said the Board would be voting to approve or disapprove a revised Road Policy later in the meeting, and that Mr. Prescott's request would be revisited should the policy be approved.
- Mr. George Scott of St. Marys commented on two items: the Road Policy and the proposal to create a Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Scott is concerned about cost, and asked what the county's future obligations will be to maintain the roads it owns. He said the county should reinstate a reserve fund, and that the county should publish and implement a policy on capitol expenditures. Mr. Scott also stated he could easily find 100 volunteers, including himself, to serve on a Citizens Advisory Committee should the Board create one.

### **1. Approval of Minutes for January 7, 2003 Commission Meeting**

Motion by Mr. Herrin, and seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the January 7, 2003 Commission Meeting, as amended by the Clerk.

### **2. Reports:**

Ms. Woodard reviewed the Board Calendar for February/March 2003.

Ms. Woodard reviewed the status of appointments:

- Appointment requested for a County Commissioner to replace former Commissioner Ken Hase on the St. Marys River Management Committee.
- Re-appointment requested for Mr. Donny Rominger to continue serving on the St. Marys River Management Committee.
- Appointment requested for a Board representative to serve on the Camden County Public Library Board due to Chairman Rainer's resignation from the library board. Mr. Rainer suggested Mr. Berry serve on the library board.
- Re-appointment requested for Commissioner Preston Rhodes to continue serving on the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Board. Mr. Rhodes is Camden County's minority representative.

Mr. Berry gave the Board an update on the new Camden County Courthouse at Mr. Rainer's request. Mr. Berry said the estimated completion date for the project was May, 2003, with a possible move-in date of July, 2003. He added that the project is proceeding smoothly and that it is estimated the courthouse project will be about \$ 445,000 under budget when completed.

### **3. OLD BUSINESS: Planning Commission Business –**

- Caney Creek Development, Inc. and other property owners in Devonshire Subdivision request to rezone from Residential-2 to Residential-1 for all 65 lots in Devonshire Subdivision. The property is located on Dover Bluff Road, just south of Hickory Bluff Road and is identified as a portion of Parcel 1 on Zoning/Tax Map 125.

Motion by Mr. Feller, and seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted unanimously to approve the Caney Creek Development, Inc. rezoning request.

- Dwight McCollough, 847 Ardith Lane, Kingsland, GA 31548, requests to rezone a parcel of land approximately 1 acre in size from Agriculture-Residential (A-R) zoning district to Multi-Family Residential (R-2) zoning district. The property is located on Mush Bluff Trail and is identified as Parcel 4 on Zoning/Tax Map 132-C.

Discussion ensued on Mr. McCollough's rezoning request. Mr. Feller and Mr. Berry voiced concerns that approving the rezoning request will create "spot" zoning in that area. Mr. Feller said the Board needs to adhere to a Comprehensive Plan when making decisions on zoning and development in the county.

Motion by Mr. Rhodes and seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted to approve Dwight McCollough's rezoning request.

**So Voted – 3 to 2**

Mr. Berry – nay  
Mr. Feller – nay  
Mr. Rainer – yea  
Mr. Herrin – yea  
Mr. Rhodes – yea

The motion carried.

**4. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. St. Marys River Management Committee Appointments**

Motion by Mr. Herrin, seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mr. Feller and re-appointment of Mr. Donny Rominger to the St. Marys River Management Committee.

**b. Camden County Public Library Board Appointment**

Motion by Mr. Herrin, seconded by Mr. Feller, and voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mr. Berry to the Camden County Public Library Board.

**c. Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center Board of Directors Re-appointment**

Motion by Mr. Herrin, seconded by Mr. Rainer, and voted unanimously to approve the re-appointment of Mr. Rhodes to the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center Board of Directors.

**d. Budget Amendments**

Motion by Mr. Herrin, seconded by Mr. Feller, and voted unanimously to approve four resolutions to amend the budget.

One resolution makes a budget cut to the capitol improvements fund. The next three resolutions deal with transferring lease obligations from the general fund to the capitol improvements fund and the unincorporated tax district.

**e. Tax Release applications**

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to approve the Tax Release applications from the Tax Assessor's Office.

**f. Tax Refund for Carolyn and Robert Mason**

Motion by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted unanimously to approve a tax refund for Mr. Robert and Mrs. Carolyn Mason.

Mr. Berry said the Masons mistakenly thought they had applied for their senior tax exemption, when, in actuality, they had not. The couple, according to Mr. Berry, had "gotten caught" between the Tax Commissioner and Tax Assessor's Offices. They had filled out the exemption card in the Tax Commissioner office, when they should have

done so in the Tax Assessors office. Therefore, the couple did not receive a senior tax exemption. Mr. Berry added that the Masons have paid their taxes in full. Mr. Feller commented that the two tax offices need to better communicate with each other. The Masons will receive a refund in the amount of \$685.65, to be paid out of the county general fund.

**g. Road Department Business**

- Road Policy

The Board reviewed the revised Road Policy and discussion ensued. Attorney Brent Green told the Board that he used January 1, 2001, as a cut-off date in the policy. Any roads maintained by the county prior to this cut-off date, which were privately-owned roads, would come back before the Board for consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Rainer asked Mr. Green to insert the word “easement(s),” after the words “right-of-way,” and Mr. Berry asked Mr. Green to add the following statements as criteria item number 6 for new roads accepted after January 1, 2001, “Nothing is intended by the act of acceptance that would obligate Camden County to pave any road so accepted. That decision rests solely with the Camden County Board of Commissioners.” Mr. Green said he would also delete the word “agree(s)” for old and new criteria items number 4, which will correctly read, “Owner(s) of the road deed permanent right-of-way easement(s) to the County.” Mr. Berry also wanted to make clear that the county, in order to accept a road, must have title to that road. He also stated that he would not vote to raise taxes in order to pay for paving additional roads.

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, and seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted to accept the revised Road Policy with the above-suggested changes.

**So voted 4 – 1**

Mr. Berry – yea

Mr. Feller- nay

Mr. Rainer – yea

Mr. Herrin – yea

Mr. Rhodes – yea

The motion carried.

A final copy of the Road Policy with modifications will be presented to the Board at the February 4, 2003 Commission meeting.

Per Mr. Rhodes request, Road Supervisor Larry Lampe then briefed the Board about the status of Notta Road and Douglas Fish Camp Road, which were once considered county roads, but had been taken off the county road list. Mr. Lampe told the Board these roads could be accepted back as county roads. Mr. Lampe said he discovered that Notta Road had been taken off the county road list by an act of the county administrator before his employment with the county. Mr. Lampe stated that Notta Road is on the 1968 map of official county roads submitted to the Georgia Department of Transportation in 1972. Douglas Fish Camp Road was taken off the list last year, though it too was depicted on the 1968 map of roads submitted to GDOT in 1972, according to Mr. Lampe.

Motion by Mr. Feller and seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to accept Douglas Fish Camp Road as a county-owned road, and directed Interim County Administrator Penny Woodard to place Notta Road back on the county road maintenance list.

- Escott Road, Bid

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, and seconded by Mr. Feller, and voted unanimously to accept a bid from Steven A. Carter Construction in the amount of \$31,926.00 to clear and grub the right-of-way on Escott Road.

- Temple Church Road, Bid

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, and seconded by Mr. Feller, and voted unanimously to accept a bid from P & A Engineering, Inc. in the amount of \$6,400.00 to monitor storm water discharge on Temple Church Road.

- Borrow Pit Lease

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, and seconded by Mr. Feller, and voted unanimously to accept two Borrow Pit Leases from Winston Barlow, Sr. One borrow pit will be constructed on Parcel 39 of May 16, and the other will be constructed on Parcel 15-B of Map 16.

#### **h. Bed Tax Distribution**

A draft proposal of an agreement for tourism services between the County and the Kingsland Tourism Authority was brought to the Board for review. The County has collected, as of December 31, 2002, a total of \$7,298.00 in bed tax money. The Finance Department expects the County to collect \$16,500 by fiscal year's end. These funds are being held and have not been dispersed, because such funds must be targeted for promotional services.

Mr. Rainer stated that this contract had been declined by the Kingsland Tourism Authority. Mr. Berry said the Board needed more time to study this issue.

Motion by Mr. Berry, and seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted unanimously to table the contract.

#### **i. Greenspace Update**

Planning and Building Director Frank Etheridge briefed the Board on potential Greenspace projects proposed by the Greenspace Group. The Greenspace Group is an offshoot of the Planning Commission. The group has met quarterly in order to identify potential properties for acquisition, and also to identify general categories of Greenspace that would benefit Camden County as a whole, and should be pursued. The group suggested the Board look at historical sites such as homes, churches, cemeteries not currently in use, and Indian mounds; waterfront access points; conservation easements for drainage, and marsh and hammock protection; and, passive parks.

Mr. Etheridge told the Board that the County's Greenspace funds must be used by June 30<sup>th</sup>. He informed the Board that the County is not eligible for funding next year, as the population has not increased enough to meet that particular requirement for the next grant. Mr. Etheridge suggested the Board consider pooling the County's Greenspace funds with the three cities' Greenspace funds, so Greenspace properties could be purchased that would benefit the whole of the County.

Mr. Herrin suggested that Mr. Etheridge work with the three cities to pool funding and produce a list of Greenspace projects with which to spend the funding. Mr. Rainer said he would work with Mr. Etheridge and the cities on Greenspace. Mr. Rhodes commented that some sites in North Camden County also need to be reviewed and identified for Greenspace.

No action by the Board was taken.

#### **j. Discussion regarding Building Inspector**

Planning and Building Director Frank Etheridge suggested the Board hire a full-time building inspector for Camden County. At present, the County contracts these building

inspector services on a part-time basis from Mr. Tony Farrin. The building inspector position is a funded position in the currently approved County budget. Staff informed the Board that the County collects sufficient funds in building permit fees to support the costs associated with the building inspector position. The continued use of a contract person will require the Commissioners to approve the transfer of funds from the department's personnel line items to a contract line item, according to Mr. Etheridge. Discussion ensued as to whether a full-time inspector should be hired, or to return to a previous arrangement in which the county contracts building inspection services from the City of St. Marys. The city uses both Mr. Wiley King, St. Marys' current planning director, and Mr. Dave Peterson as building inspectors.

Motion by Mr. Berry, and seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to contract building inspection services with the City of St. Marys as soon as possible for the remainder of calendar year 2003 for a sum of about \$25,000.

#### **k. Flea Hill Water System Ordinance, review**

Planning and Building Director Frank Etheridge brought before the Board for review only, a proposed ordinance that would permit the County to bill customers on a County water system. Mr. Etheridge told the Board that the draft ordinance was designed to set the fees the County must charge in order to operate the proposed Flea Hill Water System at a break-even point. The ordinance also spells out the application process and minimum connections required by individual property owners. The ordinance was drafted by Mr. Etheridge, and by Mr. Bill Shanahan, former assistant county administrator, and reviewed by County Attorney O. Brent Green.

Mr. Etheridge said the system would take 9 to 12 months for the meters to be placed on the Flea Hill property owners' homes, once the county acquires the two-acre parcel for the new well. Mr. Etheridge told the Board that, according to the draft ordinance, customers would be charged the flat fee of \$54 until their homes could be metered. According to staff, the \$54 minimum fee would generate adequate funds to operate the system within the Camden County Water and Wastewater Business Plan. Discussion ensued as to whether the flat fee should be charged, or if the County would not begin charging the water system users until the meters were in place. Mr. Etheridge said meters could not be put in place until the water pressure is brought up on the new system, once it's installed.

Mr. Etheridge informed the Board that the County currently spends about \$30 a month to monitor the current water system at Flea Hill to ensure the water is safe to drink. Mr. Berry suggested the \$54 flat fee requirement be deleted from the draft ordinance, and that the County continue to pay for monitoring the current system until the new system's meters are up and the customers are charged for the water they use.

The Board authorized the advertisement of the draft ordinance, and set the first public reading of the ordinance for Tuesday, February 4, at 6 p.m.

#### **l. Resolution Supporting Legislation by the City of St. Marys to Create the St. Marys Convention and Visitors' Bureau Authority**

St. Marys City Councilman Byran Fewox brought before the Board a proposed resolution, requesting that the state legislative delegation serving Camden County introduce local legislation creating a Tourism Bureau Authority for the administration of the hotel/motel tax revenues collected by the City. Furthermore, St. Marys brought the proposed resolution before the Board for its endorsement of the legislation.

Motion by Mr. Herrin, and seconded by Mr. Rhodes to approve the resolution. Discussion ensued as to whether the Board had sufficient knowledge of the legislation to pass such a resolution endorsing it. Mr. Berry questioned why the County had to endorse the legislation, when the issue seemed to be internal to the City of St. Marys. Mr. Berry added that a new authority is not needed, and that it would create another unnecessary level of government. Mr. Berry urged his fellow Board members to reconsider endorsing such a resolution without much information about the legislation provided to them.

Mr. Fewox and Mr. Zachary Zol, manager of Greyfield Inn and a member of the now inactive St. Marys Tourism Council, debated the resolution before the Commissioners, with Mr. Fewox in support of the resolution and Mr. Zol against it. Mr. Fewox stated the resolution would allow the City of St. Marys to promote tourism in the same way the City of Kingsland now does. Mr. Zol argued that, by law, the bed tax money must go to a non-profit entity for the purpose of promoting tourism. Mr. Zol believes the proposed authority would be a government entity, and not a non-profit agency as prescribed by law.

Mr. Herrin withdrew his motion, and no action was taken. The Board asked the City of St. Marys to provide it background information on the resolution and the legislation that would be introduced to state lawmakers. The issue was tabled for the next meeting, February 4, 2003.

#### **5. Adjournment (8:14 p.m.)**

Motion by Mr. Herrin, seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Rainer  
Chairman

Denise Etheridge  
Executive Secretary/County Clerk