

MINUTES OF THE LEE COUNTY COMMISSION, REGULAR SESSION, MARCH 13, 2023

The Lee County Commission convened in regular session at the Courthouse in Opelika, Alabama, Monday, March 13, 2023. The Chairman declared a quorum and officially opened the meeting with the following members recorded as being present: Judge Bill English, Chairman, and Commissioners Ross Morris, Doug Cannon, Gary Long and Tony Langley. District 5: Vacant. Officials in attendance: Sheriff Jay Jones. News media in attendance: Opelika-Auburn News reporter John West.

Dan Mellott of Sain Associates gave a Power Point Presentation highlighting the results of a broadband feasibility study. Mr. Mellott said the mission of the study was to determine the feasibility of and develop a plan to provide broadband internet service to as many citizens of Lee County as possible. Mr. Mellott said the objectives of the study were to: 1) define clear broadband coverage goals and benchmarks; 2) document existing broadband infrastructure and coverage areas; 3) develop a plan for addressing gaps in broadband service; 4) develop short and long-term recommendations and 4) compile information needed to apply for grant and/or other funding. Mr. Mellott said based on existing conditions on 68,412 potential customers the following was identified: 1) unserved area of the county (0 broadband customers) = 2.9%; underserved area of the county (1 Broadband provider) = 34.5%; and 3) served by 2 or more providers = 62.6%. Mr. Mellott said they collected enough information to evaluate where the most people would be served at the best costs by prioritizing projects. Mr. Mellott presented objectives of Phase 2 of the Project Analysis, including: 1) identify areas to be evaluated and potential customers; 2) develop parameters for evaluation projects; 3) define initial list of projects for preliminary study; 4) Use scoring method to narrow list of projects to 10 projects; 5) develop budgetary cost estimates; and 6) develop proposed implementation plan. Mr. Mellott said his presentation is for Commission review and feedback, then Sain Associates will take the information provided back for final potential projects list. Commissioner Cannon questioned when the next phase will be presented. Mr. Mellott said once they receive Commission feedback the information could possibly be returned by the end of March. County Administrative Officer Holly Leverette said they would gauge projects based on Commission priorities. The preliminary project map included the following: 1) Lee Road 75 fiber; 2) Lee Road 188 N fiber; 3) Waverly fiber; 4) Lee Road 84 fiber; 5) US-280 W fiber; 6) Lee Road 453 fiber; 7) AL 147 N fiber; 8) Lee Road 2038 fiber; 9) Lee Road 1 fiber; 10) Lee Road 188 S fiber; 11) Waverly Road fiber; 12) Lee Road 54 fiber; 13) Lee Road 27 fiber; 14) Lee Road 29 fiber; 15) US-80 fiber; 16) Lee Road 252 fiber; and 17) Lee Road 254 fiber. Commissioner Morris questioned if these seventeen items are presented in priority order. Mr. Mellott said those are only project numbers, not priority status. Judge English asked Mr. Mellott to provide a copy of his presentation for each Commissioner to review.

Environmental Services Director John McDonald gave a brief update on the solid waste fee billing system. Mr. McDonald said the second round of bills have been mailed and the third round will be mailed mid-April. Mr. McDonald said 600 in-person payments have been made

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since February 17, with 550 in the first two weeks, with a staff of two clerks and one supervisor. Mr. McDonald said he also pulled two administrative assistants from his department to assist in processing payments for walk-in customers. Mr. McDonald said several employees worked after hours processing mail-in payments. Additionally, Mr. McDonald said his office provided 455 bulk pickups during February with four routes, stating he would be looking to rezone the routes soon for quicker pickups. Last, Mr. McDonald said they are looking to start up the recycling program. Mr. McDonald said he has been working with Parks Director Ryan Norris to provide recycling at a couple of the park locations in the summer.

Chief Building Official Joel Hubbard provided information about the updated Building and Administrative Codes for Commission review and possible action at the next meeting. Mr. Hubbard said he did not present the updates from the 2015 I-Codes to 2018 I-Codes due to the 2019 tornadoes and other events. Mr. Hubbard said he is now before the Commission to get approval to update to the 2021 I-Codes.

Copies of the items on the Consent Agenda sent to the Commissioners in their packets included: listings of claims, a procurement card transactions listing, and a copy of the February 27, 2023 minutes. Judge English said a revised approval list was provided prior to the meeting. First reading of the following board appointments was made: 1) Loachapoka Water Authority-David Taylor and George Ervin; 2) Smiths Water Authority-Adam Littleton and Jason Flowers; and 3) Alternative Sentencing Board-Bill Parker and Edgar Adams. The opening for the Beauregard Water Authority Board was moved to New Business since two applications were received for consideration. Commissioner Cannon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris, to approve the consent agenda items as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Sheriff Jones presented educational reimbursement requests from Deputy Jared Corbett and Deputy Shawn McDevitt. Sheriff Jones said the courses meet the requirements and pertain to their current positions. Upon completion of the course with a "B" or higher, tuition will be 100% reimbursed. Commissioner Morris made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Langley to approve the educational reimbursement requests as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Sheriff Jones presented a special events retail license application from B & B Beverage Management for a one-day event on Saturday, April 1, 2023 at 21 Acres. Sheriff Jones recommended granting the license for the event. Commissioner Cannon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris, to approve the following Resolution to approve the application. The motion carried unanimously.

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BE IT RESOLVED, the Lee County Commission hereby approves the special events retail license for B & B Beverage Management for a one-day event on April 1 at 21 Acres located at 5505 Lee Road 137, Auburn, Alabama.

Sheriff Jones presented a special events retail license application from B & B Beverage Management for a one-day event on Saturday, April 13, 2023 at Legacy at Serenity Farms. Sheriff Jones recommended approving the application for the event. Commissioner Cannon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris, to approve the following Resolution to approve the application. The motion carried unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Lee County Commission hereby approves the special events retail license for B & B Beverage Management for a one-day event on April 1 at Legacy at Serenity Farms located at 1995 West Farmville Road, Auburn, Alabama.

Judge English moved to new business first reading of one position on the Beauregard Water Authority Board since two applications were submitted for one vacancy. Commissioner Langley asked for the item to be moved to the next agenda so he could talk with the two applicants Larry Patterson and Dave Ketchen. Commissioner Langley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Long, to move the item to the March 27 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

County Attorney Stan Martin said the Commission needed to adjourn into an executive session concerning current litigation. Judge English said County Engineer Justin Hardee and Chief Administrative Officer Holly Leverette needed to attend. The session would last approximately 30 minutes and no action is anticipated afterward. At approximately 5:35 p.m. Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cannon to adjourn into an executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

Upon reconvening after the Executive Session at approximately 6:40 p.m., Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.