

**REGULAR SESSION MEETING  
BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023  
6:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman, Robert Griner, called the regular session meeting of the Berrien County Board of Commissioners to order on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Board of Commissioners present were Commissioners Pixie Harrod, Ronnie Gaskin and John Nugent. Commissioner Jimmy Parker is absent due to surgery.

**Invocation:** Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins

**Pledge:** Commissioner John Nugent

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the December 6, 2022 Regular Session Minutes and the December 6, 2022 Executive Session Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made a motion to move into Public Hearing for Special Exception Alesha Alcala Event Barn Old Valdosta Rd. at 6:02 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. Alesha Alcala and Renae Graham spoke in favor of the special exception. Alesha stated she wants to do an event venue. She stated that some of the items that were concerning when the Planning Commission met as the issue of noise. She said they are willing to make sure all events end by 10:00 p.m. and everyone off the property by 12:00 a.m. There would be staff on the property at all times as well as a security guard at each event. There would be two gates which would stay locked. They would make a parking area which will be gravel/paving. Lighting would be timed. She stated that she heard the comment was made that nine acres would not be enough property to do what they want. She disagrees, it can work. She is wanting to pursue this as a business. Renae Graham said she sees it being a small intimate gathering place. This will bring revenue to Berrien County and they are not trying to hurt the neighbors. Alesha stated they are willing to drop the maximum occupancy down to 100 guests.

**Against the Special Exception**

- **Robert Burnett** – He and his wife Debbie owns property right behind the proposed venue. They are one of four residential houses adjacent to the property. They bought their place for a quiet retirement home in the country. They have safety concerns with the traffic that this will draw. They are proposing to operate Thursday through Sunday. This would bring a lot of noise. They have concerns about their privacy and a resale value of their home.
- **Dr. Garland Pendergrass** – stated he is concerned with the noise this will cause. His wife suffers from MS. She has to rest a lot. She goes to bed about 8:30 to 9:00 each night.
- **Steve Sumner** – He pointed out that the property owners do not live on the property. If anything, this is a commercial business and they should be submitting to have the property rezoned commercial. He stated that there are farmers who have business on

their property but they also live on the premises. Ms. Alcala stated that trees would buffer the noise. Mr. Sumner stated there are no trees on the property that would buffer the sound. He stated that they referred to bringing taxes into Berrien County. They are proposing a 2 acre pond, 2 acre parking lot and 2 buildings. This brings in very little taxes. He said he does not disagree that an event place is a good idea, just not in the county. The guidelines for exception is: it should only be granted if it does not have a negative effect to the community. He stated an average band plays at 70 decibels which you can hear three miles away.

Commissioner Harrod asked how many people signed the petition against the venue. The answer was 17. Commissioner Harrod stated that it is old established land and some of the citizens have lived on their property for many years. He can sympathize with them.

Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made a motion to go out of Public Hearing and into regular session at 6:25 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to amend the agenda and move Item B to Item A, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Griner asked what is the pleasure of the board? Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to deny the Special Exception, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **A. NOMINATION OF 2023 CHAIRMAN/VICE CHAIRMAN FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

- Nominations for the 2023 Chairman and Vice Chairman for Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made a motion to appoint Robert Griner as Chairman and John Nugent as Vice Chairman for 2023, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

##### **B. SPECIAL EXCEPTION – ALESHA ALCALA – EVENT BARN OLD VALDOSTA RD. -**

Administration received an application from the Planning Commission for a Special Exception from Alesha Alcala for an Event Barn on Old Valdosta Rd. The Planning Commission is not recommending approval. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to deny the Special Exception, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

**C. PIPE ACQUISITION – ROAD** - Administration received a request from Ben Warren, Public Works Director, to purchase pipe. Three quotes were provided with the lowest from WinSupply in the amount of \$12,826.50. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the purchase, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

**D. AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION – TRANSIT** - Administration received an Authorizing Resolution from Southern Georgia Regional Commission in reference to the Transit System. If Berrien County wants to be a part of the regional system, then this resolution needs to be executed. Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made a motion to approve the Authorizing Resolution, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously.

**E. Agreement for Geographic Information System Services with SGRC** - Administration received from Greg Nimmo to renew our Agreement with SGRC on the Geographic Information System

Services. This is an annual agreement. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

**F. SOLID WASTE LICENSE – 2023** - Administration received a Solid Waste License Application from Express Disposal. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the license, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

**G. SURPLUS PROPERTY** - Administration received a request from Danielle May to purchase 0.09 acres from Berrien County. The property was placed in Berrien County's name due to a tax sale. It is located off of Harley Ln. (a private road) in Ray City. Ms. May is an adjacent landowner. Ms. May and Ms. Cindy Manning were present at the meeting. Both citizens are adjacent landowners. There are no other adjacent landowners. Ms. Manning stated she is ok with Ms. May purchasing the property. Legal Counsel confirmed that with both parties present and no other adjacent landowners the board could vote to approve the sale of the land at whatever price they deem. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to sale the 0.09 acres on Harley Ln., Parcel ID 077110020 to Ms. Danielle May for \$500.00, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously. Legal Counsel will take care of the paperwork.

**H. HVAC REPLACEMENT PROJECT & WATKINS & ASSOCIATES AGREEMENT – ARPA FUNDS**  
- Administration is requesting the board approve an ARPA Project for HVAC Replacement along with the Watkins & Associates Agreement to administer the project. The project estimated cost is \$400,000.00 which includes a rate of \$36,800.00 for the Professional Engineering Services. This replaces HVAC units at the Jail, Ag Center, EMS, Library, Health Department, West Berrien Fire Department, Maintenance Shop, 911 Facility, Senior Citizens Center, Animal Control as well as upgrades to the control software for the Administration Building. Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made a motion to approve the HVAC Replacement Project and the Agreement with Watkins & Associates, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously.

**I. BOARD APPOINTMENT & RESOLUTION – BOARD OF ASSESSORS** - Administration received a request from Greg Nimmo, Chief Appraiser, requesting to reappoint Rickey Boyd for another 3-year term. The term starts January 1, 2023 and ends December 31, 2025. Also, to approve the Resolution of the appointment. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to reappoint Rickey Boyd to another 3-year term and to approve the Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

**J. INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT – FIREFIGHTER CANCER POLICY WITH CITIES** - Administration is requesting the board approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with each municipality on the Firefighter Cancer Policy. The cost for the county/city stations are split 50/50. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement, seconded by Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins. The motion carried unanimously.

**K. FUEL VENDOR – DISCUSSION** - Administration received a request for discussion on our fuel purchases. Currently we purchase through Akins, LLC. Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made a motion to put out an RFP on the Fuel, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously.

**L. RATIFICATION ITEMS** – Administration is requesting ratification on the following items:

GA Corrections – Road	\$1,253.75
Akins – Road	\$2,372.50
Virtual Guru – Sheriff	\$1,639.35

Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to ratify the purchases as stated, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously.

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND DEPARTMENTS:**

Marc Mathis – We just got the truck back from Forestry.

**COMMISSIONERS’ ITEMS:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Nick Lacey thanked the commissioners for approving the maintenance items for the historical buildings.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:**

Brenda Ferrell –

- Received a Drug Court supply order this afternoon. A request from Siemens in the amount of \$2,977.80. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously.
- SPLOST Meeting with the cities is January 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at the Nashville Community Center.
- Platinum Roofing submitted a Change Order for rotten wood on the old jail. The cost is \$1,725.00. This brings the total cost to \$15,713.00. Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.
- Presented the board with a list of surplus items that was turned in from the Road Department. No action taken at this time.

**ADJOURN**

With no other business to come before the Board, Commissioner Ronnie Gaskins made the motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

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Chairman, Robert Griner

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Commissioner, Ronnie Gaskins

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Commissioner, Pixie Harrod

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ABSENT  
Commissioner, Jimmy Parker

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Commissioner, John Nugent

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Clerk