

June 20, 2023

At a scheduled meeting of the Walker County Commission held in their offices in the Walker County Courthouse Annex, Jasper, Alabama, at 9:30 a.m. on the 20th day of June 2023, Chairman Miller gave the welcome and called the meeting to order.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:

“I just want to get up and say that I’m looking forward to our time together after this meeting with you, Mr. Chairman, and, you, Mr. Burrough and looking forward to hopefully having some time in the next coming weeks to talk to the other Commissioners, as well. So, just thank you for that and thank you for your time.”

Thank you guys for the time. This message is kind of directed more towards the public. You know for years we’ve seen chairman and politicians come and go making –“ County Attorney Richard Fikes inquired of the gentleman’s name. Chairman Miller stated, “Excuse me, sir, can you state your name for us please?”

“Yes, sir. My name is Jordan Madison.”

Mr. Madison continued, “For years we’ve seen Chairmans and politicians come and go making promises of progress. Yet our roads crumble, our employees struggle and our citizens carry this burden. It’s disheartening to hear about our financial troubles while witnessing the lack of real solutions to actually help our county and its people. My name is Jordan Madison. Today I’m here to announce my candidacy for the Walker County Chairman. I’m running because I love Walker County that I grew up in, but it’s slowly fading away and our current leaders aren’t doing enough to stop it. We need a leader who isn’t stuck in the past, that’s focused on the present and the future, someone who is willing to admit that what we’re doing isn’t working. And I believe I can be that leader. I see the potential of Walker County. There’s no doubt that Jasper is striving, but the rest of the county is stagnant. We need to attract new businesses, explore new revenue sources and recruit and invest in hardworking employees. Our county deserves leaders who have progress and not just empty words. So, I have a simple question for our county, if we’re in such bad shape, why do we re-elect someone who hasn’t fixed the problem? It’s time for a change and if you vote for me this coming election, I promise to work harder than any previous chairman to fix what’s been broken by ineffective leadership. I won’t be out worked and I won’t fail. If you want a leader who will roll up their sleeves and fight for you and this county stand with me, vote Jordan Madison on March 5th in our primary elections. Thank you.”

Chairman Miller stated, “Thank you, sir.”

After Chairman Miller gave the invitation for comment from citizens and other

elected officials, the County Administrator called the roll and Commissioners present were Keith Davis, Jeff Burrough, Jim Borden and Steven Aderholt.

Commissioner Borden gave the invocation and Commissioner Davis led the pledge of allegiance.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATION:

None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to Approve the Agenda, to Approve the Meeting Minutes of June 6, 2023, to approve the New Vendor List for May 2023 and to make a correction on item 3 to read as follows: Approval to post and request names when available for Full-time Solid Waste Common Laborer.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

REPORTS FROM STAFF:

County Administrator Robbie Dickerson stated, "I just want to update a couple of things on our website and Solid Waste software. Sometime in the next three weeks we will have a preview. We will contact those who may want to come in and look at it. I've sent out an email to all the departments and reaching out to cities and other organizations to get their information together to attach to our website. And Solid Waste should have their preview at the same time. Just to let you know about that. Also, the fiscal 2024 labor projections are ready, they will be sent out today." She said they will be talking about that later and they will have that information before them.

County Engineer Glenn Peek stated, "Brown's Bridge is still waiting for surface treatment, unless they came over the weekend and didn't let me know. We've got all the guardrail up and the bridge inspection completed, so once they finish their surface treatment and their checklist of little things they do afterwards, we'll be ready to open that bridge up. Smith Chapel, they're working on the substructure of the bridge and working on the roadway. And we probably will be doing some paving here soon on all our projects. The last word I got was they're getting set up ready to go. They just haven't given me a date yet. That's all I have."

OLD BUSINESS

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of Board of Equalization Nominations. After explanation by County Administrator Robbie Dickerson and her making it known that Revenue Commissioner Jerry Guthrie had sent an email to the Commission recommending that Mr. Douglas Booth be the nominee for the Board of Equalization, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough that Mr. Douglas Booth be the Commission's nomination for Board of Equalization.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Davis to open discussion of Business License Upgrade Discussion and Approval.

After County Administrator Robbie Dickerson explained that this is a software upgrade and turned to Chief Clerk Jerry Davis of the Probate Office who gave the explanation, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to Approve the Business License Upgrade.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of WC Sheriff's Office Jail Operating Policies discussion and approval.

After explanation by Jail Administrator Justin White, input by Sheriff Nick Smith and County Attorney Richard Fikes and much discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt contingent on it being paid out of jail fund 107 and Mr. Fikes mitigating the cost by any means on updating the files (whether he can or not) going forward, and seconded by Commissioner Davis to Approve the Walker County Sheriff's Office Jail Operating Policies (NIJO).

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One; Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: No; District Four: Aye.

With one opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Approval to post and request names when available for Full Time Solid Waste Common Laborer.

After explanation by Solid Waste Director John Dunagan, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to Approve to post

and request names when available for Full Time Solid Waste Common Laborer.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of Approval to hire Nicole Nuss as a Full-Time Common Laborer for the Walker County Humane and Adoption Center.

After explanation by Director of the WCHAC Kay Farley, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve the hiring of Nicole Nuss from Part-time to Full-Time Common Laborer at Walker County Humane and Adoption Center.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and scheduling of a work schedule-budget.

After explanation by Chairman Miller and input from County Administrator Robbie Dickerson and Commissioner Burrough, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to schedule the work session for budgeting for July 11th, 2023. Commissioner Borden made an amendment to the motion, seconded by Commissioner Aderholt that the work session start at 9:00 a.m.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough, to open for discussion for Discussion and Approval to liquidate 2018 SW freightliner VIN 2125 and purchase two trucks.

After explanation by Solid Waste Director John Dunagan and much discussion, input from County Engineer Glenn Peek and County Attorney Richard Fikes recommending that they proceed in the direction of selling the current truck on gov.deals, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Davis to Approve the Liquidation of 2018 SW Freightliner VIN 2125, to sell the truck on gov.deals and pay for one of the trucks and have a little money left over and use that money along with the CD to purchase the other truck.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of repairing the Jail's Fire System.

After explanation by Chairman Miller and comments by Jail Administrator Justin White, input by County Attorney Richard Fikes and County Administrator Robbie Dickerson, and much discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve up to the cap of \$100,000 for Repairing of the Jail's Fire System out of Fund 107.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

After County Attorney Richard Fikes made known that what is to be discussed meets the criteria for an Executive Session, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden that the meeting be adjourned to executive session and to reconvene afterwards.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

(Commission retired to executive session)

(Commission meeting resumed)

Chairman Miller called the meeting back to order and Commissioners present were Keith Davis and Jeff Burrough.

Chairman Miller inquired of County Attorney Richard Fikes if there is a quorum and Attorney Fikes responded in the affirmative. He stated, "Also, Ed from the Daily Mountain Eagle had asked about the executive session and it was to discuss preliminary negotiations involving matters of trade or commerce and to keep the County's competitive position with other counties and cities who may be also involved in these negotiations. The law allows for an executive session so that we can keep our competitive position. So, therefore, the executive session was appropriate and I just wanted to make that clear for the record."

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Burrough stated that he would like to add item 8 to the Agenda, address it back to item three here. I think John has a man by the name of Aaron Salter to – I'd like to present his name to be available for the Common Laborer position with Solid Waste. And, of course, this will be according to the Civil Service and making sure that they can just grab that name. I make a motion that we fill that job.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Davis that the Agenda be amended to add item 8, that Aaron Salter's name be added to item 3, pending Civil Service Rules and Regulations.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; Chairman: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Davis to open discussion that Aaron Salter's name be added to item 3, pending Civil Service Rules and Regulations.

Solid Waste Director, John Dunagan, stated that he appreciated them doing this so he can get started a little quicker.

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Davis to Add Aaron Salter's name for the Common Laborer job for Solid Waste.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Commissioner Burrough, stated, "I'll continue with my comments. On top of that, I appreciate what the Civil Service Board does. They have done a lot of rearranging making it where we can get people on the job faster, especially in the Sheriff's Department and Solid Waste Department. I just want to publicly thank the Civil Service Board for doing all they do. Other comments, you know we have a chance to speak at every meeting. I always thank everybody for coming. I thank you again for coming today. On the infrastructure of Walker County, I mean, we are divided into four districts and our money is split. You know, some of the terrain in some of the districts are a little, you know, more treacherous than the other. You know, we do a good job using what we have to address our roads situation. You know we had comments earlier from the man running for the Chairman position, but I know Keith is still here and he may speak on it too, but you know, we've paved, I was sitting here just jotting down the last three years, I mean, I've got close to fifty miles that we've resurfaced. We have projects that are starting, Glenn, I know in my district Holly Grove Road and Self Road are starting as we speak. I'm sure Keith and some of the others have some too. We have a new bridge that's being constructed in District Two. It's on its way up, Smith Chapel Bridge. But like I said, there is infrastructure and progress being made in – it might not be right where you live, but like I said, if you drive around District Two you'll see roads are getting

resurfaced and repaved. That's one thing I wanted to bring out. I have a good crew and I appreciate what they do. Our workers and our people that work for the county is what makes this county go. We have got to support them as much as we can. I appreciate everybody that works for the county."

Commissioner Davis stated, "Just kind of saying what Jeff said about the Civil Service Board, again, it's just a pleasure to work with that board. They strive hard to work with us to speed up some processes and things. And we know everybody on that board that they're working extremely hard and we appreciate their contribution that they do for the County. On the paving, we've got Russell Dairy Road about to be paved and we're looking at doing Duncan Road in two phases, the first phase this year and the second phase next year, due to funding. Of course, we'd like to pave every road in Walker County period, black nice asphalt two inches thick, right Glenn? The whole County. We're very limited on funds so we just have to work with what we have. And like Jeff, we've paved a tremendous amount of roads in the past couple of years, with different Federal funding and things of that sort. Smith Lake Dam Road was a 2.1 million dollar project, complete. We've got a ton of surface treatment that's about to be done in District One. The striping crew finally should be here next week. Just a lot of different positive things going on. We've got a lot of big major positive things going on in the County that we will be able to talk on and discuss later in the future. There are needs coming up that are big deals, folks, really big positive things for the County. So, I like to always focus on the positive. We deal with the negative every day, but to me in this County the positive outweighs the negative. And I appreciate everybody coming. Good to see everybody. Again, we work for y'all. Okay. We don't forget that and we take that serious, so if you need us, call us. Remember to pray for us as we make decisions to try to make this county a better place to live. So, good to see everybody. It's good to see Greg back there in the back. Anthony came in, good to see you. I appreciate you. Justin, appreciate you and John appreciate you and everybody in here, Glenn and the staff what y'all do. Again, helping us make this County a better place to live, so thank y'all. Al, you too, I guess (jokingly). Your hair looks better."

Chairman Miller stated, "I, too, want to say just thank you to everybody who came today, all the Sheriff's Department. Mr. White and I, I think we're getting to know each other a lot better because of all the things we've been involved in. Okay. And I know it's stressful in his job and the Sheriff, too. He's had a lot on his plate and I've seen him stop, just shake his head, and realize, you know, he's under stress and I get that, okay. So, I do appreciate you. I appreciate the Sheriff's Department. Chief Deputy Leach, I tell you, we understand that position, too, because he does a lot of work there. And I know the Sheriff appreciates both of these guys. But we appreciate the Sheriff, too, and he's under a lot of stress at times. But moving this County forward as both of these gentlemen have told you here, that's what this is about, y'all. And the amount of funds that are here, you know, you just have – here's three pages – well actually four

pages worth of funds that we deal with every day. And I can pay – I say I – the County can pay for something out of this fund, but you can't do anything else over here with it. And you can take this 107 fund, you work on the jail, but you can't work on the courthouse, you can't work on the Justice Center. There are just so many different funds that are here that people don't understand. And it is a daily task to keep up with the daily balances in these accounts and keep up with what's been spent out of each account moving forward. So, that is on a day-to-day basis. Ms. Robbie works on a lot of that day-to-day and we appreciate her.

But as we move forward the Brown's Bridge, the Smith Chapel Bridge, they had been looked at for years and years and worked on and the dollar amounts. You know, they came to this Commission and they were approved to move forward and we are moving forward on those two bridges. You know, at the end of four years, this Commission, if we don't do anything else, these guys, this Commission with the State money, which is Triple R and all their money is going to be somewhere around 24 million dollars. Do the history on that, folks. I don't think you're going to find where there's been a Commission that's done any more than that on roads. And we still need much more on roads. Okay. Five percent pay raise for these employees. Now, these employees in the County, just like these guys talked, this is what makes this Commission move forward, this day-to-day activities in the County.

Okay. You know, the Alabama Power Building, we bought, this Commission bought and has moved the Justice Center there. And it's being renovated with funds appropriated by this Commission. The G. May & Son's Building we bought it for Probate, which was approved by this Commission. The Solid Waste has increased because this Commission approved it.

The Warrants, the 15 million dollars worth, we're paying about 1.5 million a year on those. And that has to be paid, because that's a debt of this county that was made many, many, many moons ago.

The grants, we've acquired \$264,000 grant for the courthouse that we've worked hard on, a \$500,000 grant for the Coroner's Office. We've got a 40 thousand dollar grant from Cawaco that was just sent us. We haven't received it as of yet, but it's been sent to us for the Justice Center Building. Okay. There's another Cawaco grant that we're applying for that we think we'll get for one of these buildings.

These gentlemen here have worked hard for this particular Commission, for this particular four years. And it's something that you have to continue on a day-to-day basis. Yes, there's putting out fires today. Tomorrow might be a lot easier day. I know I came in Sunday afternoon up Herman Road and I passed a big humongous tree on the side of the road that I probably passed for 62 years, that's how old I am. I got a phone call just in a few minutes and District One has folks out there moving what was probably a third or half of the tree that was laying across Herman Road."

Commissioner Davis added: "We had ten down, Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Miller continued: "So, had ten trees down. So, as everybody is sitting at home thinking about how bad we're doing, we're out working for you, the citizens of Walker County.

I do appreciate each and every one of you and appreciate what each and every employee does for this County and what these gentlemen do for this County. With that, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn."

ADJOURN:

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough that this meeting be adjourned to reconvene at the next regularly scheduled meeting or at the call of the Chairman.


With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye.

With no opposition the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Read and Approved:



Chairman



Attest