

**October 16, 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 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023, Chairman Miller gave the welcome and called the meeting to order.

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.

Mr. Stan Bradford gave the invocation and County Attorney Richard Fikes led the pledge of allegiance.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATION:**

1. Wheeler Pounds gave an informative presentation on Byler Road.
2. Rachel Williams with the Board of Registrars and Jeff Elrod, Director of Elections with the Secretary of State's Office, gave a presentation to the Commission on the GIS mapping system.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to Approve the Agenda and to Approve the Meeting Minutes of October 2, 2023.

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 Engineer Glenn Peek gave an update on the Smith Chapel Bridge Project. He stated, "We have several paving projects currently in progress and some more in the works. That's all I have."

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Davis to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Airport Taxiway Maintenance

Program Grant.

After explanation by Mr. Keith Duncan, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to Approve Airport Taxiway Maintenance Program.

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 Davis and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Carl Elliott Library Parking Lot Paving.

After explanation by Chairman Miller, input by County Attorney Richard Fikes and Commissioner Davis and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Davis that the Commission approve the Carl Elliott Library Parking Lot Paving and accept the low bid, which is Murray Asphalt Paving.

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 Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval of Resolution (Probate Court).

After explanation by Judge of Probate Lee Tucker, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to Approve Resolution (Probate Court).

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 Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to hire Reggie Moore as Full Time Common Laborer/Solid Waste.

After explanation by Solid Waste Director John Dunagan and input by Eddie Miller and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Borden to table the hiring of Reggie Moore as Full-Time Common Laborer/Solid Waste.

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

Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to post for Full Time Driver/Operator (3 positions) for Solid Waste.

After explanation by Solid Waste Director John Dunagan, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Davis to post for Full Time Driver/Operator (3 positions) for Solid Waste.

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 Discussion and Approval-Lease Amount for New Airport Lease.

After explanation by Keith Duncan, input by County Attorney Richard Fikes and Commissioner Aderholt and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to table the Approval-Lease Amount for the New Airport Lease.

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 discussion of Discussion and Approval-Purchase New Front Loader Garbage Truck/Solid Waste.

After explanation by Solid Waste Director John Dunagan, input by Robbie Dickerson, Chairman Miller and County Attorney Richard Fikes and much discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the purchase of a New Front Loader Garbage Truck/Solid Waste.

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 Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval-Stairway Agreement with Jasper Main Street.

After explanation by County Attorney Richard Fikes and input by Judge of Probate Lee Tucker, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve the Stairway Agreement with Jasper Main Street.

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 Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval-Polling Place change from Copeland Ferry Church of God to the Pumpkin Center Baptist Church.

After explanation by Judge of Probate Lee Tucker and input by Commissioner Aderholt, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve the Polling Place Change from Copeland Ferry Church of God to the Pumpkin Center Baptist Church.

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 Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and Approval-Road Bids 795-800.

After explanation and recommendation by County Engineer Glenn Peek and input by Commissioner Davis, motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve Bids 795, 798-800 and to table Bids 796-797.

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 Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of Discussion and Approval-transfer of Lucas device from Sheriff to Oakman Fire Department.

After explanation by Commissioner Borden, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve the Transfer of Lucas device from Sheriff to Oakman Fire Department.

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 Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and Approval-Youth Services Agency Grant Agreement.

After explanation by Juvenile Probation Director Shawn Robinson, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve Youth Services Agency Grant Agreement.

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 Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and Approval-Courthouse Pressure Washing add on expense.

After explanation by County Administrator Robbie Dickerson, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Davis to Approve the Courthouse Pressure Washing add on expense.

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.

After County Attorney Richard Fikes stated that the matters to be discussed meets the criteria for an executive session and a letter stating same was presented to the County Administrator Robbie Dickerson, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt that this Commission retire 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 RETIRES TO EXECUTIVE SESSION)

(COMMISSION RECONVENES)

Chairman Miller called the meeting back to order.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Aderholt stated, "I want to thank everybody for being here and those that decided to remain. He mentioned that generally when they go into executive session, it kind of clears out and he thanked everybody for hanging in here with us. He stated, "There's a lot of good progress going on in the county, obviously, a lot of paving going on, especially in District Four. So, again, I say it often and I'll say it again, if you're out and about on county roads and you see county workers, slow down. That's a very dangerous job. I talked to one of our employees the other day. He says, 'you've got to live with your neck on a swivel,' so you're constantly reminded by curves and things like that, even though we flag and we do the best we can do, sometimes it can be a

dangerous job. So, again, thank everybody for being here. I look forward to the next meeting.”

Commissioner Borden stated, “Mr. Chairman, I want to add on, if we can, make it item 14, open for discussion.”

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Davis to add item 14 to the Agenda, to Post for Two Driver/Operators and Two Full Time Common Laborers for Solid Waste and to send down the names.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Post for Two Driver/Operators and Two Full Time Common Laborers for Solid Waste, the names to be forwarded.

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve to Post for Two Driver/Operators and Two Common Laborers for Solid Waste and the names to be forwarded.

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.

Commissioner Borden continued, “Now, again, thank everyone for being here today. We want to thank our guests. Also, on the road -- I’m a history buff and I really love this kind of stuff. I knew of some of this before. I read the pamphlet that you have provided. You know, a lot of people in this county don’t even realize, not only our old roads, our old communities used it as recent as the civil war when Wilson’s Army came through here out of Tennessee, they actually went to Elyton using this road that you’re talking about. They filtered in out of North Alabama down the Tombigbee. They went to Elyton Village that was his headquarters. They proceeded from there to burn the University of Tuscaloosa to the ground. They did some burning around here, I believe, if my bearings are right here, the Old Methodist Church, they swore Confederate Soldiers were in there in the early years of the war, but when Wilson came through, I believe, he actually burned the church for them as a thank you. But again, thank you for your work. I encourage people to get out. We, you know, just on the road and him coming through just over here at the Warrior River, what they call Lynn’s Park there’s – my understanding, sections of the old ford when it used to go across there. I believe to be canon revetments that were dug pointing back to the west to protect the Army as they took days and days to get all the way through Jasper and back over into Birmingham, but there’s interesting stuff out there. Our old cemeteries. But again, hats off to you for the work you’ve done. I hope we have a lot more people like you in society.

Mr. Wheeler Pounds stated, "My regrets was I couldn't interview in cemeteries.

Commissioner Borden stated, "That's all I have."

Commissioner Burrough stated, "Also, I'd like to thank Mr. Pounds for coming and thank you for your work. I've often talked to Skip Tucker, went to work in conjunction with him on projects up and down Byler and I'm certainly excited about what's coming, and investing in restoration of that particular road. I'm committed to, you know, when the time comes, to do all paving that it needs up and down the sections, we're going to do what we can and I just appreciate all of the hard work you've had in it. And, I guess, Glenn we've got road projects coming up. Coal Valley is basically the next one I have coming. We've got road projects, working Redmill-Saragossa Road currently. You know, we've paved - I'd have to add it up to be exact, somewhere between forty and fifty miles of asphalt in the last three or four or five years, you know, being fortunate to receive the money that the Chairman has pinched and saved and disbursed, plus the ARPA fund that we had. I know it's been a big shot in the arm to all of us and everybody is excited about their road getting paved. Unfortunately, there are some that don't get paved, they'll be coming in time, down the road.

I want to take the time, the candidate that's running for Chairman, the Chairman job, and maybe respond back to something that he's bringing out on our expenses. He has coordinated this with our Administrator requesting public information. You know, that's open book to anybody that ever wants to come in here to do this. I don't know where exactly he exaggerates the mileage. We have it right here. I've got a folder on it today. I've got all my mileages since I've been in office. I'm the only commissioner, I guess, that chooses to drive my own vehicle. You know, I have certain reasons for that. But you know, the job that we have is not a part-time job and I don't know where that comes into play or who thinks it's a part-time job, because you know we work from 5:30 to 6:00 in the morning till 4 o'clock almost every day until the job is completed. Sometimes they get off a little early when we get things done, but you know, we get twenty, thirty or forty calls a week at our office and that's traveling to check on drainage issues, check on potholes. I have an average of ten men that, you know, you work three crews. You know, you have to followup on their work. I mean, I can't take for granted that they've been sent out and the work got done. I have to go check it. You know, we have civic duties that we have to do, we have to attend meetings, you know, two or three times a week at certain different places. I have to come to this Commission Office for payroll, you know, accounts payables. Anything that goes on. I'm constantly in my vehicle working with my phone and my vehicle. And, you know, if somebody wants to question my job, you know, that's fine. The voters can decide that. But, you know, we travel around 2500 to 3000 miles a month. That averages out five or six hundred miles a week. I have a 340-mile district and we drive those roads regularly. You know, nearly every Monday, Tuesday, you know, we are out there hard and heavy. And, you know, you can question it all you want, but you know, my people in my district I represent I think they know that I do the job. And after the meeting you're welcome, Ed, I certainly

want to encourage you to come, you're welcome to come also, the Chairman candidate. And he's received information from the Public Information Act. He's made a request, I guess, again, I haven't – he does not make these requests of me, they go straight to the administrator. She's the one that has handled the first set. I have no reason to know why you haven't answered him back. So, that's between you two. And if there are any other questions you may have after the meeting, you're welcome to come in here and we'll –

Mr. Madison: Absolutely.

Commissioner Burrough: Well, there you go.

Chairman Miller: "Mr. Davis."

Commissioner Burrough: "You won't out top that one."

Commissioner Davis stated, "I'm going to try. You've got me this meeting, don't you Jeff? I do need to add number 15 to the Agenda, Mr. Chairman. This is Bid Number 793 for the second half of Duncan Road. That bid will be opened Wednesday. For times sake I want to go ahead and approve whoever the lowest bidder is for Wednesday. So, I need to add that to the agenda at this time.

Chairman Miller stated, "Okay. I have a motion from Mr. Davis to add item number 15 to the Agenda, that's Bid 793, Duncan Road and to approve the bids that will be received Wednesday or to approve the low bidder that will be received Wednesday. All right, do I have a second?

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Borden.

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

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Commissioner Burrough stated, "May I interrupt you and make it a little longer? Do you mind?"

Commissioner Davis stated, "Let's get through voting first. Then you can talk all you want to."

Chairman Miller stated, "Okay. Let me back up to, okay, at this time, now we've got item 15 added, so we need a motion to open for discussion, item 15.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open for discussion Bid 793, Duncan Road.

County Attorney Richard Fikes stated, "Let me say this: Let's review it, obviously with the engineer. And I can take a look at it, too, to make sure everything is in order before it gets approved, okay? Subject to legal's and engineering's approval, okay?"

Chairman Miller stated, "Okay. And once it is – if that's approved, then you'll direct me as to the signing of the contract or whatever?"



County Attorney Richard Fikes stated, "Yes, sir."

Commissioner Davis stated, "The reason being is for time situation. We're starting on the first part of Duncan Road with the ARPA money that's available now. District One has the fundings to complete the second part, engineering plans have been done and the bids open up on Wednesday. Instead of having to wait two weeks to come back in and approve that, the lowest bidder gets approved and hopefully, we'll get the whole road paved in a decent amount of time, timewise, so that's the reason behind that."

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to Approve bid 793, subject to review by the Engineer and Legal.

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.

Commissioner Burrough continued, "I just failed to mention. You know, we have an Alabama Code that provides that we get reimbursed for our mileage when we use our personal vehicle. I don't know if I said it, but it's Alabama Code 11-3-4. And we are budgeted every year and it's in my budget. This is stuff I'll give Ed, but I want it to be known that I said it. It's all here for you to look at."

Commissioner Davis stated, "Well, I want to make mention on that too, since Jeff said other commissioners drive personal vehicles or county vehicles or whatever they choose to drive. I don't have a county vehicle. I don't have a county cell phone. I rarely ever turn in mileage in the eleven years I've been in office. I rarely turn in gas tickets. It's my personal choice. I drove fifty miles last Tuesday in my District. I will not turn in and charge the taxpayers one penny for those fifty miles that I drove checking on my district. So, just because a commissioner doesn't have mileage turned in, does in no way indicate that the commissioner is not out working. He just might have a better, not better, excuse me, he might have a different mindset with what he does, okay, as far as turning that in. The same thing for Mr. Aderholt. He doesn't turn in mileage, it's the same situation. You know, we made that decision. The Code sets forth what's legal to do. The other commissioners can do what they do based off that Code and based off their records. Commissioners don't check the other commissioners' miles logs. It's the district commissioners' funds that's legal that's set up by statute. They spend those funds according to that. So, again, what I choose to do, Jeff chooses different or Jim might choose different. The Chairman might choose different or Mr. Aderholt might choose different. That's just the way it goes. I choose that for a reason. I don't do this job for the money. I do this job to help this county, period. Okay. That's the reason I do this job. I'm not saying about the other guys, I'm not speaking for them, I'm speaking for myself. So, you can check any records you want to of mine. You're welcome to. You can

lay it all out there. Again, I've spent money out of my pocket to go to meetings. I don't charge the county meals. I don't charge – I have to eat three times a day anyway. The way I look at that, I'm going to pay for that out of my pocket. I'm not going to charge the taxpayers for that. That's just me. I've paid for conferences before out of my pocket to go represent the county, thousands of dollars before. That's just me. Okay. So, if some person wants to put it on the Facebook post and allude that you've got commissioners with zero, that's not true. You're welcome to call me and sit down and I'll tell you what my schedule is like every week. It is a fulltime job. We're on call 24/7. I've done this job and a successful real estate business fulltime for eleven years, seven days a week, like Jeff said. We're on call seven days a week 24/7. So, anybody again, like Jeff said again, it's public information. You're welcome to come and look at anything you want to. Okay. I'm not going to be part of anything being hid or not disclosed and I don't think these other gentlemen will be part of anything being hid or not disclosed. So, I just want to get that out. Because again, each, and every individual district commissioner has their own funds and they choose to allocate those funds the way they want to. Okay. If they choose to drive a county truck, not drive a county truck, turn in mileage, not turn in mileage, that's what we're elected to do. And again, the voters decide on who they want to sit in these seats. And they might decide different folks. It's up to them. I'll respect them either way and still love this county and still work to help support this county."

Commissioner Burrough added, "We're all audited each year."

Commissioner Davis continued; "That's a good point. We're all audited every year like Commissioner Burrough said, so I just want to say that because, again, when something is made, other folks get drug into these Facebook posts. And I'm not a Facebook warrior, I'm not going to get on there and comment things. My cell phone number is published. If anybody has got any questions, they're welcome to call me. I'll sit down with you and provide any information you need. With that, there are a lot more positive things going on in the county than negative. Okay. Let's focus on the positive things that we've got going on. And on top of that, the number one thing is pray for us as we make those decisions. Pray for our county employees and pray for our law enforcement as they're in danger every day. And when we pray, pray for their safety. With that Mr. Chairman, I'll – Jeff, I think I went longer than you. Do you want to add a couple more minutes?"

Commissioner Aderholt stated, "I would add one comment, too. I think it's on the hearts and minds of a lot of people. Let's pray for Israel."

Chairman Miller stated, "I, too, would like to say thank you for all the folks coming today and we appreciate them. And I want to do a big shout out to Regina with our EMA. Folks, we had a fire and this young lady stood up for this county. This young

lady stayed out there several hours during the night. Then the next morning when I was out there doing some things that I was asked to do by the fire marshals, I had to call her back because we had some hotspots out there. And she was right back out there. She got everything handled. We had to remove some -- removal of some fuel and she was right out there and stayed with it. She went above and beyond on this for the county. I want everybody to know that. I appreciate every employee that's here of the county. And it has been this commission's hope -- and we have made some improvement on the pay for the county employees to the tune of 7 percent now. And that, we hope, is more to come in the future. It depends on our funding and our budgets. It depends on a lot of things that this county needs. We know that our roads are the most important. Up to date, right now, we're close to the 23-million-dollar mark. We're in basically the third year. That's never been done in a commission's four-year-term. That's continuing to grow. That's with the state funding and the extra monies and the ARPA funding, that won't be here next year or next term. You know, the Brown's Bridge and the Smith Chapel Bridge, you've heard that they're pretty much headed down toward finishing up. There's only sixty, I think, sixty-one more bridges that we need to work on Glenn?

County Engineer Glenn Peek, "Yeah, sixty, eighty, a hundred."

Chairman Miller stated, "Yes. So, there's a lot of things this county still needs. But continuing this process is time consuming and it is a hard job and everybody that lives on a road, that road is the most important. And I'll assure you, it is. And it has been the hope of this Commission, all of these guys, to do every inch of road that they can do with the funding that was available. And they have. And we're going to continue and just like on our Solid Waste, we appreciate John's work there at the Solid Waste. He really has worked on it and the funds are up and the count is continuing to grow for service. And, you know, we appreciate that. And I know we've got a lot of building projects going on here. And I know Mr. Tucker was pleased with the Resolution and those things will help him just a little bit at a time. And so, those projects are ongoing, you know, it's a daily task. In traveling, I do a lot of traveling in my personal truck. If you'll look at that little truck out there that's setting in that parking lot, that's my personal one, that's not the county's. Okay. I've had a couple of vehicles that we get and hang onto because somebody else needed them in the future. We'd move them down to them. And pickup truck, Glenn is going to pick up today because a new assistant engineer is hired. And this truck was held onto for him, because that's part of his job to have that vehicle. And so, as we continue to grow with this county and move with this county, you'll find that it is the intent of this Chairman to continue the process of moving Walker County forward as we're doing at this moment. With that said, I would entertain a motion to adjourn."

Mr. Wheeler Pounds stated, "I don't want to leave here without commending everybody for the excellent job done on the Brown Bridge Road. We depend on that and that is an excellent job."

Chairman Miller stated, "Thank you. I entertain a motion to adjourn."

**ADJOURN:**

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

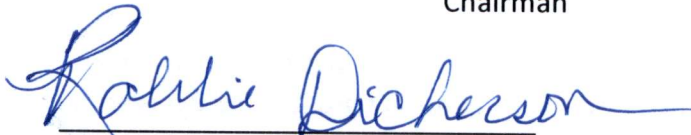
With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Read and Approved:

  
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Chairman

  
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Attest