

**REGULAR SESSION
TIFT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2009 (6:30 P.M.)**

The scheduled Regular Session of the Tift County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Grady Thompson on Monday, June 8, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Administrative Building. Member of the commission present including Chairman Thompson were Vice Chairman Rigdon and Commissioners Donnie Hester, Sherry Miley, Melissa Chevers, Mike Jones and Robert Setters.

Chairman Thompson called to order the Regular Business meeting of the Tift County Board of Commissioners at 6:30 P.M.

Chairman Thompson asked Commissioner Hester to give the invocation followed by the pledge to the flag.

All actions taken in this meeting are results of Commissioners' votes with the Chairman not voting except in the case of a tie or a Commissioner is absent which will be stipulated as such.

Minutes: Motion was made by Commissioner Hester approving the May 5, 2009 Workshop Minutes and the May 11, 2009 Regular Session Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

Additions to the Agenda:

Request from the Tax Commissioner to remove properties from the Tax digest (S)
Designation of an agent authorized to deal with FEMA & GEMA as it relates to financial assistance (T)
Homeland Security Grant Program Citizens Corps Program (U)
Restroom and other upgrades to E.B. Hamilton Softball Complex (V)

Motion to add Item S, T, U and V to the Agenda was made by Commissioner Miley, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

Sonny Bowen, with Bowen, Phillips, Carmichael, Davis & Sims addressed the Board concerning the audit bid. He would like for the Board to re-consider their firm since the bids are similar and in some instances cheaper. He stated they have a very experienced staff and they have governmental auditing experience. They are a local Tift County firm and would like for the Board to reconsider their motion placed on the Consent Agenda on the award of the audit bid.

Meredith Lipson, with Mauldin and Jenkins addressed the Board concerning the award of the audit bid. They have performed the audit for Tift County for the past several years and they work very well with the staff. They have six partners and many staff members that do nothing but governmental auditing all year long. She stated she realizes they are not local and also stated that being local was not one of the criteria request in the bid invitation. She stated the County Staff had made the recommendation to continue with their firm, we work very well together and she would appreciate the board's consideration to continue their auditing procedures with Mauldin and Jenkins.

Public Hearings:

A. Presentation of 2009-2010 Proposed Operating Budget: Leigh Jordan, Finance Director gave hand outs to the Board on the power point presentation. She stated the budget is balanced. Each Department Head was asked to submit their budges with a 2%, 3%, and 5% decrease. Then during the budget process the determination of the numbers for each department was made. There was a freeze put on hiring. The tax digest has increased 1.69% but this is subject to change as we get closer to June 30th but it is not expected to change by much. The budget has been balanced with no millage increase.

The County Attorney opened the required Public Hearing for comments.

There were no comments for the Public concerning the 2009-2010 Operating Budget.

The County Attorney closed the public hearing.

B. TC-SE-09-09: Petition from Michael and Molinda Wise for a Special Exception to locate a Manufactured Home in R-8 Zoning District at 35 Pecan Street on part of parcel T033-312 subject to plat approval and subject to (a) approval of 72 square feet variance from the 800 feet minimum floor area requirement of (b) addition of 72 square feet living area to the manufactured home within 6 months: Carl Fortson read the staff recommendation and it comes to the Board with a recommendation of approval from both Staff and Planning and Zoning subject to plat approval and subject to (a) approval of a 72 square feet variance from the 800 square feet minimum floor area requirement or (b) addition of 72 square feet living area to the Manufactured Home within 6 months. He stated there are some mobile homes in this area but not on this particular street. Commissioners Hester and Chevers both had some a couple of questions of Mr. Fortson that was answered to their satisfaction concerning the extra square footage of living space and the age of the proposed mobile home to be moved on the lot.

The County Attorney opened the public hearing and asked for any declaration of Conflict of Interest from the Commission Board. There was none.

Mr. Fortson has received a letter of opposition from Mr. Eugene Burns in regard to this request. He stated in his letter that allowing this Special Exception it will decrease in values of surrounding property owners and will open the flood gates to similar request for other properties in the area. He was not able to attend the public hearing.

Phil West 225 Collier Road, Sycamore, Georgia spoke against the request. He was the previous property owner that sold the lot to Mr. Wise. He is concerned about the property values of the other properties in the area and along this street. He has other properties that he wants to sell in this same area. He advised that he made the present property owner that this property was zoned R-8 before he purchased the property.

Ms. Holloman, 33 Pecan Street spoke against the request. She stated that this area is only for structure homes and she has lived there a long time. She stated she went over to welcome them when they began to clear the lot and the Mr. Wise stated they were going to move a house in on the property and remodel it. She stated that many of the neighbors were concerned about the mobile home being allowed there. She said this is a very nice young couple but they should go by the rules as they all have. She asked the Board to please deny this Special Exception.

Lawrence Smith 3260 South Virginia Avenue spoke against the request. He advised the Board that two months ago he and his partner bought a lot in this area and they were going to bring in a house and refurbish it because they were told there could be no mobile homes on the street and in this area. He is against this request.

Michael Wise 1497 Bill Bowen Road spoke in favor of his request. He asked the Board to please consider the Special Exception and allow him to place his mobile home there for him and his family. He stated that he could not find a house that he could afford to be moved onto the property. He cherishes his mobile home as if it was a million dollars. He has a wife and two small children, he has a roof over his head and he is a hard working young man. He does not mean to cause any trouble; this is all he can afford. He thought he could get a free structure but that did not work out and he cannot afford the price they want for old homes to be moved. He is just trying to get out of the trailer park because there is real bad crime over there and he wants to get his family out and in a safer place.

There were no further comments and the County Attorney closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hester then spoke to the Board and the audience stating he has been on the Board for eleven years and this has been one of the toughest decisions to make. He sympathizes with Mr. Wise and his family and he understands about the crime in the area where he is now but we do have rules and regulations that must be followed.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hester to deny TC-SE-09-09, Special Exception of Michael and Molinda Wise, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jones to remove Item N from the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

D. Motion to reappoint Laverne Land to the Tift County Board of Elections and Registration for a 4 year term to expire July 2013

E. Motion to re-appoint Jo Griffeth, Dotty Royal and Eunice Mixon to the Tifton-Tift County Library Board for 3 year terms to expire June 2012

F. Motion to re-appoint H. C. Medford to the Tift County Board of Family and Children Services for a 5 year term to expire June 2014

G. Motion to withdraw Jonathan Garvey's appointment to the Tifton-Tift County Planning and Zoning Board due to the vacancy on the Board at the time he was appointed is a city of Tifton slot

H. Motion to appoint Tony McBrayer to the Tifton-Tift County Planning & Zoning Board of Appeals for a 5 year term to expire June 2014

J. Motion authorizing the purchase of a Bush Hog Mower from Stafford in the low bid amount of \$12,485

K. Motion authorizing the purchase of a John Deere 410J Backhoe from Stafford Equipment in the low bid amount of \$71,516 and authorizing the trade in of the 1994 John Deere 410D currently in inventory

L. Motion authorizing the purchase of 6 sets of 5 row 27 foot bleachers and installation in the low bid amount of \$25,478 from Outdoor Aluminum

M. Motion to appoint Jeff Robbins to the Athletic Advisory Committee for a 3 year term to expire May 2012

O. Motion authorizing the purchase of a new water heater and installation for the jail in the low bid amount of \$8,779.27 from Ken Clary & company and installed by Central Plumbing to be paid for from the Jail Construction Fund

P. Motion authorizing the Chairman to sign the annual renewal leases for State Agencies that lease from the County which include the Department of Juvenile Justice, Veterans and Department of Public Safety

Q. Motion authorizing the application be filed for the Weather Radio Grant for E-911/EMA for weather radios which requires \$13,323.80 in local match

R. Motion authorizing the Chairman to sign the Annual Renewal Lease with the Department of Corrections for detail work in the County in the amount of \$39,500

Motion approving the Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Miley, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Rigdon has been very ill and is slowly recovering. He has sat through this portion of the meeting but at this point he asked the Chairman to be excused from the meeting to go home and take some medicine, he will hopefully be back before the meeting adjourns.

REGULAR AGENDA:

S. Request from the Tax Commissioner to remove properties from the Tax Digest: The County Attorney advised the Board that he had investigated the reasoning for the proposed write offs and finds they are justified. Most of them can no longer be located in the specified location or any other property in Tift County. Some of them were duplications in inventories of the owners. Therefore it is the County Attorneys recommendation to write off the amounts list on Exhibit C for the years 2000 through 2008. Motion was made by Commissioner Setters to authorize the Tax commissioner to remove from the Tax digest the list marked as Exhibit C, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Set the Tentative Millage Rate for Tift County for 2009: The County Manger and the Finance Director advised that the budget has been balanced without a Tax Millage increase. The tentative millage needs to be set the same as last year; 10.39 Countywide and 2.103 Special Tax District. Motion was made by Commissioner Hester setting the tentative millage rate for Tift County at 10.39 Countywide and 2.103 Special Tax District, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

I. Award bid for the purchase of a Sloper/Motorgrader for the Road Department: Richard Burr, Public Works Director again gave the staff recommendation to purchase the Caterpillar Motorgrader. The caterpillar is the machine the operators prefer and staff would like its motorgrader fleet uniform as it relates to the manufacture. This purchase will be on a monthly lease payment of \$2,149.03. Commissioner Miley reported that she met with Mr. Burr and the folks at the road department concerning the difference in the motorgraders. She has had her questions and concerns answered to her satisfaction. Motion was made by Commissioner Miley to purchase the caterpillar motorgrader from Yancey Bros on the specified lease agreement, seconded by Hester. Motion carried unanimously.

N. Award bid to perform the Annual Financial and Compliance Audit for the County for the next three consecutive years, FY 2009, 2010 and 2011: The Finance Director that bids had been solicited for the audit with only about \$1,000 difference in the bids from both companies that submitted bids. It is staff recommendation to stay with Mauldin and Jenkins; however the Board will need to take a vote. The local CPA Firm that submitted a bid is Bowen, Phillips, Carmichael, Davis & Sims. Commissioner Hester stated he has always been in favor of the hometown people. The audit bid is very close and equal. Commissioner Miley stated she understands both sides and she thinks it is a good thing for it to go outside the county periodically but she also thinks that at this time with the economic situation it is important to keep jobs at home where we can. Motion was made by Commissioner Miley to accept the bid from Bowen, Phillips, Carmichael, Davis and Sims, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

T. Designation of an agent authorized to deal with FEMA & GEMA as it relates to financial assistance: the County Manager advised this is a Resolution request from FEMA & GEMA which designates a fiscal agent for Tift County to provide them with all information necessary for disaster relief funding. Motion was made by Commissioner Miley to designate Leigh Jordan, Finance Director, seconded by Commissioner Jones. Motion carried unanimously.

U. CERT Grant Program: The County Manager advised that this is a grant known as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) which is awarded by GEMA. The grant amount is \$8,536.75 with no local match required. The Chairman needs to be authorized to sign the Agreement for the grant. Motion was made by Commissioner Setters authorizing the Chairman to endorse the CERT Grant documents, seconded by Commissioner Hester. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Restroom and other upgrades to E. B. Hamilton Complex: Jason Jordan, Projects Manager addressed the Board on this issue. There is left over funds from the renovation of the new DDS Building and there are four (4) buildings at E. B. Hamilton Softball Complex that are in need of repair. These renovations would resolve some of the public complaints about the appearance and functionality of the restrooms. Prices have been solicited to do the upgrades using materials that would require minimal maintenance and upkeep. The cost for improvements at E. B. Hamilton, Friendly City Park and Optimist Park include football, soccer and softball field restrooms and roofs at the softball restrooms. Commissioner Hester inquired about some maintenance on the roof at Mott Litman Gym. Staff stated that Tucker Brothers is still trying to isolate the roof leak at Mott Litman Gym. Staff will look into this and get the leaks repaired there. These figures are only for the outside of the buildings in the amount of \$34,209. We will use our own manpower for any renovations for the inside of the buildings. Commissioner Jones stated he would like to see our Tourism Board to come on board with us on these upgrades. Staff does want to meet with the Board along with the Tourism Board as well as the City to get them on Board through SPLOST dollars to get necessary improvements to these recreational fields. Commissioner Miley also would like to see Tourism involved. Motion was made by Commissioner Miley for recreational improvements as presented in the amount of \$34,209, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Rigdon has now returned to the meeting.

County Manager Items: None

The Commissioners have requested an Executive Session for personnel.

Commissioners Items:

Commissioner Setters again wanted to comment on the opportunity he and Commissioner Jones had to ride along with the Sheriff's deputies a few weekends ago and it was a real "eye opener" and thanked them for a job well done. Secondly he commented on the number of capital items that was

on the Consent Agenda and wanted everyone to understand that this money had been budgeted but the Department Heads have held the line on their budgets all year long. This is items that have been needed long before now, it's been a lean year and will continue next year. He thanked the Department Heads for holding the line on their budgets very well as asked by the County Manager.

Commissioner Jones stated he has received some calls from folks on Davis Road where the city is to extend the sewer; they are having trouble with their septic tanks. He would like for the County Manager to talk with the city folks to get an update on this time frame and report back to him so he can let the folks out there know when this might end. The County Manager will speak with the Utilities Department and let Commissioner Jones know.

Commissioner Miley advised the County Manager that she would like to attend the next Road Committee Meeting.

Commissioner Chevers commented on the public hearing request of Michael Wise; he had already left but she wanted to let everyone know that it was a really hard vote but one of the things that we as a community need to understand is that we need to utilize our leaders and if he had of gotten with his commissioner then perhaps he could have been lead in the right direction to find answers. She applauded the County manger and the Public Works Director; they both came to help with One Street at a Time Clean-Up on Saturday. It was a great effort and Hill Avenue looks very good. The next street will be James Avenue.

Vice Chairman Rigdon apologized for having to step out of the meeting earlier but he has been very ill and need to run home to take some medicine.

Chairman Thompson thanked everybody with the County Government to help us come in under budget. He stated all have worked hard to hold the line on spending and he appreciates each one. We are very fortunate not to have to raise taxes at this time.

Executive Session: Motion was made by Commissioner Hester to go into Executive Session for Personnel, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to close Executive Session was made by Commissioner Setters, seconded by Commissioner Hester. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Setters, seconded by Commissioner Hester. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Grady Thompson, District 7

Vice Chairman, Fred W. Rigdon District 5

Commissioner Donnie Hester, District 1

Commissioner Melissa Chevers, District 2

Commissioner Robert Setters, District 3

Commissioner Sherry Miley, Dist. 4

Commissioner C. Michael Jones, District 6

Attest: _____
Glynda Hemby, County Clerk