

**MINUTES OF THE CRISP COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MARCH 14, 2017**

OPENING CEREMONIES

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sam Farrow at 9:00 a.m. in Room 305 of the Crisp County Government Center. Commissioners present were Authur James Nance, Wallace Mathis, Larry Felton, and J. R. Dowdy, III. Others present were County Administrator Tom Patton, County Attorney Rick Lawson, Finance Director Sherrie Leverett, and Clerk Linda Finch. Carl Gamble gave the invocation and Administrator Patton led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. Chairman Farrow welcomed all in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Felton to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 14, 2017, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.

NEW TAX COMMISSIONER DEBORAH LOFTON'S COMMENTS

Chairman Farrow invited Tax Commissioner Deborah Lofton, the first black Constitutional Officer of Crisp County, to speak. Ms. Lofton thanked Chairman Farrow for the opportunity to speak; she stated that she is still overjoyed with her new position and thanked everyone for their overwhelming support given to her. She advised that she wanted to let the commissioners know that she would like to close the Tax Commissioners' office at 4:45 p.m. every day so that the staff could check up and be out of the office by 5:00 p.m. every day. She stated that there is a Section Code that says the office has to be open 40 hours a week and they are open 45 hours per week. She will advertise and would like to begin doing this April 1st. Chairman Farrow stated that he has been getting a lot of positive comments with the job she is doing and advised that if she needed anything from the commissioners she is welcome to come before the commissioners at any time.

APPROVE NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH PROCLAMATION

Administrator Patton read the National Donate Life Month Proclamation which proclaims April as Donate Life Month. **By common consent, Commissioners approved the National Donate Life Month Proclamation.**

APPROVE REQUEST FROM TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Sean Sammons, Chief Tax Assessor, advised that he has a few hearing officer appeals that are complex in nature. The group appealing has a third party representative, and when they come to the hearings it is not an argument of capitalization rates or discounted cash flows, they throw other curve balls and distract from the matter at hand. He stated he has been advised to have legal representation during the hearing officer appeals. He is recommending Hall Booth Smith, P.C., law firm from Tifton, whom the Tax Assessor's Office has used in the past in these type appeals. He advised that they have three low income apartment complexes who receive tax credits; the total value appraisal differences between the county's figures and what they have returned in value is \$1,359,672.00 and if you multiply that times our

assessment rate at 40% is \$543,868.80 which would amount to over \$22,000.00 in taxes a year and that would be locked in for three years. Nick Kinsley with the Hall Booth Smith was present if they have any questions about the firm or the process. **Motion was made by Mr. Nance to approve the proposal for Contract For Representation between Hall Booth Smith, P.C. and the Tax Assessor's, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A DESIGNATED LOCAL TRUCK ROUTE

Administrator Patton reported that some time ago Joe Wright Drive used to be a truck traffic route to keep traffic off of 7th Street and it was undesignated by the Georgia Department of Transportation; it needs to be designated again. He stated that the truckers are still using Joe Wright Drive but they are getting tickets so DOT has agreed that we can re-designate that back to a trucker's route but they need a Resolution from the county. The City has a Resolution for their portion and the County needs to do a Resolution for our part of the road. Carl Gamble, Public Works Director, read the Resolution Authorizing a Designated Local Truck Route authorizing approximately 1.57 miles of GDOT Road #65607 (from U.S. 41, State Route 7 to Cordele City Limits), 11th Street or Joe Wright Drive as a Local Trucking Route and stating that all ordinances or resolution or parts thereof in conflict are repealed. **Motion was made by Mr. Mathis to adopt the Resolution as read, seconded by Mr. Nance, motion carried unanimously.**

SHERIFF HANCOCK'S COMMENTS

Sheriff Hancock reported that they have been busy last month transporting 74 prisoners to the court as they were running two courtrooms this term, and they have already been informed that they are going to run two courtrooms in the May term as well because of the number of people, 203, incarcerated in the jail this morning. He invited everyone to the open house they are having at the Detention Facility on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. He advised that they are expanding their work release program and talking with Superior Court Judges about having some alternative sentencing; they are now sending one inmate to the bus shop everyday working, cleaning and maintaining buses. They are also working with the athletic director of the school system for inmates to clean fields after some of the football, baseball and soccer games. The county saves a lot by utilizing the inmates in these areas. He brought a check for \$53,000 for inmate housing and commissary at the jail last month, and advised that the Chief Superior Court Judge has written a letter recommending more manpower in the courthouse. They also have a mediation meeting planned tomorrow in Albany where they are going to ask to redo the warning siren that is out on Tremont Road. Administrator Patton thanked the sheriff and his staff for the excellent work they did during the last storm we had; he also thanked the other departments in the county.

RATIFY GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE EASEMENT AGREEMENT

Administrator Patton reported that we need to ratify the Georgia DOT temporary construction and easement agreement of the bridge over Lake Blackshear as there were enough changes that we had to re-sign the paperwork and we were under a short timeline on this. **Motion was made by Mr. Nance to ratify the Georgia DOT Temporary Construction and Maintenance Easement Agreement, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVE CONTRACT BETWEEN DOT AND CRISP COUNTY FOR AIRPORT LOCALIZER PROJECT

Mrs. Leverett reported that she has the contract for the Airport Localizer Project; everything is ready to go now. It is a localizer replacement at the airport; \$159,775.00 will be paid by the Federal Government, \$8,410.00 by Crisp County and \$8,409.00 by the State of Georgia. **Motion was made by Mr. Nance to approve the Contract between DOT and Crisp County for the Airport Localizer Project, seconded by Mr. Mathis, motion carried unanimously.** Administrator Patton advised that we have been working many years to get a terminal at the airport and normally terminals are not included in the Capital Improvement Plan but this time they said if we could come up with a 25% match they would fund 75% of the terminal provided we get the three phases of safety items complete. Chairman Farrow advised that he thinks we need to look at some type of regional effect of the airport because people do not realize how that airport affects surrounding areas. Administrator Patton stated that he has been asked by an ACCG to represent the State of Georgia at a conference in Savannah that is being hosted by the National Association of County Commissioners and the National Transportation Board; their focus is regional approach of transportation and they look at us because of what we are doing with the Inland Port and TSPLOST.

RATIFY CASH TRANSFER TO EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFIT FUND

Mrs. Leverett reported that our self-insurance health fund has been struggling lately and in order to pay claims we had to make an additional cash injection into the fund to keep it in the black. They decided to transfer \$300,000.00 into the plan, the county's share of that based on our percentage of participation in the plan was \$213,723.52. We had to go ahead and make the transfer so we would not have to hold claims. She needs to ratify that transaction. **Motion was made by Mr. Nance to ratify a cash transfer to the Employee Health Benefit Fund of \$213,732.52, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVE GCIC SECURITY POLICY FOR FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mrs. Leverett advised that she has for their consideration a Policies and Procedure Policy for the Finance Department that is required now through the GBI for GCIC background check. She advised that about six months ago, the GBI, GCIC Division, contacted them and advised us that they could no longer use the Sheriff's Department to do background checks for Alcohol Licenses; they would have to do those themselves and it has been quite a process with them to get set up. She stated that the Sheriff's Department has this policy and they just changed the name on their policy for the GCIC. **Motion was made by Mr. Mathis to approve the GCIC Security Policy for Finance Department, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs. Leverett reported that the report shows the monthly and YTD activity for the General and three major Special Revenue Funds. Combined, February activity brings YTD totals to \$12.9 million in revenues and \$11.1 million in expenditures providing a positive 12% revenue over expenditure balance of \$1.9 million at the end of eight months of this fiscal year. To date, the County has received approximately 97% of the 2016 Ad Valorem property tax revenue projections. (\$6,040,869 of \$6,242,100). In the Water Fund, YTD revenue totals to \$466,108 and YTD expenditures of \$310,330 leaves the Water Fund with a net income of \$155,778. Customer usage billed for the month was 5.7

million gallons and the USDA Bonds are current at \$1.4 million. In the Landfill Fund, February accruals bring YTD totals to \$1,136,748 in revenue and \$950,136 in expenditures increasing the YTD net gain to \$186,611. The total tonnage received for the month of February was 4,696.41 tons. The GEFA Loans are current at \$3.3 million. In the cash on hand report, we ended the month with just over \$11 million in the General and Special Revenue Funds; \$4.3 million in the proprietary funds; and \$7.6 million in the SPLOST funds giving us a county wide total of \$23 million. There was no change in the 2000 SPLOST Issue as we still have approximately \$114,000 remaining in this issue. In the 2005 SPLOST Issue, total expenditures to date of \$22.1 million leaves us with \$2.6 million to complete the projects budgeted under this issue. Distribution no. 61 in the amount of \$279,743 for the 2011 SPLOST Issue gives us the second consecutive month with an increase. It is actually up just over 6% and brings total collections to \$19.7 million; the monthly average is down to \$323,262, which still leaves us virtually breaking even on projects budgeted here. To date, we have expended \$18.5 million from this issue. Following that is the detail list of all the SPLOST Expenditures for the month; we spent a total of \$491,780 in Special Local Option Sales Tax dollars during the month. Projects benefiting were the Airport, County Roads, Public Works, Sanitation/Solid Waste, Recreation, the Darton Project and the Cities of Cordele and Arabi. Just like SPLOST, this month's distribution of \$134,272 in LOST revenue is up over 6%. In the CDBG Revolving Loan Fund monthly report, we ended the month with a total outstanding balance of \$2.5 million for all these accounts. The last report is the revenues by fund and expenditures by department preliminary report which shows the expended percentage of appropriations for each individual department and the total for each fund. As of February 28th, all departments and divisions should be at 67% of their annual allowances. Overall, the preliminary numbers indicate the General Fund and Special Revenue Funds at 66%, the Water Fund at 50% and the Landfill Fund at 55%.

APPROVE AMENDMENT TO 5311 TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT FOR 2017

Mrs. Leverett reported that she received an amendment to the 2017 5311 Transportation Contract that came in yesterday and wanted to get it sent back as soon as she could. She advised that basically they have added some language to several amendments to keep the county in compliance with the FTA regulations. **Motion was made by Mr. Nance to approve the Amendment to the 5311 Transportation Contract for 2017, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.**

UPDATE ON 2017 SPLOST REQUESTS

Mrs. Leverett reported that we are working on the 2017 SPLOST which will be on the November ballot; they have received all the requests from the agencies and departments and she has compiled a list of all the requests, which amount to \$46,089,355.00 and our revenue projections are at \$19 million, which leave a \$27,089,355.00 shortfall. We will continue to work on this with our directors and agencies and prioritize and bring back another list and maybe we can get it down to a number we can work on. There is a lot of need out there for SPLOST dollars and a lot of good projects that can be justified. Also, commissioners have to remember that the SPLOST Law says if a SPLOST project cannot be completed with SPLOST dollars, you have to complete the project out of the General Fund dollars.

GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Mr. Nance to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel and litigation, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried with all Commissioners agreeing to go into Executive Session.

COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Mr. Nance to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried with all Commissioners agreeing to come out of Executive Session.

APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY

Motion was made by Mr. Nance to appoint Mark Crenshaw and Angus Campbell to the Solid Waste Authority, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.

ON JOB TRAINING PROGRAM APPROVED

Motion was made by Mr. Nance to approve the On Job Training Program discussed last meeting, seconded by Mr. Mathis, motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN MEETING

Motion was made by Mr. Nance to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 a.m., seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.

Sam Farrow, Chairman

Tom Patton, Administrator