

**CAMDEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2004 6:00 PM  
WOODBINE, GEORGIA**

A regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, April 6, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the Camden County Courthouse, Woodbine, Georgia.

**Present:** Chairman David L. Rainer; Vice-Chairman E.B. Herrin, Jr.; Commissioner Preston Rhodes; Commissioner Stephen L. Berry; Commissioner Sanford S. Feller; County Manager Charles D. Akridge; and County Attorney Brent Green.

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

Reverend Tommy Sikes, Burnt Fort Baptist Church, delivered the invocation.

Chairman Rainer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll call indicated all Commissioners were present.

**AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes to add to New Business Item P, *Durango Litigation*; Item Q, *Joint Resolution in Support of Base Realignment and Closure Community Action Group*; and Item R, *Request from the Road Department to hire a mechanic*.

The motion carried unanimously.

**WORK SESSION:**

**A. Base Realignment and Closure Committee (BRAC) – Mr. Jim Wells and Mr. Walt Natzic**

Mr. Jim Wells explained the BRAC establishment and process and the local community action group's efforts. Mr. Wells stated professional help is needed in preparing a clear presentation of Kings Bay's unutilized assets, and a greater presence is needed in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Walt Natzic stressed the importance of community support in this matter, and proposed a joint resolution for the Commissioners' consideration.

Chairman Rainer expressed his support for the Committee, and Commissioner Feller voiced his concerns in connection with encroachment onto the Base.

**B. Retirement Proposal for Fiscal Year 2004-2005 – Fire Chief Danny Daniels, Chairman, Retirement Committee**

Mr. Daniels explained a new retirement proposal for Fiscal Year 2004-2005 that would promote an employee contribution and employer match program. Mr. Daniels advised the Retirement Committee would propose a 6% base with 50% match, and the County's exposure would be 8% maximum.

**C. Final Report for the Coastal Incentive Cycle V Grant - Director of Environmental Health, Stuart Stevens**

Stuart Stevens, Director of Environmental Health, explained the work performed and the findings under the Coastal Incentive Cycle V Grant in connection with water well and septic inventory for Camden County.

**D. Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority –  
Commissioner Berry**

In connection with the March 22, 2004, Public Hearing regarding healthcare services and the recent newspaper advertisements by Southeast Georgia Health System, Chairman Rainer advised a Resolution inviting the Authority into Camden County was discussed at the September 24, 1992, Commissioners' meeting. However, the September 24<sup>th</sup> minutes indicated the matter was tabled until September 29<sup>th</sup>. Although a copy of the signed Resolution was found in the September 29<sup>th</sup> meeting folder, and the agenda indicated the Commissioners did meet, but it is unclear if a vote on the Resolution was taken because there are no minutes of the meeting.

Chairman Rainer said he spoke with the Chairman at that time, Daniel Williams, and Mr. Williams stated the September 29<sup>th</sup> meeting was held and the Resolution was adopted.

Commissioner Feller stated he made numerous requests to have a third public hearing at a convenient time and place for the public so that he could hear from the public on this matter.

Commissioner Berry stated has concerns with the Glynn County hospital being a tax exempt corporation making a profit in this county and not paying property taxes, in addition to access to healthcare.

Vice-Chairman Herrin stated he is very concerned with the amount of time patients were waiting to see emergency room doctors.

Commissioner Rhodes stated he wants Camden County to have quality, accessible healthcare.

Susan Bates, Public Relations Director for Southeast Georgia Health System asked that her statement be included in the minutes:

*My name is Susan Bates and I am the Public Relations Director for Southeast Georgia Health System, I also serve as the official Health System spokesperson. It is in that capacity that I appear before you, the Camden County Commissioners, tonight.*

*I have been authorized by Linda Pinson, Chairperson of the Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority, W.H. Gross, Chairman of the Camden Campus Advisory Board, Gary R. Colberg, President and Chief Executive Officer of Southeast Georgia Health System and Howard Sepp, Vice President and Administrator of the Camden Campus to present the Camden County Commissioners with the following statement:*

*During the March 22, 2004 Camden County Commissioners meeting, as we understand it, questions were asked concerning access to care, physician recruitment, construction of a new hospital in Camden County, the possibility of Camden County representation on the Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority, and, as a new concern, the issue of the Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority being in violation of state laws requiring a Camden County invitation to Glynn County to own and operate a hospital in Camden County.*

*The mission of Southeast Georgia Health System is to provide quality, cost-effective patient care, educational programs and to promote health and wellness services to meet the needs of the people and communities in which we serve.*

*In Camden County we are executing our mission in many ways, every day. As a not-for-profit organization, we re-invest in people, programs, services, facilities and equipment. In the past three years we've increased Camden Campus employee wages, for a total of \$1.25 million. This is money spent in Camden County.*

*Since 2001, new equipment -on-site- and committed to purchase at the Camden Campus has exceeded \$3.8 million, including state-of-the-art imaging and diagnostic equipment.*

*At the Camden Campus, anyone who needs health care has been provided healthcare. No one is ever turned away. Dollars spent on indigent care have increased five-fold since 2001 and expected to exceed \$1.5 million in 2004.*

*When Durango employees lost their jobs and benefits, the Coastal Medical Access Project in conjunction with Southeast Georgia Health System and volunteer physicians, Camden Campus established a medical clinic to treat them at no cost. Through collegial support a MedBank was established to provide assistance to get patients their medicines and to navigate the necessary, cumbersome paperwork. The free clinic and MedBank program has impacted hundreds of lives in Camden County and established better access to patients in need. The program has now been expanded to reach far beyond former Durango employee who fell through the cracks of insurance and financial issues and many more Camden County residents now utilize the services.*

*In the past year physician recruitment has been the primary focus of the Administrator in Camden. A number of primary care physicians and their families have toured our community and our hospital in order to make the right decisions for the establishment of a long and successful medical staff practice and to assure they are making the right choice for quality of life for their families. To date, two new primary care physicians have already moved into our community and another five have made commitments to be here by the end of the summer 2004.*

*We are more fortunate than most communities in Georgia in that our hospital is just 10 years old. But as with any and all other facilities we continue to age, and a plan to repair or replace our hospital is a top priority. At the March 22<sup>nd</sup> County Commissioner meeting our Administrator, Howard Sepp, presented an update and drawings of the plan to expand. Mr. Sepp is working through the process of expansion with the help of department managers and physicians to make every assurance that at the completion of the expansion project and that the newly re-designed Camden Campus will stand the test of time.*

*I want to take a moment to speak about our board members. The members of the Camden Campus Advisory Board spend a great deal of time, volunteering, every month in an effort to make sure that the very best health care is available to the citizens of Camden County. In his position as Chairman, Mr. Bill Gross attends the monthly meetings of the Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority. The Chairman of the Camden Campus Finance Committee, Mr. Gary Willis, attends all regular monthly Finance Committee Meetings at the Health System level. As they both can tell you, every request made by the medical staff and management of the Camden Campus has met with positive approval by the Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority.*

*The question about Camden County representation on the Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority was asked in the February 2003 Camden County Commissioners Meeting. As a follow-up to that question, legal counsel researched the Georgia Hospital Authority Law and discovered that the current law does not allow for that type of relationship between counties. Provisions were placed preventing elected officials from serving on any Hospital Authority. Also, as a reminder, the Hospital Authority Law affects every Hospital Authority in the state of Georgia, not just Glynn County. Any changes or amendments to that law must take place on state level through a change in legislation and will affect every other county in the state that has a Hospital Authority.*

*And lastly, in the March 22<sup>nd</sup> Camden County Commissioners meeting, the question about the existence of an invitation by Camden County to the Glynn-Brunswick Memorial Hospital Authority to own and operate a hospital in Camden*

*County was asked. As documents published in area-wide newspapers on Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> showed, we were most certainly invited.*

*We feel we have been straightforward and available to answer all questions asked by the Camden County Commissioners. Once again, our hospital is not for sale. Our desire is to continue to focus on the 24-hour, 365-day business of providing the highest level of health care possible to the citizens of Camden County.*

*We respectfully enter these comments into the minutes of the April 6, 2004 Camden County Commissioners meeting.*

Craig Root addressed the Commissioners. He said he served on the original governing board of the hospital that was sold to Glynn County. Mr. Root advised that he was at both Commissioners' meetings in September, 1992, and his recollection of the adoption of the Resolution was exactly as Chairman Rainer stated.

#### **MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA:**

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin and voted unanimously to adopt the agenda as amended.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Feller to approve the March 16, 2004, regular meeting minutes and the March 22, 2004, public hearing minutes.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **REPORTS:**

##### **A. Calendar**

The April/May 2004 calendar was read.

##### **B. County Manager's Report**

Mr. Arkidge reported the following:

- The Courthouse Open House and Dedication will be held April 18, 2004, 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.
- The Harriett's Bluff repeater has been installed.
- The Flea Hill wells have been installed, and the aerator and holding tanks are on site. Mr. Sapp expects to be completed in three (3) weeks.
- Quarterly budget review meetings will be scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The next Budget Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 P.M. at the Kingsland Annex.
- April 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. a G-8 Summit meeting will be held at Woodbine City Hall.
- An abandoned trailer along side Colerain road needs to be removed as it presents a safety hazard. The owner has been verbally notified to move the trailer, but has failed to do so. Mr. Akridge requested the Commissioners' direction to give the owner five (5) days written notice to move the trailer, and if the owner failed to do, the County would move it to the landfill. It was the consensus of the Commissioners to proceed with the removal of the trailer in this manner.

Commissioner Feller requested the following items be placed on the next agenda:

- Resolution regarding the expired agreement with the PSA and the local governments; and
- Policy development for water systems

Commissioner Feller also provided a copy of the City of St. Marys salary and benefits information for Fire Chief Danny Daniels.

Commissioner Berry, and Commissioner Rhodes as Chairman of the PSA, advised all parties involved with the PSA agreement are satisfied and in agreement with the current operation of the PSA.

#### **RECESS:**

Chairman Rainer called a five (5) minute recess at 7:35 p.m., and he called the meeting back to order at 7:40 p.m.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Jack Sutton, resident of Harriett's Bluff, discussed the incompleteness of the Harriett's Bluff playground and requested the Commissioners to look at freezing property taxes for senior citizens.
- Kevin Carroll of "Open MRI of Camden" stated his concerns with the hospital installing open MRI equipment. Mr. Carroll believes the hospital would be better served in installing other equipment or in doing building improvements.
- Rich Gamble, candidate for Sheriff, addressed the Commissioners regarding an incident involving the Sheriff in 2002 and the use of the Sheriff's county vehicle. Chairman Rainer and Vice-Chairman Herrin advised Mr. Gamble that the Commissioners' meeting was not the proper venue in which to pursue his political agenda.
- Judy Williams Mason, former management employee of Camden Medical Center, requested the Commissioners to pursue the hospital issues further. Ms. Mason stated the hospital authority continues to take money from the Camden hospital and invest it in the Brunswick hospital. Additionally, Ms. Mason told the Commissioners that the hospital does not take care of its employee.
- Walt Natzic, St. Marys, addressed the Commissioners regarding attendance of Destination Camden meetings as well as meeting with the Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Coastal Management Program to discuss a "Smart Growth Audit." Chairman Rainer advised Mr. Natzic that the Commissioners' meetings schedule conflicts with other scheduled meetings at times, but the Commissioners make every effort to attend as many functions as possible.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. Tax Release Application: Cheryl Taylor, Point Peter LLP, Maggie S. Drury, and Earl & Betty Smith**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin and voted unanimously to approve the Tax Release Applications of Cheryl Taylor, Point Peter LLP, Maggie S. Drury, and Earl and Betty Smith.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**B. In Lieu of Rent in Public Buildings Agreement with the Camden County Department of Family and Children Services**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin and voted unanimously to approve the In Lieu of Rent Agreement with the Camden County Department of Family and Children Services for a twelve (12) month period.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**C. City of St. Marys Intergovernmental Agreement for Animal Control Services**

Vice-Chairman Herrin made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes to accept the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of St. Marys for animal control services.

Commissioner Berry questioned if the Agreement's language was changed to reflect that should the agreement be cancelled, the City's equipment would be returned if said equipment is still in the County's custody. Mr. Akridge advised it had not been changed.

Commissioner Berry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Feller and voted unanimously to table the matter until the language was corrected.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Berry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Feller and voted unanimously to continue with the Agreement previously in place until the new Agreement could be entered into as corrected.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**D. Satilla River Soil and Water Conservation District request for funds**

Mr. Akridge advised the Conservation District is seeking \$200.00 in assistance from Camden County that would be paid from the Special Appropriations Fund.

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin and voted unanimously to provide the Satilla River Soil & Water Conservation \$200.00 from the Special Appropriations Fund.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**E. Camden County Road Department's request to purchase Lot 44, Woodland Trails Subdivision for drainage improvements**

Chairman Rainer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Feller and voted unanimously to authorize the Road Department to purchase Lot 44, Woodland Trails Subdivision for drainage improvements.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**F. Accept right-of-way deed for Kayla Street from Dwight R. McCollough**

Chairman Rainer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes and voted unanimously to accept Item F, Accept right-of-way deed for Kayla Street from Dwight R. McCollough, and Item G, Accept right-of-way deed for Kayla Street from E. L. Kerry, Sr.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**G. Accept right-of-way deed for Kayla Street from E. L. Kerry, Sr.**

Item G considered under Item F.

**H. Accept right-of-way deed and drainage easement for First Street from White Sands, LLC**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin to accept the right-of-way deed and drainage easement for First Street from White Sands, LLC.

**So voted, 4 to 1**

Chairman Rainer – Yea

Vice-Chairman Herrin – Yea

Commissioner Rhodes – Yea

Commissioner Berry – Yea

Commissioner Feller – Nay

**The motion carried.**

**I. Accept right-of-way deed to Old Jefferson Road from Proctor Land Company**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Chairman Rainer to accept the right-of-way deed to Old Jefferson Road from Proctor Land Company.

**So voted, 4 to 1**

Chairman Rainer – Yea

Vice-Chairman Herrin – Yea

Commissioner Rhodes – Yea

Commissioner Berry – Yea

Commissioner Feller – Nay

**The motion carried.**

**J. Request from the Tax Assessor's office to advertise employment to fill the vacant Senior Property Appraiser position**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Chairman Rainer to authorize the advertisement for employment of Senior Property Appraiser.

Commissioner Berry stated although a hiring freeze is currently in place, each request to fill a vacancy needed to be considered individually, and positions critical to the day to day operations of the County needed to be filled. Commissioner Berry said this is such a position.

**So voted unanimously, the motion carried.**

**K. Approval of bid for the Facilities Maintenance Building/S.P.L.O.S.T. Project**

Facilities Maintenance Manager, Harvey Amerson, advised W.H. Gross was the low bidder for the Facilities Maintenance Building S.P.L.O.S.T. project in the amount of \$349,725.00, and he recommended the Commissioners accept this bid.

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin and voted unanimously to award the Facilities Maintenance Building S.P.L.O.S.T. project bid to W.H. Gross in the amount of \$349,725.00.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**L. Resolution regarding Quality Growth Resource Team**

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes to adopt the Resolution in Support of a Quality Growth Resource Team Visit.

After some discussion, it was the consensus of the Commissioners that the County would not fund any money at this time, and if funding was needed by the Team, the Team would have to come before the Commissioners.

**So voted unanimously, the motion carried.**

**M. Acceptance of \$3,000 from Citizens State Bank to upgrade Annadale Subdivision**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Feller to accept from the Citizens State Bank the Annadale Subdivision 60' right-of-way and the sum of \$3,000.00 to provide culverts and upgrade of drainage in that subdivision.

**So voted unanimously, the motion carried.**

**N. Cleaning services for new Courthouse**

Mr. Akridge recommended the Commissioners authorize the advertisement for employment of a custodian for the daily cleaning of the new Courthouse. Mr. Akridge advised the cost would be approximately \$4,500.00 for the remainder of the current fiscal year, and would be paid from the Facilities Maintenance budget.

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes and voted unanimously to authorize the advertisement for employment of a custodian for the new Courthouse at the cost of \$4,500.00 to be paid from the Facilities Maintenance budget.

**So voted unanimously, the motion carried.**

**O. Consideration of providing matching funding for the Base Realignment and Closure Committee – Commissioner Feller**

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Berry to commit \$50,000.00 to the Base Realignment and Closure Committee (BRAC) for the committee's overall budget.

Commissioner Berry advised he supports the committee. However, he asked Mr. Natzic, who was representing the BRAC committee, to consider this request carefully. Commissioner Berry advised Mr. Natzic that once the BRAC committee accepted the public funds, it would subject the committee to formal bid requests and the Open Records Act. Commissioner Berry did not believe the BRAC committee was ready for that commitment. Mr. Natzic agreed with Commissioner Berry.

Commissioner Feller withdrew the motion.

**P. Litigation of the Durango Bankruptcy**

County Attorney Brent Green briefed the Commissioners on the Complaint filed by Durango Georgia Paper Company against the Camden County Board of Tax Assessors and City of St. Marys and the implications thereof. Mr. Green recommended authorization allowing the law firm of Christian & Steinmetz to assist in defending this matter in bankruptcy court.

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin and voted unanimously to authorize Mr. Green to take all steps necessary to properly defend the lawsuit of *Durango Georgia Paper Company vs. Camden County Board of Tax Assessors and City of St. Marys*.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**Q. Joint Resolution in Support of Base Realignment and Closure Community Action Group**

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Rhodes and voted unanimously to adopted the Joint Resolution in Support of Base Realignment and Closure Community Action Group

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**R. Request from the Road Department to hire a mechanic**

Commissioner Feller made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes and voted unanimously to authorize the Road Department's request to advertisement for employment of mechanic.

Commissioner Berry stated although a hiring freeze is currently in place, each request to fill a vacancy needed to be considered individually, and positions critical to the daily operations of the County needed to be filled. Commissioner Berry said this was such a position.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion made by Commissioner Rhodes, seconded by Vice-Chairman Herrin and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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David L. Rainer  
Chairman

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Jodi Gregory  
Executive Assistant/Clerk