

**REGULAR SESSION MEETING
BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2024
6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, Ronnie Gaskins, called the regular session meeting of the Berrien County Board of Commissioners to order on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Board of Commissioners present were Commissioners Pixie Harrod, Jimmy Parker and Robert Griner. Commissioner John Nugent participated by phone.

Invocation: Commissioner Jimmy Parker

Pledge: Commissioner Robert Griner

Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to add an executive session for personnel to the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. AIRPORT MAINTENANCE – Administration requested the board approve the annual maintenance on the fuel pumps at the airport. We have one quote provided by L&T, Inc. in the amount of \$2,672.88. They are the only quote available and are out of Lyons, GA. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

B. FY 2024 LRA LMIG AWARD – Administration received a recommendation from Watkins & Associates, LLC to award the FY 2024 LRA LMIG Award to Reames & Son Construction Company in the amount of \$1,333,488.60. Competitive bids were put out and they were the lowest bid. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to award the FY 2024 LRA LMIG to Reames & Son Construction Company in the amount of \$1,333,488.60, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

C. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – ALAPAHA, ENIGMA, RAY CITY – Administration presented the board with a Memorandum of Understanding between the cities of Alapaha, Enigma, Ray City and Berrien County regarding debris removal as a result of Hurricane Helene. Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

D. LAND SUBDIVISION – BEVILLE – Administration received a request from John & Tonia Beville to subdivide a parcel of land. All plots will be at least two or more acres which meets the county ordinances. The Planning Commission is recommending approval. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

E. INDEXING HISTORIAL DOCUMENTS – CLERK OF COURT – ARPA PROJECT – Administration received recommendation from Watkins & Associates to award the indexing Historical Documents ARPA Project to Kofile Technologies, Inc. Kofile is the only bid that met the requirements of completing the project on-site. Their bid was \$81,592.60.

Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

F. ER ASSIST, INC. CONTRACT – ADMINISTRATION – Administration presented the board with a contract from ER Assist, Inc. The contract is for assistance in gathering information with Hurricane Helene and filing with FEMA. This is the best option to make sure the county gets full reimbursement from FEMA. Ms. Laurel Matula with ER Assist was present to answer any questions. The cost of the contract is not to exceed \$90,000.00 which is 100% reimbursable by FEMA. Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

G. EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION – NASHVILLE FIRE DEPT. – Steve Admas, Nashville Fire Department asked the board to purchase spare batteries for SCBAs. One quote was provided from Ten-8 Fire & Safety, LLC in the amount of \$7,571.07. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

H. FY 2024 TAN BIDS & RESOLUTION – Administration requested quotes for a \$3,000,000.00 Tax Anticipation Note. Quotes were:

Bank of Alapaha	\$1,500,000.00	6.00%
Farmers & Merchants Bank	\$3,000,000.00	5.75%
Ameris Bank	\$3,000,000.00	5.65% Plus Costs

Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to stay local and approve the TAN with Farmers & Merchants Bank in the amount of \$3,000,000.00 at 5.75%, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

I. RATIFICATION ITEMS - Administration is requesting ratification on the following items:

<u>Hurricane Helene:</u>	Greg Hadsock – Pipe Repair – Berrien Youth Building	
	Sams Club – Large Screen TV – EOC	
	Speedy Response – Berrien Youth Building – Insurance Claim	
	Southern Linc – 20 Phones	
	South GA Tree Service – E-911	
	Verizon Phones – 2 phones	
	NED Excavator Rental – Road	\$4,500.00/Monthly
	Elite Landscape Solutions – Chainsaws -Road	\$5,702.00
	Ag Pro – Chainsaws – Road	\$2,180.00
	Red Bud – Road	\$1,720.59
	Red Bud – Road	\$4,870.60
	Red Bud – Road	\$3,401.13
	Southern States Construction & Supply, LLC – Road	\$132,312.35
	Warren & Warren Contracting, LLC – Road	\$65,600.00
	David Taylor Construction, Inc. – Road	\$43,820.00

Change of name on the debris contract to 911 Arborist, LLC from South Georgia Tree Service, LLC – Same owner, same contract, the 911 Arborist, LLC is his storm name.

Southeastern Com Tire – Road	\$1,221.12
Nashville Ford – EMS	\$1,751.46
Shiver Diesel – EMS	\$1,547.04
4-Star – Road	\$2,532.18
Ray & Son Heating & Air Conditioning – Jail	\$1,072.00
Nashville Feed & Garden Center – Animal Control	\$1,382.10

Commissioner Pixie Harrod asked Ben Warren, Public Works Director, what the Warren & Warren invoice for \$65,600.00 was for. He said it was for clearing roads the day after the hurricane. He said there were three contracts used to assist with that clean up. Commissioner Pixie Harrod stated that we have listed the debris contract on the ratification list so he would like to address the use of our debris contractor. He said that according to FEMA guidelines, he has a problem with using the contractor and not bidding it out due to conflict of interest. There was much discussion back and forth on the contract and it the fact that it was not put out for bid. Laura, ER Assist, stated she can help the county with creating an RFP for those services. Commissioner Harrod asked Laura, ER Assist, to read out loud the conflict of interest from the FEMA guidelines. Commissioner Harrod stated if you have to bid it out, why not have several contractors. Charlie Barnes stated he will have 11 trucks operating by Friday under 911 Arborist, LLC. Commissioner Harrod asked the Sheriff what he thinks about it. He said he feels like we have a big mess. Bill Alley, Critical Response Strategies, which is the monitoring company gave an update on what he is seeing and complimented on the clean up where we are today. Commissioner Harrod stated that he will go on record that he does not think this is right and he did not read the contract. Chairman Gaskins stated that nothing was done underhanded. We tried to bring in professionals to clean up the county as fast as possible. We were told the first 90 days is paid at 100%. Aaron Smith with Rockin S stated he works with Charlie Barnes and has four grapple trucks and 11 coming. He would like to keep it around eight trucks. Hazards are being addressed. Bucket trucks will come in and do hangers and low bearing limbs. Marie Lindsey stated that this is definitely a conflict of interest. Chairman Gaskins stated that the monitoring company came as a recommendation from GEMA. Commissioner Parker asked the question what determines when we are out from under the emergency? Also, when is it normal procurement/emergency procurement? Laura Mutula with ER Assist gave an opinion that an emergency is getting the roads back open and now that has happened so you should proceed with putting a RFP out. Marie Lindsey asked about her 30 planted pines that were taken down by the hurricane. Will the state or county pick the debris up and will they pick up after 90 days. Her address is on a state highway so the state would be doing the clean up there. She was directed to call the state about pick up after 90 days. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to prepare procurement documents for RFP on debris removal, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously. There was discussion on opening up another site for the debris to be hauled to. There will be the cost of another monitor at that site. Commissioner Harrod said due to the cost lets continue with only one site. Kylan Fort asked the board to consider the farmers and not to put all the trucks in one area at one time. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to open another site in Ray City, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to have ER Assist, Inc. work with County Attorney, to prepare procurement documents for the debris contract, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to ratify the items presented, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS ITEMS:

Jimmy Parker –

- Thanked all the citizens of Berrien County for coming together and helping out during the storm. The volunteer support was appreciated.

Ronnie Gaskins –

- Agreed with Commissioner Parker. He stated that this is the first storm that Sandy Mizell has worked in her position as EMA Director. She has been in that position less than a year. He commended Gerald Sumner, EMS Director for Commander in the EOC, the Public Works Department, Sheriff Department, Marty Faulkner, April Martin, Marc Mathis all for stepping up and helping wherever it was needed. He stated all the commissioners were involved. Commissioner Nugent hauled supplies to Ray City, Commissioner Parker used his fork lift at the donation site, Commissioner Harrod used his equipment to clear debris and at the donation site and Commissioner Griner was at the EOC. He said everybody came together and got the job done.

Robert Griner –

- Stated he concurred with the other remarks and that we were trying to do the best we could in the situation we were in.

Pixie Harrod –

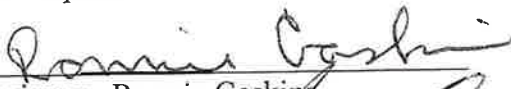
- Everyone has done a good job and we have a long way to go. Berrien County will never be the same.

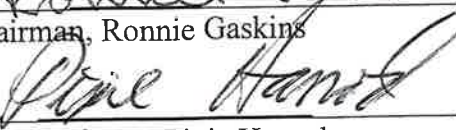
EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to move into executive session for personnel at 7:31 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner.

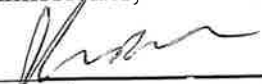
Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to move out of executive and into regular session at 7:47 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker.

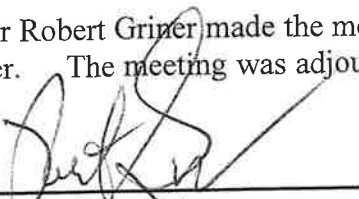
ADJOURN

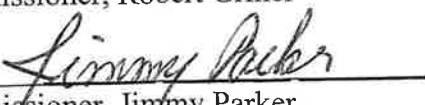
With no other business to come before the Board, Commissioner Robert Griner made the motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

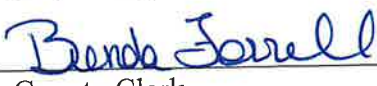

Chairman, Ronnie Gaskins


Commissioner, Pixie Harrod


Commissioner, John Nugent


Commissioner, Robert Griner


Commissioner, Jimmy Parker

ATTEST: 
County Clerk