

**MINUTES OF THE CRISP COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 16, 2022**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Chairman James Dowdy, III, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in Room 305 of the Crisp County Government Center, with Commissioners A. James Nance, Sam Farrow, Jr, Larry Felton, and Mark Crenshaw in attendance. Others present were County Administrator Clark Harrell, Hayden Hooks (sat in for County Attorney Rick Lawson), Finance Director Sherrie Leverett and Valerie Black (sat in for County Clerk Monica Irwin). 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 Dowdy welcomed all in attendance.

**APPROVE MINUTES**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Felton to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 10, 2022, seconded by Commissioner Crenshaw, motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF WORK SESSION MINUTES**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Felton to approve the work session meeting minutes of May 31, 2022, seconded by Commissioner Crenshaw, motion was carried unanimously.**

**SHERIFF'S REPORT**

Sheriff Hancock reported the Sheriff's Office completed 643 man hours last month in court. Deputies ran both court rooms with criminal, civil, probate, juvenile, and magistrate courts. The citations are slightly up and the jail count is up to 221 currently housed inmates. This being said, revenue is up. Fuel expense last month has increased due to the inflation of gas prices. The department is trying to figure out some alternative ways to save on fuel but at the same time make sure deputies keep our 221 square miles covered. This is a challenge when you only have a certain number of deputies patrolling at night. In the last thirty days, the Sheriff Office has answered 118 calls inside the city limits of Cordele. Citizens placing 911 calls requesting a Sheriff Office deputy puts a tremendous strain on the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Hancock also reported the inmate housing check presented today is for \$61,000.00. Sheriff Hancock advised the board next month the Sheriff Office will be losing a 30 year veteran who will be retiring. The Sheriff also reported that the office is still fighting a salary issue and is behind in starting salaries. He also reported the Sheriff Office is making a change in the deputy shifts to hopefully make a difference in work-life balance.

**NEW BUSINESS**

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, advised the Commissioners of several items under new business needing their consideration:

**EXISTING LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF CORDELE – STANDARD FIELD (BALL PARK)**

March of 2000, the Crisp County Board of Commissioners entered into a 50 year lease agreement with the City of Cordele for certain recreational parks. Whereby, the County started with the lease tending to

the up-keep of the parks (i.e. mowing grass). Based on the language in the lease, the city or the Board of Commissioners can remove property from the lease at any time. County Administrator, Clark Harrell, read the conditions of the lease and also named the parks included under the lease. Mr. Harrell also advised Standard field does not have any organized recreational events take place at the park, as well as Williams Field. **Motion was made by Commissioner Felton to terminate the lease authorizing the lease of City of Cordele Parks, seconded by Commissioner Nance, motion carried unanimously.**

### **RETAIL BEER, WINE, & LIQUOR LICENSE**

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, advised the Commissioners of the request for retail beer, wine, and liquor, by the drink, for Pancho's Cantina & Grill, LLC located at 2536 U.S. Hwy 280 West. Owners are Baltazar and Francisco Vega. They have completed all the required documentation. The new establishment is located in the Old Inn on Hwy 280. **Motion was made by Commissioner Crenshaw to approve the retail beer, wine, and liquor, by the drink, license, seconded by Commissioner Nance, motion carried unanimously.**

### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, advised the board Benjamin Drennan will be providing administrative services and support for Ricky Dawson, Coroner of Crisp County. The Coroner's budget allows for one hour a day, Monday – Friday, for administrative services. **Motion was made by Commissioner Nance to acknowledge and accept the Memorandum of Understanding between Benjamin Drennan and Crisp County Coroner's Office, seconded by Commissioner Felton, motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Crenshaw and Commissioner Farrow not in agreement.**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Nance to amend the agenda to discuss providing County Benefits to the Coroner and all Constitutional Officers, seconded by Commissioner Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion was made by Nance to provide County Benefits to any Constitutional Officer, seconded by Commissioner Felton, motion carried unanimously. Motion carried with all Commissioners agreeing to provide all Constitutional Officers with County Benefits.**

### **CRISP COUNTY FY2023 HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN**

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, advised the Board the County is able to gain health care coverage again with Blue Cross Blue Shield with less costs than the previous year when coverage was terminated due to the premium increase. Mr. Harrell made the recommendation to the Board for the approval of the FY2023 Health Insurance Plan with Blue Cross Blue Shield, Option #4. **Motion was made by Commissioner Felton to approve the FY2023 health insurance plan, seconded by Commissioner Nance, motion carried unanimously.**

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUESTS – TRAINING OFFICER**

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, advised the Board the Fire and Rescue Director, Chief Postell, requested in his budget a training officer position to be funded. They had an opportunity to discuss this during a work session meeting and it is certainly a position that can be used within the Fire Department.

The position will be funded by the Special Service Tax District with a salary of about \$56,000.00. At a very minimum, the county had to hire three firefighters to meet the ISO requirements we did not meet during the audit conducted by the fire consultant. These three positions are also budgeted to be funded by the Special Service Tax District. With the three new firefighter positions, plus COLA's, the total is around \$331,000.00. Mr. Harrell requested a vote from the Board for direction as an Administrator on whether or not to budget this new training position for the upcoming fiscal year budget. Fire Chief, Michael Postell, explained to the Board the training requirements for firefighter's standards and training, the process of applying for training, the requirements for training, and the gear required for training. With that being said, Mr. Postell explained the benefits of having an "in-house" training officer. **Motion was made by Commissioner Nance to fund the training officer position for the Fire Department, seconded by Commissioner Felton, motion was opposed by Commissioner Farrow, Commissioner Crenshaw, and Chairman Dowdy.**

Sheriff Hancock explained to the Board the money the county will be saving by having an "in-house" training officer for the Fire Department versus sending firefighters to Forsyth for training. He stated the County will save money on the back-end if there is any way possible to make this work. The Sheriff also stated the liability of not training a firefighter versus training the firefighter will protect the Board from a lawsuit. **Commissioner Farrow made a motion to reconsider the opposing vote for the request of the training office position for the Fire Department, seconded by Commissioner Crenshaw, motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Nance thanked Sheriff Hancock for speaking on behalf of the Fire Department and for his understanding of what is needed for public safety and how it operates. Commissioner Nance stated to the Board that it is a shame it took Sheriff Hancock speaking in reference to the benefits of having an "in-house" training officer for the other Board members to reconsider their decision. **Motion was made by Commissioner Nance to approve the training officer position for the Fire Department, seconded by Commissioner Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

#### RESOLUTION 2022-011 FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, read the resolution. Mr. Harrell asked the Board for their consideration in approving Resolution 2022-011 for the fiscal year 2023 budget. **Motion was made by Commissioner Nance to adopt Resolution 2022-011 Fiscal Year 2023 Budget, seconded by Commissioner Farrow, motion carried unanimously.**

#### QUIT CLAIM DEEDS

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, explained the on-going matter with Mr. Basnar and Mr. Lawson's office. Mr. Lawson has prepared two quit claim deeds for Milldale Road. Milldale Road was closed by the Board in September 2019 and the county has been trying to get an easement for the gas line and power lines. These quit claim deeds will be contingent to Mr. Basnar signing the easements. The property will be transferred to Mr. Basnar and the county will obtain the rights to the gas line and the pole and electric line. **Motion was made by Commissioner Farrow for the board to authorize the signing of the 2 Quit Claim Deeds for Milldale Road contingent on Mr. Basnar signing the easements for gas line and power line, seconded by Commissioner Nance, motion carried unanimously.**

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director, Sherrie Leverett, gave a preliminary report and executive summary on the major funds of the County as of the end of May. The monthly and YTD activity for the General & three major Special Revenue Funds combined and including preliminary numbers for May are reporting YTD revenues at \$20.5 million and YTD expenditures at \$20.2 million leaving a 2% positive revenue over expenditure position at 5/31/22 of only \$326,357. Water Fund monthly revenues and expenditures increase the YTD net income to \$180,529. Usage billed for the month totaled 7,555,000 gallons to 1,459 customers. The USDA Bonds are current at \$1.2 million. Landfill Fund reporting \$2.4 million in accrued year to date revenue and \$1.8 million in accrued expenses leaving a net income of \$675,199 at the end of eleven months. Due to the coal ash project, the total tonnage received for May is up 12,485.68 tons for the month. Approximately 16% of that was delivered under the commercial hauling contract, 4% under the City of Cordele's residential contract and 3% under the County's curbside contract. The GEFA Loans are current at \$1.3 million. Cash on hand report ended the month with \$17.1 million in the General and Special Revenue Funds combined, \$8.3 million in the proprietary funds and \$9.2 million in the SPLOST & TSPLOST funds giving a county wide total at 05/31/22 of \$34.7 million. The schedule on the 2011 SPLOST has no change over the month of May. The 2017 SPLOST Issue Report, Distribution No. 52, is up over last year by 17% and brings issue to date collections to just under \$19.3 million. As of May 31<sup>st</sup>, actual expenditures and appropriations have reached \$12.9 million. Projects benefiting Special Local Option Sales Tax for the month of May were Public Safety, Public Works, Sanitation/Solid Waste and the cities of Arabi and Cordele for a total amount expended of \$165,247. The 2012 TSPLOST revenues have now collected approximately \$7.6 million since January of 2013. Combine that with LMIG and GDOT Revenue and we have expended and/or obligated \$11.2 million in local road maintenance and capital projects through the one cent transportation tax fund. L.O.S.T distributions. Just like is also up 17.3% over last year. CDBG Revolving Loan Fund Accounts ended the month of May with a total outstanding balance of \$1.8 million for all accounts. Revenues by fund and expenditures by department preliminary report for the eleven-month period of July 2021 through May 2022 shows the expended percentage of appropriations for each individual department and the total for each fund. As of May 31<sup>st</sup>, all departments and divisions should actually be at or below 92% of their annual allowances. Overall, the preliminary numbers indicate the General Fund and Special Revenue Funds are slightly over at 95%, the Water Fund is good at 70% and the Landfill Fund is also within budget at 83%.

## ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Harrell reported Mickey Dunnavant, Planning and Zoning Director, is transitioning well into the position. He continues to create a more efficient operation for the citizens by updating paper applications and permits to be accessed online. Mr. Harrell thanked Jimmie Mumphery, County Building Inspector, for his assistance in making this transition smooth for Mr. Dunnavant. They make a good team. Mr. Harrell also reported Georgia EPD has finally given a Notification of Permit by Rule for operation of a transfer station at the Crisp County Landfill. This should provide a much smoother operation at the Landfill by keeping people and vehicles off the working face. Mr. Harrell reported that he is working on an agreement between the Board and Family Connections for use of the Dowdy Building. The Board has been helping Family Connections with the utility bill by paying a portion. Family Connections sub-let office space in the building to Southwest Georgia United for the Youth Build Program. We need to have arrangements in writing between the Board of Commisisoners and Family



Connections. The county has the following pending projects: 1) Arabi/NS Railroad Project – need to have Executive Session regarding property acquisition for this project 2) Coal Ash/CCPC – continue to receive coal ash at the landfill 3) Meadow Park – CDBG is continuing, and we are in the process of acquiring necessary right of way 4) Communications – CDBG is continuing. Mr. Harrell reported he attended several meetings and events last month as well as forthcoming meetings in June of 2022.

**GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR LITIGATION AND PERSONNEL**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Farrow to go into Executive Session for purchase of property, seconded by Commissioner Felton, motion carried with all Commissioners agreeing to go into Executive Session at 10:57 am.**

**COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Farrow to come out of Executive Session at 11:18 am, seconded by Commissioner Crenshaw, motion carried with all Commissioners agreeing to come out of Executive Session.**

**RESOLUTION 2022-012 EQUIPMENT LEASE**

County Administrator, Clark Harrell, explained to the Board Resolution 2022-012 is the authorizing and approving execution of an equipment-lease purchase agreement with Bankcorpsouth equipment finance, a division of Cadence Bank. Mr. Harrell asked for the Board’s approval for the lease. **By common consent motion carried unanimously to adopt Resolution 2022-012 equipment lease purchase agreement.**

**ADJOURN MEETING**

**By common consent, Commissioners adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.**

  
James R Dowdy, III, Chairman

  
Clark Harrell, County Administrator