

UPSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
6:00 P.M. – Regular Commission Meeting
City/County Meeting Room – January 9, 2018

Attendance: Chairman Allen, Commissioner Spraggins, J. Ellington, Commissioner Wilder, Commissioner R. Ellington, Attorney Heath English and County Clerk Jessica Jones

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Norman Allen

II. INVOCATION
Rev. Eddie Herring

A motion was made to amend the agenda to add an executive session.

Motion: Commissioner Wilder **Second:** Commissioner Spraggins

Commissioner Wilder – Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington - Yes
Chairman Allen - Yes

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES
December 12, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2017 Special Called Meeting Minutes

A motion was made approve the minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Spraggins **Second:** Commissioner J. Ellington

Commissioner Wilder – Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – abstain
Chairman Allen - Yes

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Neil Hightower, 555 Peachbelt Road, stated that they have formed a citizen committee to block the sale of land in the City on the corner across from Walgreens. Some of their reasons are. They want to see community grow but don't feel this is what is best for the growth.

1. Because it is an extension of the green space for Generation park
2. The closure of Park Drive will cause traffic congestion at Generation Park
3. This is a dangerous precedence they are setting for selling donated property that has not gone through the proper rezoning steps.
4. They feel that there are other properties that are for sell that would be suited
5. This sale violates the intent of the gift.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Appoint a Vice Chairman

A motion was made to appoint Commissioner J. Ellington as Vice Chairman.

Motion: Commissioner Spraggins **Second:** Commissioner R. Ellington

Commissioner Wilder – Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – Yes
Chairman Allen - Yes

b. Discussion and approval of SPLOST funds for Sheriff Vehicles

A motion was made to approve the purchase of 4 Sheriff Vehicles from Thomaston Ford at \$107,833.84.

Motion: Commissioner Spraggins **Second:** Commissioner J. Ellington

Commissioner Wilder – Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – Yes
Chairman Allen - Yes

c. Discussion and approval of funds for Digital Radio System

Chairman Allen stated that the county is in the process of converting the radios to a digital system for the sheriff department. They need to put some equipment on three towers to start out, and see how it works using only three towers. The company advocates a four tower system, currently there no reliable towers in the southern part of the county. The total cost is \$184,610.00 and the Sheriff budgeted \$56,000 in the 2017 and 2018 budget. The balance to complete the project is \$72,610. The proposal is to use the funds that were set aside for the E-911 upgrade.

A motion was made to approve the use of SPLOST funds to complete the project to upgrade to a digital system.

Comm. J. Ellington if there had been any update from the City of Yatesville on using their tower. There had been no updates.

Motion: Commissioner R. Ellington **Second:** Commissioner Spraggins

Commissioner Wilder– Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – Yes
Chairman Allen - Yes

d. Approval of Employee Handbook

Chairman Allen stated that they have been working on the new handbook and it has been a long process. They have one change that the attorney has recommended.

Updated wording for Employee Handbook. Please add in Section 7.3.4 Discipline and Progressive Discipline:

“Employees are at-will and may be disciplined or discharged with or without notice and with or without cause. Nothing in this policy is intended to create a property interest in employment.”

A motion was made to approve the Employee Handbook.

Motion: Commissioner Wilder **Second:** Commissioner R. Ellington

Commissioner Wilder– Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – Yes
Chairman Allen - Yes

- e. Discussion and approval of Resolution for TANS
Chairman Allen read portions of the Resolution for the 2018 TANS. The available loan amount is 5,000,000; Colony Bank was the lowest bidder at 2.195% interest rate.

A motion was made to approve the resolution with Colony Bank as the lowest bid.

Motion: Commissioner Spraggins **Second:** Commissioner R. Ellington

Commissioner Wilder– Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – Yes
Chairman Allen - Yes

- f. Discussion and approval of Resolution and Intergovernmental Agreement for Volunteer Firefighter Cancer Policy
With the approval of HB 174 it requires the county cover the Volunteer Firefighters with a cancer policy. ACCG is writing the policy and need the approval of a resolution and intergovernmental contract.

A motion was made to approve the resolution and intergovernmental contract for the Volunteer Firefighters Cancer Policy.

Motion: Commissioner Spraggins **Second:** Commissioner R. Ellington

Commissioner Wilder– Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – Yes
Chairman Allen - Yes

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Comm. J. Ellington, with a second from Comm. Wilder to exit regular session and enter into executive session.

A motion was made by Comm. J. Ellington, with a second from Comm. Wilder to enter back into regular session.

Chairman Allen explained that they had received a letter from County Manager Jim Wheelless stating that as of January 9, 2018 he will be retiring.

A motion was made to accept the County Manager's letter of retirement.

Motion: Commissioner Spraggins **Second:** Commissioner Wilder

Commissioner Wilder– Yes Commissioner Spraggins – Yes
Commissioner J. Ellington – Yes Commissioner R. Ellington – Yes
Chairman Allen – Yes

County Manager, Commissioners and County Attorney Comments

County Manager Jim was not in attendance.

County Attorney Paschal English stated that County Manager Jim Wheelless has done so much to save the county on attorney fees with his great people skills.

Commissioner Wilder asked everyone for the continued prayers for Jim Wheelless on a full recovery. The board needed to think about a street name for the road where the Lincoln Park Volunteer Fire Department is.

Commissioner R. Ellington stated that he will miss Jim Wheelless, but his health is more important.

He thanked Scott Blackstock for his donation to the IDA.

Commissioner J. Ellington stated that he enjoyed working with Jim Wheelless and that he taught him a lot. He appreciates the work from Chairman Allen and County Clerk Jessica Jones in his absence.

The donation from Mr. Blackstock to the IDA is truly a gift and he really appreciates it.

Commissioner Spraggins stated that he has worked with Jim Wheelless for a long time and he will truly be missed. He thanked Chairman Allen and County Clerk Jessica Jones for the work they have done during his absence.

He stated that Mr. Eddie Collier has retired from his work in the community park and he thanked him for all he has done.

He asked everyone to keep Paul Rogers in their prayers.

Chairman Allen stated that Mr. Wheeless has had to endure him, train him and mentor him over the past year, he considers him a friend will keep him in his prayers. He has a lot to offer and he publicly challenges him to stay involved in the community. He believes 2018 is going to be a great year. We have to challenges trying to develop economic vs green space; we have to be smart about what we are going to do. Golden Star came in and still looking a project in the industrial park. He added that he is a little nervous about the budget and asked everyone to keep a tight purse string on the general fund budget.

ADJOURMENT

Comm. Spraggins made a motion to adjourn, with a second by Comm. R. Ellington to adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Norman Allen

Commissioner James Ellington

Commissioner Frank Spraggins

Commissioner Lorenzo Wilder

Commissioner Ralph Ellington

Was not in attendance
Jim Wheeless, County Manager