

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Monthly Work Session and Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday, February 6, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at the Brooks County Office Building. Commissioners present were: Ms. Myra Exum, Chairperson; Mr. Joe Wingate, Vice Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell; Mr. Willie Cody; and Mr. S. L. Jones. Others present were: Mr. Justin DeVane, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Mr. Vann Parrott, County Attorney; and various residents.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – SIGN-IN SHEET PROVIDED

A. Special Request for Special Exception – Garrett & Chelsea Rowe

Building and Zoning received a request from Garrett & Chelsea Rowe for a Special Exception on property located at 400 Nesbitt Road. The request is for an event venue to be located on the property, which is a 56 acre parcel currently planted in pecan trees. The Greater Brooks County Planning Commission voted to approve the request as recommended by the SGRC staff.

UPDATE: Request was denied by the Board in December of 2015. The original vote taken by the Planning Commission voted to approve but required that the event site be 3 acres in size and have vegetative buffers on all open sides of the property. The Board may choose to add those conditions or modify restrictions, if any, if it wanted to do so.

Ariel Godwin, SGRC, Senior Planner, presented the request for a Special Exception to establish an agricultural event venue/retreat center on a 3-acre portion of a 56-acre parcel within the Agricultural zoning district, located at 400 Nesbitt Road in unincorporated Brooks County. On January 24, 2017, Brooks County Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application. SGRC Staff recommended approval for the Special Exception.

Chair Exum asked for those who wish to speak in favor of the request to address the Board and not the audience.

Garrett Rowe and several supporters spoke on behalf of the request for the event venue; and asked the Board to consider the request.

Several residents and adjacent property owners spoke against the request. They had concerns with the noise, traffic, litter; and the drastic change it would bring to the community. Some spoke about the impact on the families and community; and asked the Board to consider the people that will have to live with it.

Chair closed the Public Hearing at 5:45 p.m.; and went into the Work Session.

WORK SESSION – Chair Exum called Work Session to order.

Reports from Committees/Departments

A. Glenn Walker - Public Works – Glenn Walker, Road Superintendent, provided report on work completed for month of January:

- Eight 911 calls, 73 work orders with Motor Grader and Side Arm; 4 trees removed.
- Mr. Walker stated they had trees down after the storm; had to leave current projects to work on clean up after the storm; but will get back on schedule.

D. Ben DeVane – County Surveyor/Engineer – presented project updates.

- Presented Change Order #5 to be issued to H & H Paving regarding the LMIG FY 2015-2016 for improvements on Barrett Road. Estimated cost is \$25,350.
- Change Order #3 – the dip on Barwick Road has been completed.
- Change Order #4 is complete.
- Working with FEMA for storm damage assessment.

Chair closed Work Session to go into the Regular Meeting at 5:51 p.m.

1. Call to Order – Ms. Exum called meeting to order.

A. Prayer & Pledge – Mr. Jim Pitts, Morven Baptist Church, led all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda

A. February 6, 2017 Regular Monthly Meeting – Mr. Wingate made the motion to approve the agenda, Mr. Cody seconded; vote was unanimous.

3. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Cody, seconded by Mr. Jones, the Board unanimously approved the following minutes:

A. Work Session & Regular Meeting

January 9, 2017

4. Appearances

A. Facilities Request – Laymen’s Group for Courthouse Grounds – the Brooks County Laymen’s Group submitted a request to use the Brooks County Courthouse for April 22, 2017 for their annual Battle of the Grills. Will also team up with downtown business owners to host a Car Show, also on the Courthouse grounds. Mr. Wingate made the motion to approve the Laymen’s Group request to use the Courthouse grounds on April 22, 2017 for their annual Battle of the Grills, seconded by Mr. Maxwell. Vote was unanimous.

5. New Business

A. Request for Special Exception – Garrett & Chelsea Rowe – Mr. Maxwell made the motion to approve the request by Garrett & Chelsea Rowe for a Special Exception to establish an event venue/retreat center within the Agricultural zoning district, located at 400 Nesbitt Road on the condition that (a) the area proposed will be 3 acres; and (b)

vegetative buffers will border all open sides of the property, Mr. Cody seconded. Chair called for the vote. Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Cody voted yes; and Mr. Wingate voted no. The vote was 3 to 1.

B. CJT Software for Magistrate Court – Chief Magistrate Judge, David Crosby, requested that new software be licensed for the Magistrate Office. The current software/system, is about 30 years old and Brooks County is the only County still using the system as offered by the Regional Commission. The Probate office is currently using CJT software as well, and both offices will be moving to an all online based system soon, if the County approves a license for Magistrate.

The initial price will be \$15,000, including data conversion, then a monthly fee of \$300 a month after 12 months (\$3600 yearly). Other than the \$15,000 upfront cost, the new system should not cost anymore out of pocket. Magistrate Office currently pays \$300 a month to maintain a VPN connection to the RC servers for software access plus we have to pay for any programming or tech support. Funding would need to be appropriated from Contingencies.

On a motion by Mr. Cody, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board unanimously approved the request for CJT software for Magistrate Court to be paid from Contingency Fund.

C. Change Order #5 Approval LMIG 2015-2016 – Administrator received a request from County Engineer, Ben DeVane, for Change Order to be issued to H & H Paving concerning LMIG FY 2015-2016 for improvements on Barrett Road. Change Order includes paving of the intersection of Barrett Road and Dixie Road and includes 8" of base material. The estimated cost is \$25,350. Administrator recommends that a motion for approval be made with funds being made available from any extra funds out of SPLOST 5, and balance to come from Contingencies.

Change Order #5 was approved to be issued to H & H Paving for improvement on Barrett Road; including paving of the intersection of Barrett Road and Dixie Road and 8" of base material at the estimated cost of \$25,350; with funds from remaining funds in SPLOST 5, and backup funds from Contingency Fund, on the motion made by Mr. Cody; seconded by Mr. Jones. Vote was unanimous.

D. Legislation Change for Partisan Positions to Non-Partisan (Magistrate & Coroner – Administrator requested that Representative Carter look at what election positions within our County could be changed to nonpartisan elections. After review, it was determined that the office of Coroner and Magistrate Judge could be changed to non-partisan elections. Rep. Carter has provided us with sample legislation that may be presented to the State, however, the County would need to run four consecutive weeks of advertising before the change could be made. I have spoken to both current officials and both support the change to non-partisan.

Mr. Maxwell made the motion to approve the change of legislation to make Chief Magistrate Judge a non-partisan position, Mr. Wingate seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Maxwell made the motion to approve the change of legislation to make the Coroner a non-partisan position, Mr. Wingate seconded. Vote was unanimous.

E. New Tables and Chairs for Senior Center– Administrator received a request for new tables and chairs in the Senior Center. I have priced 12 new 6' plastic tables and 28 solid frame chairs from Sam's Club for a total of \$2,010. I would recommend that an extra pack of chairs be purchased, bringing that total to 42 chairs, so we can swap out most of all the mix-matched furniture that is in the Center. 14 additional chairs is \$480. Grand total would be \$2,490. Mr. Maxwell made the motion to approve purchase of new table and chairs for Senior Center in the amount of \$2,490; and funds will come from Contingency, Mr. Cody seconded. Vote was unanimous.

6. Unfinished Business

A. County Farm Lease – During the January regular meeting; the Board discussed the possibility of selling the farm at some point; but wants to have plan for use of funds and move forward.

UPDATE: Administrator submitted an application for the USDA Lease Ad to express the County interest in continuing to work with them. County Attorney, Vann Parrott, and Administrator will work with the Development Authority in an effort to partner with them to come up with a solution to be able to assist USDA; and get information and bring back to the Board.

7. County Administrator Notes/Comments

A. FY2015-2016 Brooks County Audit – County Auditor, Gary Zeigler, presented the Financial Statements for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2016. Some of the Findings reported for the current year are: Absence of Optimum Level of Appropriate Segregation of Duties; Budgetary-Financial Compliance; Unauthorized Use of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Proceeds; Preparation of Annual Financial Statements.

Mr. Zeigler advised Board of need for Intergovernmental Agreements between Cities and for Jail Fund, Victim Witness, Drug Education; and Law Library; and one between Brooks County and Development Authority for Economic millage collection.

Mr. Maxwell made the motion to accept the Response to Findings presented; and the FY2015-2016 Brooks County Audit, seconded by Mr. Wingate. Vote was unanimous.

B. January Storm/Tornado Update – Administrator updated the Board on the storm/tornado damage that occurred January 22, 2017. There were two fatalities; ten to eleven houses damaged, trees down, and lots of debris. County is doing own clean

up; crews are going around picking up debris; provided assistance to Cook County; and Cook County provided resources to Brooks. Local restaurants provided food for at no cost. FEMA has declared Brooks County for Public Assistance but no Individual Assistance.

8. Commissioners Notes/Comments

- A. Joe Wingate - District 1** – No comments.
- B. S. L. Jones, District 2** – No comments.
- C. Willie Cody, District 3** – No comments.
- D. Myra Exum, District 4** – No comments. But informed Board of Flyer received from Mr. & Mrs. Golden for the Meeting of the Minds event to be held on February 7th in Morven.
- E. James Maxwell, District 5** – No comments.

9. Executive Session – Personnel

The Board went out of the regular meeting to go into executive session on the motion made by Mr. Maxwell; seconded by Mr. Cody at 7:33 p.m.

Mr. Wingate made the motion to not hire a Fire Chief for Brooks County Fire Department according to the ad that ran in the Free Press; and to reject all applications for the position, Mr. Jones seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Maxwell motioned to create a Fire Coordinator position for Brooks County Fire Department; hire within the Department; and promote Jordan Smith from position of Captain, to position of Fire Coordinator with a salary increase from \$24,500 to \$32,000 per year, Mr. Jones seconded. Vote was unanimous.

10. Adjournment - Mr. Cody made the motion to adjourn regular meeting at 7:49 p.m.; Mr. Maxwell seconded.

Ms. Myra Exum, Chairperson
Mr. Justin DeVane, Administrator
Ms. Patricia A. Williams, Clerk