

**MINUTES OF THE CRISP COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MAY 11, 2021**

OPENING CEREMONIES

Chairman Sam N. Farrow, Jr. called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in Room 305 of the Crisp County Government Center, with Commissioners A. James Nance, Larry Felton, J. R. Dowdy, III, and Mark Crenshaw in attendance. Others present were County Administrator Clark Harrell, County Attorney Rick Lawson, Finance Director Sherrie Leverett and County Clerk Linda Finch. Rick Smarr gave the invocation and Administrator Harrell 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 April 13, 2021, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Sheriff Billy Hancock reported that their check to the commissioners for last month's inmate housing was round \$86,000, and the average daily population of the jail was 193. They patrolled 97,000 miles last month which averaged about \$.18 a mile, plus they are going to try to purchase a couple of cars with asset forfeiture funds as several cars have over 180,000 miles. Total calls going into the 911 Center last month was 7,107. Also, they added a person in the investigations division that will be in charge of intelligence to try to identify gang members in Cordele they know here through the District Attorney's Office, the Department of Corrections, and those who are on parole or probation, to see if we can't attack some of the smaller burglaries, thefts and entering in autos from a different angle. He advised that they are also assisting the city over the last couple of weekends with some parties in the city limits. Sheriff Hancock advised this is National Police Week and invited all to come to Pinecrest Baptist Church on Thursday night for a memorial service. They will be honoring Corporal Avery Hillman who passed away last year.

STATE CERTIFICATION RECOGNITION AWARD TO SHERRIF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Hancock advised that when he took office, one of his goals was to get the agency certified, and we were one of 23 sheriff's offices that are certificated throughout the state of Georgia; we have completed the certification again. Chuck Groover, Coordinator for the State Certification Program of Georgia, stated that he works for the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, and also he introduced Chief Michael Persley with the Albany Police Department, who is one of the District Representatives for the Georgia Chiefs and also the Vice-Chairman for the Georgia Review Committee, which is the final committee that reviews an agency before they are certified. Mr. Persley came today in support of the sheriff's office. Mr. Groover reported that this department was certified three years ago, this is their first re-certification and they have met and documented all 140 standards in this program. He presented the plaque to the sheriff's department signed by the Governor, President of Ga. Chief's, President of Ga. Sheriff's Association, Chairman of the Joint Review Committee, and the Executive Director of the Ga. Chief's. Sheriff Hancock thanked his employees for attaining this goal again, and also thanked the Chief's Association.

ADOPT PROCLAMATION 2021-006 NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Administrator Harrell read the Proclamation for National Police Week, which honors the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty while protecting communities and declares the week of May 9-15, 2021 as Police Week. **Motion was made by Mr. Felton to adopt the Proclamation 2021-006 National Police Week May 9-15, 2021, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.**

PRESENT PLAQUE TO LT. TAMMERA SEARS

Mr. Groover stated that they have another presentation. He stated that there is usually one person who keeps up with all the documentation and files, that is the person the sheriff chooses that they know is self-initiated, very detailed and task oriented, and can get the job done. This person that is the certification manager for the sheriff's department is Lt. Tammera Sears. She was thanked for a job well done.

WASTE MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION

Administrator Harrell reported that he has asked Steve Edwards, Account Manager with Waste Management, to talk with the commission about resolving the issues we are having with trash pickup in the county lately. Mr. Edwards advised that they have been through some bumpy times, we have a long history with the county and service has been good until the last few weeks. He stated that they are going through a labor shortage, like most companies are going through now; they are doing their best with what they have and with the post pandemic situation we are all faced with, which is extended unemployment benefits and stimulus checks. He advised that they have implemented hiring incentives, referrals and increased their wages; the good news is Crisp County is caught up right now. They believe they have turned the corner on this situation and will be back on track. He apologized to the county citizens, it has been a struggle trying their best to put temporary labor on the back of their trucks. He is going to leave several of his cards with his phone number on it, and advised that if residents call commissioners or the administrator with questions, to have them call his cell phone and he will be glad to answer any questions.

ADOPT PROCLAMATION 2021-005 EMS WEEK

Administrator Harrell read the Proclamation for EMS Week, recognizing the value and accomplishments of Emergency Medical Services providers by designating the week of May 16-22, 2021 as Emergency Medical Services Week. **Motion was made by Mr. Dowdy to adopt Proclamation 2021-005– EMS Week, seconded by Mr. Crenshaw, motion carried unanimously.** David Edwards, EMS Director, was present to accept the proclamation and thanked the commissioners for the support they receive.

PUBLIC HEARING – REVOLVING LOAN FUND APPLICATION

Administrator Harrell reported this is a public hearing to consider an application to the Crisp County Revolving Loan Fund. Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Administrator Harrell reported the application is from Swamp Queen Properties, LLC for a revolving loan for an amount up to \$100,000. The funds must generally be used to benefit low and moderate income persons or to aid locally owned business startups or expansions where a financial need has been demonstrated and is warranted. He asked for any comments for or against the Revolving Loan Fund Application; there were none. Chairman Farrow closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Administrator Harrell reported this is for proposed Text Amendments to the Land Development Code. The Text Amendments are simply the wording that is in the code; earlier this year we adopted a new Land Development Code. He advised that as we work our way through different scenarios that present themselves, we find things that need to be tweaked. Prior to updating this, you as a commission did not have the authority to issue any type of variances, that is why we want to update this so that when a citizen comes before the Board asking for a special use and a variance may be associated with their particular request. If we don't update it, then they have to go through the process of going to the Planning & Zoning Board, advertise again and then come back here so it just extends the amount of time in trying to help the citizens. One other update is to the Solar Ordinance, which basically says that solar can only be in Crisp County between five acres and one hundred acres and did not allow for larger solar developments; he thinks that needs to be updated, plus we have had a solar company look at Crisp County working through the power commission. Administrator Harrell asked if anyone wanted to speak in favor or against the proposed Text Amendments to the Land Development Code; there were none. Mrs. Youngblood advised that the variances will be only on rezoning and special use requests. Chairman Farrow closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FROM PAUL MILLER FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Administrator Harrell reported that we have a request from Paul Miller for a Special Use Permit for a residential, building mounted Solar Energy System. The property is zoned Rural Residential and is located at 919 Arabi Warwick Road. Mr. Miller reported this is to supplement what he is already consuming from the power commission, he will not be selling power to anyone. Chairman Farrow asked if anyone else wanted to speak for the request, there was none. He asked if anyone who wanted to speak against the request, there was none. Chairman Farrow closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING – REZONING REQUEST FROM REEVES CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Administrator Harrell reported that we have a request from Reeves Construction Company (with the property owners authorization) to rezone a parcel of property from GC (General Commercial) to RR (Rural Residential) for the purpose of a Gravel Pit, Topsoil Stripping or Borrow Pit for the construction of the widening of U.S. Hwy 280. The property is shown as 6.31 acres, Tract 2 on proposed plat. The property is located adjacent to and east of 2452 Hwy. 280 West. Mark Rischar, representative of Reeves Construction, advised that there company has the project on Hwy. 280 for a proposed Borrow Pit and the remaining property will be used for a storage yard and a field office. They request permission to begin proceeding with the field office so that they can apply to the DOT for their oversight of the project; the project will not be complete until 2023. Chairman Farrow asked if anyone wanted to speak for or against the project, there were none. He closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FROM REEVES CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Administrator Harrell reported that we have a request from Reeves Construction Company (with the property owner's authorization) for a Special Use Permit for the purpose of a proposed Gravel Pit, Topsoil Stripping or Borrow Pit to be used for the widening construction

of U.S. Hwy. 280. Property is currently zoned GC (General Commercial) with a requested application to be rezoned to RR (Rural Residential), and if the rezoning to RR is approved, then a Special Use Permit would be required for the proposed use. The property is shown on proposed plat as Tract 2 with 6.31 acres and is located east of 2452 U.S. Hwy. 280 West. Chairman Farrow asked if anyone wanted to speak for or against the request; there were none. He closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FROM REEVES CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Administrator Harrell reported that this request from Reeves Construction Company (with the property owner's authorization) is for a Special Use Permit for the purpose of a Construction Contractor, with machinery, equipment and storage area. The property is zoned GC (General Commercial) and is located east of 2452 Hwy. 280 West, and shown on proposed plat as Tract 1 with 6.72 acres. Chairman Farrow asked if anyone wanted to speak for or against the project; there were none. He closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FROM JONI NAPIER FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT AND FOR EXCEPTIONS TO THE REQUIREMENT OF A FAMILY CARE DWELLING

Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Administrator Harrell reported this a request from Joni Napier on behalf of Douglas Stanford for a Special Use Permit for a Family Care Dwelling. The property is zoned RR (Rural Residential) and is located at 373 Byrd's Mill Road. Also, the request for the following exceptions to the requirements of a Family Care Dwelling: 1) Special Exception Variance: request a double wide, with required Class B (single wide) mobile home, and 2) Special Exception Variance: locate the family care dwelling in front and on the south side of the main house, with required standard at least 20' to the rear of the main house. Joni Napier stated that she is asking special permission for the permit for the health care dwelling. Her father suffered a major stroke in 2018 and is unable to care for himself. They are trying to get him a place at her house so that she can help take care of him. The option they chose to locate the dwelling is in front and on the south side of the main house as this is the most cost effective way that they can accommodate him. With the double wide home, we were thinking that due to him being in the wheelchair and having to get in and out of a bigger bathroom and shower, that this would be necessary, but they have since found a single wide that would accommodate all of his handicaps, so that could meet the standard. Also, at the location of her property, the house is sitting at the posterior of the property with the well and septic tank near the property lines, so there is no way they can accommodate putting it 20' behind the home. On the south side of the house is a larger area and there is a second septic tank in that area and that is why they chose that side of the property to place the home. They appreciate commissioners hearing the need, and she hopes that they will find it merited for the sanity of human life and safety. Chairman Farrow asked if anyone else wanted to speak in favor of the request, and there was none. Chairman Farrow asked if anyone would like to oppose the request. William Smith, property owner adjacent and to the south of this property, advised that they are sympathetic with the situation and their main concern is if it goes through and is allowed to sit there, it will set a precedent for future families if they decide to move. He was told that this would only be a temporary placement. He advised that it is directly beside his house, and he feels like it will affect the value of his property, not to say that property is more important than someone's health, but he doesn't want this to be a long-term thing sitting there for years. He thinks there are other areas of the property that the home can be put instead of directly beside his house. He is not opposed to the family care dwelling, he is here to oppose the position of where it is proposed to be placed. Ken Smith advised that he had heard that they couldn't place the home in the back because of the well and septic back there, the water is there and it looks simple to hook

to the well and if they can't put another drain field in, they can put a septic tank in and put a pump in to pump water to the other area. I do not like the location of the mobile home, I don't live there but I do have a lot of invested time and effort there. We think there would be room on the north or east side of their property. Lee Jones advised that he is neutral to the situation, and he agreed not to oppose the request, but he does believe that there are better locations just as well than in this young man's front yard. He owns the property on the other side, and he doesn't have a problem with the home going closer to his property; there is just as much property on the north side as the south side of the house. This is not doing this young couple justice in his book, and he would like to see everybody get the same respect as the next person. Mrs. Napier advised that they have not had a percolation test on the back side of the property because they know it holds a lot of water and it would not meet the 20' setback; they were also going to put up an eight foot privacy fence. Mr. Jones advised that he would not oppose the property setback closer to his property. Chairman Farrow asked if there were any more comments, there were none. He closed the public hearing and advised that during the next month, hopefully we should have things worked out at the decision meeting.

ADOPT RESOLUTION 2021-004 – DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Administrator Harrell read Resolution 2021-004 which authorizes and designates the District Attorney's Office of the Cordele Judicial Circuit to offer the same benefit package to all employees of the DA's Office. **Motion was made by Mr. Nance to adopt Resolution 2021-004 – Regarding the District Attorney's Office, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVE HEALTH PLAN INSURANCE FOR FY22

Administrator Harrell reported that currently we have health insurance with Blue Cross/Blue Shield and were looking at an increase from 12-15%. Partner's Benefit Group, our broker, shopped around and found insurance with United Health Care, which is a 9% reduction from where we are at currently. Mrs. Leverett reported that going with United Health Care, employees will receive a reduction in their pay period cost for single coverage of \$3.48, employee and children coverage reduction will be \$48.43, employee and spouse coverage is the only tier that went up at \$26.48, and family cost will be reduced by \$.67. She advised that the coverages are equal, or a little better than what we have now in a couple of places. They have met with the power commission administration, and both agencies believe this is the best option at this time and recommend United Health Care. **Motion was made by Mr. Crenshaw to approve and implement insurance with United Health Care for county employees for Fiscal Year 2022, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVE REVOLVING LOAN FUND REQUEST

Administrator Harrell reported that the last item he has is the Revolving Loan Fund request that was made by Swamp Queen Properties; we had the public hearing this morning. The RLF Committee has met on the application, and the application is warranted and in order based on DCA rules and regulations. It is the recommendation of the committee that the Board adopt funding for this RLF in an amount up to \$100,000 with addition of seven low to moderate jobs. **Motion was made by Mr. Felton to approve the Revolving Loan Fund application of Swamp Queen Properties up to \$100,000 and adding seven jobs, seconded by Mr. Crenshaw, motion carried unanimously.**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs. Leverett reported that today's packet includes a preliminary report and executive summary on the major funds of the County as of April 30, 2021. The first report shows the monthly and YTD activity for the General and three major Special Revenue Funds; combined these funds are reporting YTD revenues of \$18.8 million and expenditures at \$16.8 million dropping YTD revenue over expenditure down to \$2,059,130. For the Water Fund, monthly revenues and expenditures bring YTD net income for this fund to \$186,254; the USDA Bonds are current at \$1.2 million. The Landfill Fund YTD net income is at \$245,436, and the GEFA Loans are current at \$1.5 million. In the cash on hand report, we ended the month with \$14.7 million in the General and Special Revenue Funds combined, \$7.2 million in the proprietary funds and \$6.1 million in the SPLOST & TSPLOST funds giving a county wide total of just over \$28 million. \$18.3 is restricted or reserved for special projects or uses. Next are the SPLOST reports, and there are no changes to the 2011 Issue as the balance remains at \$148,871 to complete the projects with this Issue. For the 2017 SPLOST Issue, Distribution No. 39 in the amount of \$425,089 is the largest monthly distribution received to date. It is up by 35.5% over this time last year, which did take a dive due to business closures and loss of sales during the onset of the pandemic. Actual expenditures and appropriations have now reached \$9.7 million. In the issue to date report on the 2012 TSPLOST revenues, this month's distribution of \$89,745 is also up about 30% over this time last year. Following that is an updated schedule on our L.O.S.T., which is up 35% from April of 2020. In the CDBG Revolving Loan Fund monthly report, we ended the month of April with a total outstanding balance of \$2.1 million for all these accounts. The final report is the revenues by fund and expenditures by department report for the period of July 2020 through April 2021. As of this report, all departments and divisions should be at or below 83% of their annual allowances. Overall, preliminary numbers show the General and Special Revenue Funds at 83%, the Water Fund at 58% and the Landfill Fund at 54%. She announced that the proposed Budget is available, the ad will be in the paper tomorrow, and if anyone wants to review it, the Finance Department will provide them a copy.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Harrell reported that 1) we are working on the NRCS – Cedar Creek/Gum Creek project now. We received a Notice to Proceed on May 3rd and have to be finished with the scope of the project by May 13th. The project includes removal of downed trees in Cedar Creek and Gum Creek, the Federal share of this project is \$59,358; 2) NS/RR has completed the installation of the two pipes beneath the railroad, this project should help with the flooding with the installation of 2 – 84" pipes; 3) department heads have submitted FY-22 budget requests, and administration has met with each departments and offices. When we began we were \$2 million out of balance. Over the last several weeks we have worked to trim it to about \$1 million, and we will have a budget work session immediately after this meeting; 4) the new county website is on-line and operational; 5) he attended several meetings and taught a new commissioner class for ACCG last month; and 6) we will need to have a work session in the coming weeks with the hospital administrator and other staff as the Hospital Authority is wanting county commissioners to issue a bond for some additional work at the hospital. He also reported that at 9:00 a.m. on May 26th, DCA will be down to award the county \$347,000 in a Community Block Development Grant that commissioners approved the sheriff's department applying for a telecommunications upgrade through a Hazard Mitigation Grant. The award will be made at South Georgia Technical College. Also, as soon as we finish the Gum Creek side of the NRCS project, our next move will be drainage and improvements on Midway and Hines Road. He went over other projects they are working on in the county.

GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION


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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Dowdy to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m., seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.



Sam N. Farrow, Jr., Chairman



Clark Harrell, Administrator