

**NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**1124 Clark Street**  
**Covington, Georgia**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**January 2, 2018**

Present: Chairman Marcello Banes, Commissioners' Stan Edwards, Lanier Sims, Nancy Schulz, J.C. Henderson, Ronnie Cowan, County Attorney Megan Martin, County Manager Lloyd Kerr and Clerk Jackie Smith

Large group of citizens Covington News, Newton Citizen

Chairman Banes called the meeting to order, extended a welcome, and read the thought for the day. The invocation was given by Pastor A. Dobbs, Mt. Olive Baptist Church and the Pledge of Allegiance to our great flag was led by Commissioner Sims.

**AGENDA ADOPTION**

Chairman Banes requested to add Item 10.a. for the LEAP Program to the Agenda and remove items 14 and 17 from the Agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Edwards, second by Commissioner Sims to adopt the January 2, 2018 agenda as stated.

Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

No comments

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

None

**COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

- T-SPLOST webinar
- Audit should be completed by the end of this week.
- Juvenile program building should be occupied within next 30 days.
- Judicial Center on target for May occupancy.
- Plan is to move the Judges and their staff into new section first.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Finance/Senior Services/DFACS – Acceptance of \$125,871.41 (additional) from GA DHS Community Block Grant to be used for Rent/Utility/Meals on Wheels services for Newton County Residents.

Appointment: Board of Elections and Registration – Democratic Party – Kelly Robinson

Appointment of BOC Vice-Chair – Ronnie Cowan

Appointment of County Manager – Lloyd Kerr

Appointment of County Attorney – Megan Martin

Appointment of County Clerk – Jackie Smith  
Appointment of Deputy Clerk – Judy Johnson  
County Clerk: BOC ES Meeting Minutes dated December 5, 2017  
Discussion/Approval of SPLOST Oversight Committee Members:  
Appointment: Chairman – Ralph Staffins  
Appointment: District 1 - Pastor Kenneth Williams  
Appointment: District 2 – Appointment to be made at next BOC meeting  
Appointment: District 3 – June McDowall  
Appointment District 4 - Appointment to be made at next BOC meeting  
Appointment: District 5 – Dan Elmore  
Appointment: County Manager - Sally Chamberlain-Budd

Motion by Commissioner Henderson, second by Commissioner Schulz, to adopt the consent agenda.

Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

**DISCUSSION/SCHEDULING OF BOC WORK SESSIONS FOR: HWY 278  
CID; 911 FEES LAWSUIT; OPIOD LAWSUIT; EMPLOYEE POLICY AND  
PROCEDURES MANUAL; AND APPROPRIATIONS REPORTS**

County Manager, Lloyd Kerr presented the Board with handout of potential upcoming dates in which work sessions could be scheduled.

Motion by Commissioner Schulz, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve the work sessions as stated by the County Manager.

Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

**DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF LEASE AGREEMENT FOR THE FARM  
FIELDS AT GAITHER'S**

Presented by County Attorney Megan Martin

- Lease agreement is attached and made part of these minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Edwards, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve the lease agreement for the farm fields at Gaither's as presented by the county attorney.

Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

**DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF THE LEAP PROGRAM WITH THE  
NEWTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Mr. Ralph Staffins, President of the Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Board of Commissioners requesting \$15,000 to offer the LEAP Job Training Program again in Newton County. Mr. Staffins stated the first round of the LEAP program produced 100 graduates with certificates of job training that could be used by local industries and some graduates had already secured jobs with these industries. Mr. Staffins indicated there were another 122 citizens who had signed up for the program. Mr. Staffins further stated the total cost to educate another 100 citizens would be \$30,000 (\$300 per person) with the other half of the cost being contributed by the City of Covington.

Both Commissioner Edwards and Schulz expressed concern over using the funding from the Contingency Fund and asked if Mr. Staffins had approached other resources to seek funding. Mr. Staffins stated that the initial program had been paid by a grant and while the Chamber would be seeking funding from other resources, due to the time constraint to keep the program active, there was not enough time to meet the February deadline.

Motion by Commissioner Henderson, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve \$15,000 to the Chamber of Commerce designated for the LEAP program.  
Motion carried (3-2) with Commissioners Edwards and Schulz voting in opposition.

**DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FLAT SHOALS RD/COVINGTON BYPASS PROJECT**

Presented by County Attorney Megan Martin.

Motion by Commissioner Cowan, second by Commissioner Schulz, to approve Parcel 13, acquisition of 0.005 acres of fee simple ROW & 0.119 acres of construction and maintenance easement for \$49,314.00 (Owners: Mary J. Knight & Gregory S. Knight)  
Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

Motion by Commissioner Cowan, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve Parcel 14 (former tenant interest) Relocation Expenses payable to Wesley Hughes totaling \$2,325.00 in accordance with the Federal "Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act".  
Motion carried unanimously (5-0)

Motion by Commissioner Cowan, second by Commissioner Schulz, to approve Parcel 14 – Incidental Moving Expenses – Approval of \$500.00 payable to property owner of Parcel 14, Jack Laster, for assistance in moving several large items from existing structure scheduled to be razed by Newton County.  
Motion carried unanimously (5-0)

**DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND MUTUAL RELEASE BETWEEN NEWTON COUNTY, PIEDMONT-NEWTON HOSPITAL, AND THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY.**

- Note: Chairman Banes removed item from agenda during the approval of the agenda at the beginning of this meeting.

**DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION R010218– A RESOLUTION OF THE NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS NAMING JARRARD & DAVIS, LLP AS SOLICITOR FOR THE NEWTON COUNTY MAGISTRATE COURT**

Presented by County Attorney Megan Martin.

- Resolution R010218 is attached and made part of these minutes
- Mrs. Martin stated this would be an interim appointment until Judge Bell could fill the position.

Motion by Commissioner Cowan, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve Resolution R010218 naming Jarrard & Davis, LLP as Solicitor for the Newton County Magistrate Court.

Motion carried (4/1) with Commissioner Henderson voting in opposition.

**DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION R010218a– A RESOLUTION OF THE NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TERMINATING THE SEGREGATED FUND ACCOUNT FOR GAITHER’S.**

Presented by County Manager Lloyd Kerr

- Finance director will close this account.
- Resolution R010218a is attached and made part of these minutes

Motion by Commissioner Edwards, second by Commissioner Schulz, to approve Resolution R010218a terminating the segregated fund account for Gaither’s.

Motion carried unanimously (5-0)

**DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF R010218B – A RESOLUTION OF THE NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MAKING APPOINTMENTS TO THE JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DEKALB COUNTY, NEWTON COUNTY AND GWINNETT COUNTY.**

- Note: Chairman Banes removed item from agenda during the approval of the agenda at the beginning of this meeting.

**PUBLIC HEARING: DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION R010218c – A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF NEWTON COUNTY, GEORGIA, DECLARING COUNTY LINE ROAD EAST ABANDONED AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

Presented by County Manager Lloyd Kerr

- Final hearing on the abandonment of the county road
- All advertisements and notices have been filed.

Chairman Banes opened the Public Hearing @ 7:30 p.m.

There were no public comments and the chairman closed the public hearing @ 7:34 p.m.

Motion by Commissioner Edwards, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve Resolution R010218c declaring County Line Rd East abandoned.

Motion carried unanimously (5-0)

**ALCOHOL LICENSE**

Final Reading

Kroger #621

3700 Salem Road

Covington, GA 30016

Andre Sanders

District Three

Motion by Commissioner Schulz, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve the alcohol license request for Kroger #621 located at 3700 Salem Road, Covington, GA 30016 as requested.

Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

Final Reading

Pure Happy Mart

1313 Hwy. 11

Social Circle, GA 30025

Riyaz Dedani

District Five

Motion by Commissioner Cowan, second by Commissioner Schulz, to approve the alcohol license request for Pure Happy Mart located at 1313 Hwy. 11, Social Circle, GA 30025 as requested.

Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

### **2018 ALCOHOL LICENSE RENEWALS**

Motion by Commissioner Schulz, second by Commissioner Sims, to approve the 2018 Alcohol License Renewals as printed in board book and read by the county manager.

Motion carried unanimously (5/0)

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Barbara Morgan

Covington, GA

- Strong supporter of jobs and training, but concerned about using money out of contingency fund.
- Questioned if we knew if these people live in Newton County, pay taxes in Newton County. Questions we need to ask each time we are asked to use contingency funding.

Sarah Dauby

Covington, GA

- Gaither's...served on committee
- Last president of committee was the Love's (live on Hwy. 162). Contact them for information. Look @ what Henry County has done with a facility like this...great example.

Archie Shepherd

Covington, GA

- Advised the board of a metal grate behind the administration building that needs to be repaired before someone gets hurt....very dangerous.

Fredrick Johnson

Covington, GA

- January 21, 2018 MLK event @ high school.
- January 22, 2018 – Cemetery clean-up day to honor Dr. King's birthday.
- A Day On instead of a Day Off...

Ricky Mock  
Social Circle, GA

- Voiced concerns of the JDA (Gwinnett, Rockdale & Newton).
- Issuing bonds affects Newton County's credit rating
- Suggested that Newton County drop out like Rockdale did.

Thomas Buckner  
Covington, GA

- Against raising taxes.

Flemmie Pitts  
Covington, GA

- First started when we set bonds for the college.
- Serves on the JDA and it has never cost Newton County one dime!

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Edwards

- Thanked everyone for helping him during 2017.
- Would like to see county look into high speed internet availability for rural Newton County.
- Suggest a "high-speed internet summit." Get cable and phone companies together.

Commissioner Sims

- Echo Commissioner Edwards comments
- Expressed appreciation for chairman's goal to unite this board in 2017 and that goal was accomplished.
- Thankful for all the people we serve, staff and serving with BOC.

Commissioner Schulz

- Thankful for relationships on board and appreciates how board has become solidified under chairman's leadership.
- Suggest we take an active role and be attuned to what goes on at the Capitol.
- Watch the Rural Broadband Bill.

Commissioner Henderson

- Challenge to preserve our African-American heritage history in Newton County.
- Would like to see a museum for African-American history.

Commissioner Cowan

- Expressed thanks to BOC members for 2017
- Handled a lot of problems and last year made progress.
- Appreciate willingness to work together.
- Our "Clean-up Day" in the Jamestown Community was a great success and people were so appreciative of what was done there.
- Appreciate citizens' support.

Chairman Banes

- Great pleasure to work with this board.
- Thanks to the Covington News for giving me the opportunity to comment about this board. What you see here is what you see behind closed doors.
- Future is bright for Newton County

- We are going to move Newton County forward and we are not going to dwell on the past.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**None**

With no further business, a motion by Commissioner Sims, second by Commissioner Edwards, the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Jackie B. Smith, County Clerk