

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

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

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

Chairman David Rainer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Reverend Elliott Foss delivered the Invocation
Chairman David Rainer led the Pledge of Allegiance
The roll call indicated all Commissioners were present

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Chairman Rainer asked the Board to move Board Appointments under New Business as

- l. Library Board Appointments

And

- m. Planning Commission Board Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Sanford Feller and seconded by Commissioner Preston Rhodes and voted unanimously to move Board Appointments under New Business

PUBLIC HEARING: NONE

WORK SESSION:

1. Judge Amanda Williams addressed the Board of Commissioner to request Twenty Thousand dollars to fund the Drug Court Program in Camden County. Sixteen Thousand dollars will be used solely for the program and the other Four Thousand dollars to be used for a full time Drug Court Public Defender. Judge Williams indicated that Sheriff Bill Smith would allocate Fifty Thousand dollars for the Drug Court Program. Judge Williams gave each Commissioner a pamphlet of the statistics and success the program has had in Camden County. Steve Mansfield the current Director over the program also spoke to the Commissioners about the success of the program. Commissioner Feller asked Mr. Mansfield what the success rate of the Camden Drug Court Program dating back to 1998 when the Drug Court Program was implemented in Camden County. Mr. Mansfield's response was that out of all the graduates dating back to November of 1998 who have successfully completed the program only three graduates that he could recall have not been successful candidates for the Drug Court Program. Jackie Johnson a prosecutor with the District Attorneys Office also spoke on behalf of the Drug Court Program and the success of the program.

2. Chairman Rainer addressed the Commission on the discussion of the Old Courthouse Renovations noting of the available SPLOST funds, the estimated total is 3.5 million dollars. Mr. Rainer made a proposal to the Commission to work with an Architect and come up with a plan to house the Central Administration, the Tax Commissioner and the Board of Tax Assessors into the old Courthouse after renovations are completed. Commissioner Rainer stated that maybe the renovations on the Old Courthouse would not cost the entire 3.5 million dollars and that perhaps some of the monies could go back to the taxpayer. Chairman Rainer asked each Commissioner if that would like to comment on the subject of the renovations.

Commissioner Feller made the comment that perhaps the county could do its own contracting and hire some of the Durango employees who have recently lost their jobs. Chairman Rainer commented that such a large project as the renovations on the Old Courthouse and the amount of money that would be used on the renovations, the project would have to go out for bid under the Camden County Purchasing Policy.

Commissioner Rhodes made the comment that most of the Durango employees probably have other jobs by now and hiring that type of work force through using those employees is just not available now.

Commissioner Herrin also addressed the issue on the County Purchasing Policy noting that the project had to go out for bid due to the fact the sum of money that would be involved. Commissioner Herrin asked County Attorney Brent Green for his opinion. Mr. Green stated if the county hired independent contractors the county would have to put the project out for bid, if you want to hire the contractors as employees you have the benefits such as health and dental along with salary to look at.

Commissioner Berry had much debate and discussion over the renovation issue and requested his comments be addressed when the Commission Board was ready to vote on the project.

Chairman Rainer stated that the voters have voted on the renovations of the Old Courthouse, they voted on the SPLOST that shows the 2 million dollars and the crisis was very much impending when they voted last year on the 1.5 million dollars, it was no secret about Durango when the election was held and the people have voted overwhelmingly to do the project the second time it was voted on and Commissioner Rainer did not feel that the Commissioners should do what the electorate told the Commissioners they should do concerning the matter.

3. Mr. Larry Lampe Director of the Camden Road Department addressed the Board with his presentment of a 15 year Road/Bridges plan. Chairman Rainer commended Mr. Lampe on his hard work and great effort. Commissioner Berry also commended Mr. Lampe on the well written plan on Road and Bridge projects. Mr. Lampe also recognized Mrs. Mercy Thompson one of his employees with the Road Department. Mrs. Thompson, Mr. Lampe stated that while he does a lot of the up front work Mrs. Thompson is actually the one who is actually out on the project sites and interfaces with the Contractors. Mr. Lampe spoke a little on the dirt roads that needed to be paved with the first eight roads costing 2.3 to 2.5 million dollars and 3.4 million over the next five to six years to accomplish the projects. Mr. Lampe spoke of the three bridges that had to be closed need to be repaired as soon as possible and on the Agenda was a company that could repair the bridges' and Mr. Lampe hoped that the Commission

would approve the company to repair the bridges so they could get started right away with repairs and to ask DOT for their help with their portion of the funding to move forward. Mr. Lampe spoke on the drainage problems in some of the areas in the county.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Jay Lanham approached the Board with his concerns of the closure of Old Still Yard Waste Site located on Old Still Road and the relocation of the Old Still Yard Waste to Hwy 110. Mr. Lanham stressed his concern over the distance to drive to Hwy 110. Mr. Lanham picks up a lot of leaves and brush for people around the county. Mr. Lanham said it would cost him a lot of money in gasoline to drive to Hwy 110 to dump leaves and brush. Commissioner Berry stated that when the new Durango Landfill was opened it would be used for the Old Still facility, to keep both the Old Still Site opened and the New Durango site it would cost over a million dollars because then the county would have to duplicate the equipment and staff both sites. Mr. Berry said there has been discussion to leave the Old Still Site open one day a week, but, that unfortunately the taxpayer of this county can not afford to spend a million dollars to duplicate the services, it would be to expensive.
- Kathryn Mason approached the Board, and stated she is an assistant Public Defender in Glynn County and she lives in Kingsland Georgia. She asked the Board to seriously consider approving the twenty thousand dollars Judge Amanda Williams had requested from the Board. Mrs. Mason said the program is great and that it works.
- Don O'Neal approached the Board on the subject of renovations for the Old Courthouse he said he is a life long resident of Camden County and a taxpayer. Mr. O'Neal asked the Board to look at the cost that it is taking for the maintenance and up keep on the old buildings such as the Tax Commissioners Office. The Tax Assessors are in Mobile Homes and as Mobile Homes age they take a lot of maintenance and up keep. Mr. O'Neal said that it seems to him that the taxpayers have spoken and that the people of Camden who voted for this SPLOST project want this renovation project done.

Approval of the minutes April 15th, 2003 and, April 22nd 2003 called meeting:
Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted unanimously to approve the minutes noting that the letter of resignation that Mrs. Penny Woodard gave to Chairman Rainer and the quote that Commissioner Feller gave to the press would be attached to the minutes. The request was made by Commissioner Feller.

The motion carried

REPORTS:

BOARD CALENDAR: MAY/JUNE

Connie Smith read the board calendar for May & June 2003
The Commissioners added two meetings for May
May 19th, 2003 Budget work session

May 22nd, 2003 Called Meeting/Executive Session/Personnel
The Commissioners voted on the two meetings at the, end of the Commission Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Tax Refunds

1. Patricia Peck-1979 Cadillac
2. Earl & Lisa Scherbarth

Motion made by Commissioner Feller, seconded by Commissioner Berry and voted unanimously to adjust these tax refunds back to the City of Kingsland and recover all monies owed to the County by the City of Kingsland.

The motion carried

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approval of request from Judge Amanda Williams for \$ 20,000 to fund Camden County Drug Court Program

Motion made by Commissioner Feller, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes and voted unanimously to approve the request by Judge Williams.

Commissioner Berry addressed the public attending the meeting about how the funds are appropriated, the Sheriffs \$50,000 comes from drug seized assets, the County's \$20,000 comes from a surcharge that the county places on fines and forfeitures in felony court that is designated for this type of request, and, the offenders themselves will be paying for drug court and there are no taxpayers dollars used to fund this program.

The motion carried

b. Opening Date of the New Courthouse

Chairman Rainer said Commissioner Berry wanted this on the agenda for discussion. Commissioner Berry said there is no way the Courthouse Project would be ready by July 1st, 2003. October 1st, 2003 would be a more realistic date. The drainage easement problem has still not been resolved and Commissioner Berry would like to give the employees that will be in the new Courthouse some guidance as to a more realistic date. Commissioner Berry still wanted to have a date set for open house where the community could walk through the Courthouse to see what they spent their money on. Motion made by Commissioner Berry, seconded by Commissioner Feller and voted unanimously to set an opening date of October 1st, 2003 and to revisit the issue again in August 2003.

The motion carried

c. Temporary assignment of the Commission Clerk duties

Motion made by Commissioner Herrin, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes and voted unanimously to appoint Connie Smith to temporarily handle the Clerks duties.

The motion carried

d. Request to repair roof in the Commission Building

Motion made by Commissioner Herrin, seconded by Commissioners Rhodes and voted unanimously to repair the roof in the Commission Building using SPLOST funds for renovation on the building unless the cost exceeded the Policy on Purchasing to put a project out for bid depending on the amount of money to be spent.

The motion carried

e. Planning Commission Business

Mallory Horne: Tower Subdivision lot Request

Laura D. Weston: Request to rezone her property

Matt Jordon: Request to rezone his property

Chip Drury: Development of a Subdivision Request

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted unanimously to approve the first four requests. Mr. Chip Drury wanted to make some changes on the Subdivision plat and asked that his request be tabled. Motion made by Commissioner Herrin, seconded by Commissioner Feller and voted unanimously to table Mr. Chip Drury's request until the issue is brought before the board at a later time for discussion.

The motion carried

f. Approval of a 15 year Road and Bridge Plan

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin, and voted 4 to 1 to approve the 15 year Road and Bridge Plan.

Mr. Rhodes-Yea

Mr. Herrin-Yea

Mr. Rainer-Yea

Mr. Berry-Yea

Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

g. Approval of Old Courthouse Renovations

Motion by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin to go ahead with the Courthouse renovations and voted 3 to 2

Mr. Rhodes-Yea

Mr. Herrin-Yea

Mr. Rainer-Yea

Mr. Berry-Nay

Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

Commissioner Berry wanted to explain why he voted no, and speaking for the taxpayers of Camden County, Mr. Berry stated that he, personally, would like to have a new house, but that he could not afford a new house. He could not afford a new house because it would cost him more on payments, more on maintenance, more on insurance and more on taxes. Commissioner Berry asked the other Commission Board Members if renovating the Old Courthouse was necessary at this time. Commissioner Berry understood the building was old and in need of repair, but Commissioner Berry's main question to the

Commission Board was can the county afford repairs now? Commissioner Berry stated that the county has at least two lean years ahead of them, maybe three, but at least two. Commissioner Berry said that in the year 2007 or 2008, if revenues pick back up, the county should be in better financial status and they could revisit this issue then. Commissioner Berry said the county must control its spending. Mr. Berry suggested to the Commission Board to use 100,000 dollars or whatever it would take to make temporary repairs to the Old Courthouse and the Commission building next to the courthouse, repairs that would last at least three to four years. Commissioner Berry stated that then the county could give back 3.2 to 3.3 million dollars to the taxpayer in a tax rebate which at the current millage rate would be approximately 4 mils of taxes that the county could space out over the next three years. Commissioner Berry said when the county first talked of remodeling the Old Courthouse and adding to it, he advocated the building be built. But, at that time, which was 2001, Durango Paper Company was still producing paper and life was a whole lot different at that time. There was no State budget crisis and other crisis that are in place now. Commissioner Berry hoped that Commissioner Feller, who made a pledge to the people of District 4, would feel the same way because Commissioner Feller's ads pronounced tax relief for the people of Camden County. Commissioner Berry said he would like to see the County Commission put this renovation project on hold for now and give the taxpayer some tax relief. The National level is talking about tax cuts to stimulate the economy and Camden County needs to talk about tax cuts. By putting this project on hold, the county could provide tax relief. Commissioner Berry stated that the Commissioners could declare that this project is not viable at this time. The Commission could rebate the money over the next few years. The issue could, if need be, be put on the SPLOST VI ballot in the year 2008 and let the people of Camden County vote on it then.

h. Approval of the Re-organization Recommendations

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted 3 to 2, to approve the re-organization recommendations.

Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Rainer-Yea
Mr. Berry-Nay
Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

i. Tax Refunds (new business)

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted unanimously to accept the tax refunds.

The motion carried

j. Road Department Business

1. Acceptance of Right-of-Way Deed for Price Road

Motion by Commissioner Rainer, seconded by Commission Herrin and voted 4 to 1 to accept the right-of-way deed for Price Road

Mr. Rainer-Yea

Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Berry-Yea
Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

2. Acceptance of Hickory Bluff Retreat Subdivision

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted 4 to 1 to accept Hickory Bluff Retreat Subdivision.

Mr. Rainer-Yea
Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Berry-Yea
Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

3. Approval of P & A Engineering for Old Jefferson Road Phase II Road Design

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted 4 to 1 to approve P&A Engineering for, the Old Jefferson Road Phase II Road Design.

Mr. Rainer-Yea
Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Berry-Yea
Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

4. Approval for Southern Concrete Construction to repair three bridges
a. Billyville Road
b. Old Dixie Highway
c. Owens Ferry Road

Motion by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted 4 to 1 to approve Southern Concrete Construction to repair three bridges

Mr. Rainer-Yea
Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Berry-Yea
Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

5. Approval of drainage easement from Mrs. Nora Gibbs-Robinson Hill Road.

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted 4 to 1 to approve the drainage easement from Mrs. Nora Gibbs on Robinson Hill Road.

Mr. Rainer-Yea
Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Berry-Yea
Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

6. Approval of borrow pit lease from Robert H. Aton of Cavader Harrell Road

Motion by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted 4 to 1 to approve the borrow pit lease from Robert H. Aton.

Mr. Rainer-Yea
Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Berry-Yea
Mr. Feller-Nay

The motion carried

k. Budget Resolutions

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted unanimously to accept the resolution.

Mr. Rainer-Yea
Mr. Herrin-Yea
Mr. Berry-Yea
Mr. Rhodes-Yea
Mr. Feller-Yea

The motion carried

l. Library Board Nominations

Jackie McCarthy
Peggy Reed
Melinda Mullis
Michael Wooden

Motion by Commissioner Berry, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes and voted unanimously for these four individuals to serve an additional two years when their terms expire June 30th, 2003

The motion carried

m. Planning & Zoning Nomination

Joseph V. Tinelli

Motion made by Commissioner Feller, seconded by Commissioner Berry and voted unanimously to allow Joseph V. Tinelli to serve on the planning board immediately due to the resignation of Ann Stoddard.

The motion carried

n. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted unanimously to adjourn.

Motion to set a meeting for May 19th, 2003 and for May 22nd, 2003

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Commissioner Herrin and voted unanimously to have a Budget Work Session on May 19th, 2003 and a called meeting concerning personnel on May 22nd, 2003.

The motion carried

Respectfully Submitted

David L. Rainer
Chairman

Constance E. Smith
Clerk