

**HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
5:00 P.M., MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2022
HABERSHAM COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE ROOM, MAIN FLOOR
130 JACOB'S WAY
CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523**

A work session of the Habersham County Board of Commissioners was held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 17, 2022 in the Commission Conference Room of the Habersham County Administrative Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523.

Present: Chairman Bruce Palmer; Vice-Chairman Bruce Harkness; Commissioner Dustin Mealor; Commissioner Jimmy Tench; Commissioner Ty Akins; County Attorney Donnie Hunt; County Manager Alicia Vaughn; County Clerk Brandalin Carnes; County Department Directors; Individuals from the Media and Public.

Chairman Palmer called the work session to order at 5:05 p.m.

Commissioner Akins led the Invocation.

Commissioner Mealor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Harkness, seconded by Commissioner Mealor and voted unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

a. Discussion of Creation of Public Facilities Authority

County Attorney Donnie Hunt informed the Commission that County Manager Alicia Vaughn had reached out to him to discuss with the Commission the option of creating a Public Facilities Authority that would have the ability to incur debt for several major projects the county will need to finance to complete. These projects include the construction of a new Animal Control Facility and E-911/Central Fire Station. These projects are over budget due to the fact that the costs of goods and labor have increased since the initial calculations for the SPLOST in which they were approved. One of the downsides of SPLOST is that state law dictates that the county must find a way to finance and complete any named projects, even if the SPLOST funding falls short. A Public Facilities Authority has the ability to issue bonds that could be used to make up for shortage between the SPLOST funds and the actual costs to complete these projects. He reminded the Commission that the difference between a commission versus an authority is that a commission serves as more of a subcommittee or advisory role in which the Board of Commissioners retains control whereas an authority is an independent entity separate from the county. This independence is necessary as the issuance of bonds requires a degree of separation from the Board of Commissioners. He informed that it is not unheard of for a commissioner to be appointed to the authority and that this would aid in keeping the Board of Commissioners aware of what is going on, however he wouldn't advise more than one. He also advised that no more than five people be on the authority. He informed the Commission that creation of this authority would be done through local legislation as it falls under "home rule". A draft of the resolution creating the authority would be presented to Victor Anderson to propose on behalf of Habersham County and would need to go through the legislative delegation. It is generally preferred that all five commissioners workout any issues and reach a consensus in agreement prior to submitting such a resolution. In order to

meet the timeline for having this go through the legislative hopper, a decision would need to be made either at the November Commission meeting or through an early December called meeting. Mr. Hunt stated that the county could issue bonds without the authority, however doing so would require a referendum and if that failed the money would still need to be pulled from the general fund to cover the remaining balance of the projects. Another option would be to ask the voters to remove the projects from the SPLOST due to lack of feasibility via a referendum.

Mrs. Vaughn informed the Commission that it is her job to provide them all the options and that issuing a bond through a public facilities authority was the most cost-effective option to fund the shortfall in the projects. It also provides an option for funding the airport hangar project, as she investigated the possibility of issuing a Certificate of Participation for this project, but FAA regulations will not allow for it.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: None

ADJOURN: 5:50 p.m.

Motion by Commissioner Meador, seconded by Commissioner Akins and voted unanimously to adjourn the work session at 5:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
Chairman Bruce Palmer

Attest: _____
County Clerk Brandalin Carnes