



**Walker County Governmental Authority
101 South Duke Street, P.O. Box 445
LaFayette, GA 30728
706-638-1437**

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
August 22, 2024 - 6:30 PM**

- I. **Call to Order:**
Chairman Shannon Whitfield called to order the Regular Scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting held at Annex III, 201 S. Main Street, LaFayette, Georgia at 6:30 PM on August 22, 2024.
- II. **Attendees:**
The following were present: Chairman Whitfield, Commissioner Robert Blakemore, Commissioner Mark Askew, Commissioner Brian Hart, Commissioner Robert Stultz, Legal and Policy Director David Gottlieb, Public Relations Director Joe Legge and Board Clerk Whitney Summey. Other guests signed in at the meeting as well. Please see the attached sign in sheet.
- III. **Approval of Agenda:**
Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Askew, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - I. Commissioner Stultz made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Scheduled Meeting held August 8, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Hart, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion was approved.
- V. **Public Hearing - FY 2025 Budget**
 - I. No one came forward to speak.
- VI. **Public Hearing- Planning & Zoning**
 - I. Chairman Whitfield asked if anyone would like to speak on the request from Robert Carter for ten variances for property located at 217 Claire Street, Rossville, GA 30741, tax map and parcel number 0-205-097 & 119A. No one came forward to speak.
 - II. Chairman Whitfield asked if anyone would like to speak on the request from Timothy Moore for a variance for property located at 0 Old LaFayette Road, Rock Spring, GA 30739, tax map and parcel number 0-326-023B. No one came forward to speak.
 - III. Chairman Whitfield asked if anyone would like to speak on the request from J&E Pichardo LLC for a rezone from A-1 to CN for property located at 0 S. Hwy 341, Chickamauga, GA 30707, tax map and parcel number 0-289-036. No one came forward to speak.
- VII. **Public Comment:**
 - I. Laura Owley presented concerns with Hal Gray being the chief of police for the county while also serving as the Mayor of Rossville. She asked about his compensation, benefits, etc. She said she feels there are conflicts with holding both positions. She provided the Board with a handout of questions and asked for feedback at a later time.
 - II. Scott McNabb presented the Board with a handout of concerns regarding Hal Gray being chief of police. He inquired about his job responsibilities, benefits, etc.
 - III. Ned Yates asked if the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Rossville for Recreational Services was finalized. He asked about expenditures at the Community Center property, specifically the roof at Shaffner Hall. He was concerned because the purchase order was dated prior to the meeting it was voted on. He also expressed concerns that Hal Gray attended training that cost the county around \$2,500.00.
 - IV. Jamie Hulsey said he wanted to speak about perception and transparency. He said ethics law says there are conflicts of elected officials being county employees. He asked the Board if there were plans to sell the Mountain Cove Farms property.
 - V. Cynthia McCoy said she is a resident of Gateway at Rossville. She asked about code regulations at the property. She had concerns about elevators, traveling sounds, moisture, and EMS accessibility. She asked what she could do going forward.

- VI. Cindy Bradshaw said she is a City of Rossville resident. She presented concerns about Commissioner Blakemore not voting on the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Rossville for Recreational Services. She asked if he was advised by legal counsel to not vote on the agreement. County Attorney David Gottlieb said he and Commissioner Blakemore discussed it and he advised there could be a potential conflict. He said Commissioner Blakemore decided not to vote. Mrs. Bradshaw said she feels the residents of District One did not have representation due to this decision.
- VII. Gary Williams presented concerns with grants and matching funds. He asked about the civic center playground and two pickleball courts that were planned. He wanted to know if the matching funds and grant funds were enough to cover the project. He also asked where the Rossville Middle School baseball team would play since the new Adventure Acres park would displace them.

VIII. New Business:

- I. Chairman Whitfield read Resolution R-026-24 to adopt a millage rate to be set at 5.328 mills in the unincorporated areas and 7.027 mills in the incorporated areas. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Blakemore, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- II. Chairman Whitfield read Resolution R-027-24 to accept the terms and conditions of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation fund grant, project number P24AP01281/13-01093, for Walker Rocks Park Phase 3. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Stultz, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- III. Chairman Whitfield read Resolution R-028-24 to authorize Deputy Robert W. Bowman to retain his service weapon upon retirement. Commissioner Stultz made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hart, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- IV. Chairman Whitfield read Resolution R-029-24 to enact a temporary moratorium on the acceptance and issuance of applications for new licenses for retail package sales of distilled spirits. Planning and Zoning Director Jon Pursley said he requested this since September marks one year since the package store ordinance was approved. He said this will allow staff time to clear up any current requests. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Askew, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- V. Chairman Whitfield read Resolution R-030-24 to declare fire rescue property as surplus and removed from the county inventory. Commissioner Stultz made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hart, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- VI. Chairman Whitfield read the memorandum of agreement between the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Walker County. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Askew, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- VII. Chairman Whitfield read the rural fire defense lease agreement and memorandum of understanding with Georgia Forestry Commission. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Stultz, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- VIII. Chairman Whitfield presented the Office of the Governor criminal justice coordinating council subgrant award, project name: drug court, subgrant number: Q23-8-007. He said we are the fiscal agent with no matching funds from any of the four counties. Commissioner Stultz made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hart, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- IX. Chairman Whitfield presented the request from Robert Carter for ten variances for property located at 217 Claire Street, Rossville, GA 30741, tax map and parcel number 0-205-097 & 119A. The Planning Commission recommended to approve the request. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Stultz, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- X. Chairman Whitfield presented the request from Timothy Moore for a variance for property located at 0 Old LaFayette Road, Rock Spring, GA 30739, tax map and parcel number 0-326-023B. The Planning Commission recommended to approve the request. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Askew, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- XI. Chairman Whitfield presented the request from J&E Pichardo LLC for a rezone from A-1 to CN for property located at 0 S. Hwy 341, Chickamauga, GA 30707, tax map and parcel number 0-289-036. The Planning Commission recommended to approve the request. Commissioner Askew made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Blakemore, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.
- XII. Chairman Whitfield read the July 2024 departmental statistics.

IX. Commissioner Comments:

- I. Commissioner Blakemore thanked everyone for coming out and participating. He asked Jon Pursley to speak on the Gateway apartment concerns. Jon Pursley said the Gateway development built everything up to current county code. He said all of their ADA units are on the first floor. He said they are not required to have elevators because they are under the height limit. He said they are insulated up to code, but sound travels. He said he has spoken with them previously on moisture concerns and Gateway has addressed the issue. He said they are privately owned, but he will reach out with the community's concerns.

- II. Commissioner Askew told Mr. Hulsey he has no knowledge of plans to sell Mountain Cove Farms. He said he will reach out individually with other concerns presented tonight. He thanked everyone for coming out and giving feedback.
- III. Commissioner Hart asked Chairman Whitfield to speak on the concerns with the Rossville Recreation agreement. He said he has not had any discussions on the Mountain Cove Farms property. He said he is glad to see repairs being made at the ag center and courthouse. He said these projects are a work in progress but he is excited to see the finished product.
- IV. Commissioner Stultz thanked all county employees for their hard work in the heat. He said he has no knowledge of plans to sell the Mountain Cove Farms property. He told Mr. McNabb and Mrs. Owsley he would look into their concerns.
- V. Commissioner Askew commended Chairman Whitfield on his work on the millage rate. He said the Board has worked and continues to work to reduce citizens taxes.

X. Chairman's Report:

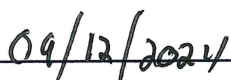
- I. Chairman Whitfield addressed Mr. Yates concerns with purchase orders. He said purchase orders are generated prior to being approved. He said they are not valid and official until the Board approves them and they are signed. He said the contractor for the Schaffer Hall roof repair understood he was the lowest price and he wanted to get the project complete while there was good weather and he had men available. Chairman Whitfield said the thermostat at the Rossville Recreation Building would only go down to 66 degrees. He said once fiber is installed in the building it would be able to be managed remotely like most of the county buildings. Chairman Whitfield said the Intergovernmental Agreement for recreation services in Rossville was tabled at the Rossville City Council meeting. He said they have not received any documents back from Rossville yet. Chairman Whitfield said the county tries to get many state and federally funded grants. He said if they receive grants then that allows for county funds to be spent on other projects. He said the broadband grant was a tremendous improvement to the county. He said it did have matching funds but Windstream paid the match. He said the county has been chasing a mitigation grant for about five years for generators. He said there are also SPLOST funds set aside for generators. He said if they receive the grant, they can combine the two funding sources to have a much larger budget for generators.

XI. Adjournment:

- I. Commissioner Hart made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Blakemore seconded the motion. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM.



Shannon K. Whitfield
Chairman/CEO
Walker County Georgia



Date

Minutes prepared by: Walker County Board Clerk, Whitney Summey

Regular Scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting

Walker County Annex III

August 22, 2024

6:30 PM

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Present/Absent</u>
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Commissioner Blakemore	Present
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Commissioner Askew	Present
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Chairman Whitfield	Present
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Commissioner Hart	Present
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Commissioner Stultz	Present
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Round