

Jasper County Board of Commissioners

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2011

9:00 a.m.

Chairman Hill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with the following commissioners in attendance:

Charles Hill, Chairman, Alan Cox, Vice-Chairman, Jack Bernard, and Carl Pennamon.

Staff Present included: Greg Wood, County Manager; Lorri Smith, Asst. County Manager/Finance Director; Sharon Robinson; also Jim Alexander, County Attorney.

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: (Moment of Silence)

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Pennamon made motion to approve the agenda with the change of moving employee promotions from New Business to Executive Session. Commissioner Cox seconded, passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Bernard made motion that the Minutes of the January 18, 2011 Work Session and Regular Board Meeting be approved, Pennamon seconded; approved unanimously.

Public Hearings:

There were no public hearings scheduled

Presentations/Delegations:

Tax Commissioner Report – Merry Faulkner

Ms. Faulkner read a letter to the Board addressing the letter received from them dated December 29, 2010 (A copy of the referenced letter is attached and made a part of these minutes).

Ms. Faulkner gave an outline of the fees collected and noted that she works very hard to collect. She noted that she had never had a problem with the Board of Commissioners in the past and doesn't like being accused of not collecting taxes.

Commissioners had not questions or comments for the Tax Commissioner.

Old Business:

Follow up Tax Commissioner:

Commissioner Bernard questioned the County Manager as to whether or not the Board has received the report from the Tax Commissioner citing delinquent taxes with reasons why taxes have not been collected.

Mr. Wood noted that he would have to defer the question to Ms. Faulkner, but a report had been received just not to the detail referenced.

Bernard noted that the Tax Commissioner is in violation section 48-5-154, and the Board should give her one more chance to with two weeks to apply to the law. If she doesn't provide the report consistent with the law then the Board should write a letter to the Governor asking for her removal.

Commissioner Pennamon noted that the Tax Commissioner has offered to furnish us any reports we ask for.

Attorney Alexander noted that the law does specify what is required and offered to meet with Ms. Faulkner to give more detail on what Commissioner Bernard may be looking for.

Commissioner Bernard made motion for the County Attorney to meet with Tax Commissioner on the letter dated December 29, 2010 to clarify what is needed and the information to be provided at the next Board of Commissioner meeting. Commissioner Cox seconded, passed unanimously.

Purchasing Policy:

Mr. Wood reported that the electronic equipment purchase order has been created and is ready to be put into use, and inventory tags will be placed on electronic equipment. Mr. Wood further noted that the purchasing policy has been reviewed and updated and requested that the board make suggestions for additional updates.

Commissioner Pennamon noted that he is still concerned about the bid process and the half million dollar worth of equipment purchased for Public Works last year around February or March.

Mr. Wood noted that he felt it was improperly done and violated the purchasing policy.

Mr. Wood clarified that the Board would like to open all bids over \$5,000 at their board meetings.

Personnel Policy – EIB & Reimbursement Rates:

Mr. Wood noted that he fully reviewed the personnel policy and noted the changes that needed to be made referencing Constitutional Officers and some outdated language and that the entire policy will need to be re-typed.

Mr. Wood suggested that the wording of the mileage reimbursement rate be “the standard IRS rate.”

Other suggestions included; codification of employees working out of their classification, allowing employees to retain up to 40 hours of PTO (Paid Time Off) when utilizing EIB (Extended Illness Benefits), and allowing employees to donate EIB time to employees who have exhausted their time.

Commissioners agreed that the County Manager could change the EIB policy to say that employees are able to use their EIB for follow-up visits.

Commissioners expressed concern of the process for accounting for and documenting the donation of time.

Commissioner Pennamon and Bernard noted that the County Manager should make the changes and bring back to the Board.

Audit Engagement Letter:

Mr. Wood noted that the auditor has responded to the issues that Commissioner Patrick brought up concerning the specific items she wanted looked at, the auditor noted that those are areas they examine anyway and if there is a risk in those areas they will do an extensive audit anyway.

Commissioner Bernard made motion to approve the audit engagement letter for signature by the chairman, Cox seconded, passed unanimously.

New Business:

First Reading Amendment to Occupation License:

Mr. Wood noted that the Board had expressed a need to increase compliance of property tax payments through Occupational Licenses.

Commissioner Bernard made motion to ask the County Manager to advertise the change to the Occupational License Ordinance and Public Hearing, Cox seconded, passed unanimous

EMS Consultant Software:

Mr. Wood asked that this item be deferred until Mr. Jeff Bratcher, Emergency Services Director is back in town.

Commissioner Pennamon questioned if this was a budgeted item.

Mr. Wood noted that they may be able to find money by eliminating a position.

Commissioner Cox made motion to defer this item until the next meeting with the understanding that EMS will come with a proposal of how to pay; Bernard seconded, passed unanimously.

Mr. Wood noted that Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker, LLC have presented an audit engagement letter for the Board to approve at a cost of \$35,000. (A copy of this letter is attached and made a part of these minutes).

Hiring Permission – Vacancy Senior Center:

Mr. Wood informed the Board that the full time assistant whose hours were cut at the last budget session has secured a fulltime position and resigned. Requesting authorization to fill the vacancy at the Senior Center.

Commissioner Pennamon made motion to authorize the County Manager to fill the position at the Senior Center; Bernard seconded, passed unanimously.

Emergency Notification System and Weather Siren:

Melissa Slocumb, Emergency Management Director addressed the board requesting permission to put out to bid the Emergency Services Grant that was awarded last year.

Commissioner Pennamon questioned if the matching portion of \$11,500.00 has been collected.

Ms. Slocumb noted that the \$11,000 was not needed and that about \$3,000 has been collected, so there is enough money for the project with the \$8,000.00 of in-kind services.

Commissioner Pennamon asked how much cash is the county going to have to come up with?

Ms. Slocumb noted \$3,632.50 worst case scenario.

Commissioner Bernard made motion to approve submittal of grant and pull funds from contingency and have Ms. Slocumb to contact each fire station and see if they can come up with funds to replace the \$3,000; Cox seconded for discussion, Hill, Bernard, Cox vote yes; Pennamon against. Motion passes 3 to 1.

2010 Budget Amendments:

Lorri Smith, Assistant County Manager/Finance Director provided Board members with copies of resolutions for amendment regarding increased revenues for Sheriff, EMS, Animal Control, Recreation and Various Departments in FY2010. (A copy of these amendments are attached and made a copy of these minutes).

Commissioner Cox questioned when these are approved are they also approving an increase in expenditures.

Ms. Smith replied, yes.

Commissioner Bernard noted for record the bad debt rate for 2010 and 2011 in property tax collections.

Commissioner Bernard made motion to approve the FY 2010 budget amendments as presented; Pennamon seconded, passed unanimously.

County Manager Items:

Mr. Wood updated board members on Legislative Issues concerning taxes, budget, and Immigration Reform.

General Comments:

Charles Forsythe – Agenda concerns, funding.

Skip Nowetner – Appreciation for work the board does.

Arthur Sheppard – Road Maintenance on Midway Road.

Executive Session:

Commissioner Bernard made motion at 10:27 a.m. to go into executive session to discuss personnel and possible litigation. Pennamon seconded; passed unanimously. (A copy of the affidavit is attached and made a part of these minutes.)

Commissioner Pennamon made motion at 11:26 a.m. to come out of executive session; Bernard seconded; passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pennamon made motion to authorize County Manager to give no more than \$2 per hour for any employee raise as long as money is in the budget; Bernard seconded, passed unanimously.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Bernard made motion to adjourn the meeting; Cox seconded, passed unanimously.

Charles Hill, Chairman

Sharon S. Robinson