



BANKS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FY2024 BUDGET WORKSESSION/MEETING

Courthouse Annex Boardroom | 150 Hudson Ridge | Homer, GA 30547

Monday, April 24, 2024 at 1:00 PM

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ch. Turk called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Chairman Charles Turk
Vice Chairman Danny Maxwell
Commissioner Chris Ausburn
Commissioner Keith Gardiner
Commissioner Bo Garrison

STAFF

Finance Officer Randy Failyer
Human Resources Officer Arlene Ivey
County Clerk Jenni Gailey
Elections Superintendent Kelsey Barnes
GIS Analyst Karen Burry
Senior Center Director Tracie Hammond
Extension Service Macy Glenn
Library Director Stacey Krumnow
Department of Family & Children Services Director Chris Sprewell

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison , Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner,
Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

3. PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Vice Chairman Maxwell led the pledge.

4. AGENDA ITEMS:

FY2025 BUDGET

Department budgets discussed were as follows:

- Elections Elections Superintendent Kelsey Barnes

Commissioner Ausburn asked the approximate cost of providing 4 voting precincts as opposed to one. Ms. Barnes stated the Secretary of State would have to assess the locations for ADA compliance as well as security and technical compliance but that she thought it would be approximately \$10,000 additional cost. Chairman Turk stated there were available fire stations on the 4 corners of the county. Commissioner Ausburn asked how to move ahead with this. Ms. Barnes stated the Board of Registrars would have to vote at their May 24th meeting and 28 poll workers would be needed to supply all 4 locations. She said they would have to investigate the cost. Ms. Barnes stated the main concern she had was the availability of the Superintendent at all locations if needed.

- GIS/Mapping GIS Analyst Karen Burry

Ms. Burry requested that the Tax Mapper be reclassified to Chief GIS Analyst to bring it more in line to what she does and has potential to do. She stated Ms. Wilbanks 30 years of experience shows. She stated this would give her a better pay grade. Ms. Ivey stated she checked with other counties and this would bring her more in line.

Commissioner Garrison: On a daily basis, how much mapping are y'all handling in there?

Ms. Burry: My day is filled with mapping. It's not just mapping but it's mapping issues and stuff like that. You know that from the updates that I send out, I give you the amount of deeds we are doing, the splits we are doing, the combines and all that is working within the mapping software and the Tax Assessors office software. So, there is not a day that goes by that we are not doing something in mapping and WinGap.

Commissioner Garrison: Now y'all was very involved in the mapping of the redistricting of our county?

Ms. Burry: Yes, because of the census that was assigned to me and because it was assigned to me, I supported the data for the census recount and when they did the recount all the data was sent to me that I shared and I went to the Census website and picked up the data and brought it in. So, my map is just an easier presentation of what the redistricting is.

Commissioner Garrison: So, you've already got the new numbers back?

Ms. Burry: Yes.

Commissioner Garrison: On the one we said was wrong, Charles?

Chairman Turk: County Line Rd, they finally corrected County Line Rd.

Ms. Burry: Yes, County Line Rd has been included in the census block for Banks County.

Commissioner Garrison: How about up at Alto?

Commissioner Ausburn interrupts: Is that official?

Ms. Burry: I'm sorry, what was that?

Commissioner Garrison: Up at Alto at the Railroad Track.

Commissioner Ausburn: That is County Line Drive.

Chairman Turk: That's Lula.

Ms. Burry: That's Lula. All those people south of the road were all included and yes, that is official.

Commissioner Ausburn: The Governor has already signed that new map?

Ms. Burry: Now, we are talking legislative and census. I'm going based on the census numbers and what they counted for Banks County. Now, they have the data but I know the legislative have not corrected their maps.

Commissioner Garrison: So, the legislature has the final say, you're saying?

Ms. Burry: Well, they've already said but like, what I'm trying to say is that the legislative maps are wrong. They did not take into consideration the census recount.

Chairman Turk: So, the representatives and the senate, they have not done those but as far as school and commissioner maps, that has been signed off on.

Ms. Burry: Correct.

Commissioner Ausburn: And the maps that have been signed off on include County Line Drive.

Ms. Burry: Yes, yes.

Commissioner Garrison: See from the maps I was looking on, they were about 4 or 5 of them, you laid them over each other and none of them lined up with our county lines and all. I was just very confused looking at that, how that happened.

Ms. Burry: I would have to look at the maps that you are talking about. The county is a representation and while we have GIS and it can be pretty close to accurate, you still got a lot of leeway. It depends on where that line is coming from, who's drawing the line, who's drawing the map, what's the scale of the map – those kinds of things.

Commissioner Garrison: But y'all drew the maps right, for our county?

Chairman Turk: The state did.

Commissioner Ausburn: So, you say there is leeway on a county line?

Ms. Burry: No, I'm saying that the representation will differ based on who is drawing it.

Commissioner Garrison: So, am I hearing that you drew the maps or did the state draw the map or who?

Ms. Burry: The census drew the maps that I put into something that is easier to understand and view. It's of Banks County data and census data.

Commissioner Garrison: You presented the data how you wanted it drawn and they drew it accordingly. That's what I'm hearing, right?

Ms. Burry: No, I took the data and placed it into what we already have.

Ms. Gailey: Based on census blocks, right?

Ms. Burry: Based on census blocks.

Commissioner Garrison: I am trying to scope in reality how it used to be virtually a straight line up a road or something. It used to just run through the woods. Now I just can't visually...

Ms. Burry interrupted: Mr. Garrison? I have many maps that represent Banks County in many different shapes. The problem is that there is no documentation, there is no paper documentation that exists to take it from where it was originally assigned Banks County to where it is now. Any handshaking that has been done over the years should have been documented through resolutions with the commissioners and recorded at Tim Harper's office or with whatever county clerk that we are bordering. I've checked, I've talked to all the GIS people – there is no documentation.

Commissioner Ausburn: Documentation of what? What are we talking about, documentation of?

Ms. Burry: Saying is the line gonna be...let's take for instance Jackson County and Banks County, is the line gonna be on the railroad tracks, is the county gonna be on the road, is it gonna be on the left side of the road, is it gonna be on the center line of the road, is it gonna be on the right side, is it gonna be the tracks or is it gonna be on the left right of way of the tracks or is it gonna be the center of the tracks? That kind of detail is not documented.

Commissioner Garrison: When Milton Dalton was in office he changed – Keith correct me if I'm wrong. When I was on the school board that line ran through the woods over right by my house over there and everything. The state told him back then that it had to be something visual like a road or something so Marshburn Rd became the separation of Berlin district and Bushville. That was something you could visually see, now...

Commissioner Gardiner interrupted: That's what she is saying, up there in Alto and places like that there is not, back in the 70s, commissioners gave Habersham County commissioners part of Baldwin so they could take the school.

Commissioner Ausburn: What's the process for changing the county line?

Ms. Burry: It involves the county's commission – board of commissions of both sides or whoever we are bordering. It needs to be pretty much detailed and agreed upon and voted on as a resolution by both counties.

Commissioner Gardiner: The only time I have known of a county line changed or was even voted on other than a school board change was in the late 80s or early 90s when Fran Thomas of Jackson County and Bobby Wood there where the trailer place is now was the Pontiac place – they paid for a survey of the county line.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: That's when they were putting in the new Tanger Blvd down through there.

Commissioner Ausburn: Danny, go ahead and ask your question.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: I'm getting a little confused. Should not the district maps for commissioners coincide with the county line...our county line?

Ms. Burry: They do.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: So, you can't have if you have a county line running here and commissioner thing running up to here, that difference in between should not that district go up to the county line?

Ms. Burry: I'm not sure what difference you are talking about.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Well, I don't know if there is a difference.

Ms. Burry: Because they go to the county line.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: It does go to the county line.

Ms. Burry: Everything is based on Banks County - county line. That is why we went to the census and fought for a recount and to get County Line Drive back in there.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Just wanted to make sure they coincided – the district line and the county line were the same.

Commissioner Garrison: What blew my mind with the map he looked at was that it went up and then it got to where one of our Commissioners - where he lived and then it turned and went right around that property and it turned right back in.

Ms. Burry interrupted: That was totally the Census and Redistricting and I had nothing to do with that. I just took the information how they said it and drew it.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: So, it was done by the Census?

Ms. Burry: Done by the Census.

Commissioner Ausburn: Guys this was not relevant for what we are doing here today.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: I've gotten confused on it now.

(Many talking at the same time)

Commissioner Ausburn: There is a better time and place for this since this is a budget hearing and I understand the gesture and I appreciate it. He then said let's carry on with this budget and as far as Ms. Burry, we were having a conversation about changing the status of your employee. Didn't we discuss that last year.

Ms. Burry: Yes, but they did not change the status and that the employee is very good at her job.

Motion to approve the reclassification request.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Chairman Turk.

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Motion to accept the salary request.

Motion made by Chairman Turk, Seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Commissioner Ausburn: These budget hearings have kept me up at night. Our jobs here are to basically balance the wants from the needs of the department heads versus the taxpayers' money and we've got to be good stewards of it and keep their taxes as low as possible. This is kind of uncomfortable and don't know if there is a better way. Don't know how other counties do it and sometimes this turns into a trial for lack of a better term. It's gotta be uncomfortable for department heads because it's uncomfortable sometimes for me. That being said, things like what we just did right there, can we bring up a different form of communication? I have questioned communication here. Danny has hinted around to it. We all have. Is there a way that we could have meetings and I'll give an example. Let's just say the sewer project that went on last week – Mike Cleveland and I had some detailed conversations about it, about the school being completely clear that that was, you know – had to be government only for them to be involved in it. The conversation that he had with Mr. Turk, that went a different way. Is that?

Chairman Turk: Completely different.

Commissioner Ausburn: Do what?

Chairman Turk: Completely different.

Commissioner Ausburn: I mean, basically what did they tell you versus me, I mean

Chairman Turk: I go back to – they approached me about needing sewer back about 2-2½ years ago and then you go to the Utilities Director – and that's where you know – the conversation started. They kept saying we gotta have it, we gotta have it. If we don't, we can't expand the school. All that kind of stuff and even to the point when the RFP was put – he kept calling me about every couple of weeks – Is the RFP ready? Is it sent out? He just kept on and on and then the conversation after they voted for it, they approved it 5-0, we good to go and then come up here and it's completely different story.

Commissioner Ausburn: So, he did not tell you that it had to be government only?

Chairman Turk: No

Commissioner Gardiner: I walked in on a meeting one day and the door was wide open...

Commissioner Ausburn interrupts: Alright, so can we, going forward guys, can we have more of like when these meetings go on, can you have one of us involved in it so we can all be on the same page? Cause I know what I recall and I know the conversation that I have had with Mike Cleveland and I have 100% faith in what he told me.

Chairman Turk: Well, I have 100% faith in what he told me too because that is what he told me. Now I don't know whether they changed their mind during the board meeting but it would have been nice if he would have relayed that to me.

Commissioner Garrison: The old saying always says "More ears hearing, we're all better off". I'm a firm believer in that...

Chairman Turk interrupts: Well, I don't have a problem but some of y'all hardly ever come around.

Commissioner Ausburn: Well, I mean there is a lot of forms of communications here. We could get a text. We could get anything and what good is us being here I mean if we sit here all day every day?

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Well, my thing on – an issue that is this large and takes the county to a position that it was in for citizens – we should've probably had a meeting with us and the whole Board of Education before...

Chairman Turk interrupts: I don't have a problem if y'all want it. Y'all knew this sewer was coming down the line, you voted 5-0 to put an RFP out, voted to have it engineered...

Commissioner Ausburn: I never voted to put an RFP out

Chairman Turk: Yes, you did too.

Commissioner Ausburn: When was this?

Chairman Turk: It was in a public meeting was it not?

Commissioner Ausburn: What year was that?

Chairman Turk: It had to be...

Vice Chairman Maxwell: It might have been...

Chairman Turk interrupted: No, it was not, no sir.

Commissioner Garrison: Was that...*(interruptions)*...wait.

Commissioner Ausburn: Then it was confused with something else that I didn't understand what it was.

Commissioner Garrison: Was that...hey

Commissioner Ausburn interrupts: I'm telling you I did not vote to put no RFP out.

Commissioner Garrison: That was the meeting when Erin said when we were voting on something and I didn't catch it until later on – he looked at her...and we were fixing to vote on something and Erin put in there "and others" but it was not said specifically what that was. It was "and others".

Commissioner Ausburn: I wasn't sitting in this seat at that time...but that's neither here nor there.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Well, that's done. What we...

Commissioner Ausburn: Yeah, that's done

Chairman Turk interrupted: Well evidently it ain't because it keeps getting brought up.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: What we need to do, if we are going to do a big project incorporated with the school or anybody else – we need to all of us need to sit down with all of them and then let's get all the specifics at that time and that way everybody knows what everybody says.

Chairman Turk: You get the emails just like everybody else does.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Huh?

Chairman Turk: You get the emails just like everybody else does.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Charles it's still not like sitting down on a big project like this and discussing all of it and if they do need it or if they don't need it rather than having it start then 2 years later something else come back. It should have been done that way but we didn't.

Chairman Turk: Then what decision did y'all make yesterday when 3 of y'all met after our meeting with Randall?

Vice Chairman Maxwell: We didn't make any decisions.

Chairman Turk: Well evidently you did because the Planning Official come to me this morning and said alright do you want us to proceed forward...

Vice Chairman Maxwell interrupts: She came around here and asked us...she came and asked Bo and asked me...

Commissioner Ausburn interrupts: She called Bo outside.

Chairman Turk: I know and then Bo got her to come back in, so that was the three of y'all sitting there.

Commissioner Garrison: No and ask Randall, I had her to ask Randall what was legal about that.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: That's right.

Chairman Turk: How many of y'all was here?

Commissioner Garrison: I didn't make that decision.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: I was standing there; Bo was out there and Chris was...

Chairman Turk interrupts: Y'all was all in the same room.

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Well, we had a meeting yesterday.

Chairman Turk: No, the meeting was closed.

(Many talking at the same time)

Vice Chairman Maxwell: Well, we didn't make a decision. All we did was try to answer her question and then we referred her to the attorney. That's what we did.

Commissioner Garrison: She asked me in the foyer and I walked her in for her to ask Randall the question. When she got the answer, she and I – we walked back out the door.

Commissioner Ausburn: I don't believe we are the ones that need stones cast at us right here either.

Chairman Turk: Well, I don't think I need stones cast at me either.

Commissioner Ausburn: I'm not casting any stones. I'm just asking if there is a better way to go forward to communicate and I was bringing out a point that you were told something different than I was told.

Chairman Turk: Absolutely

Commissioner Gardiner: I heard the \$25,000 in that meeting and I also did hear him talking about that the school needed it. I ain't got a dog in the fight other than just being one of the board members but I know what I heard. That is what I said the other day if any time we got a meeting or anything like that if they ain't enough of them here, record it – tape record. We did it years ago, we can do it now.

Chairman Turk: Absolutely

Commissioner Gardiner: Then they ain't no he said, she said or I said

Commissioner Ausburn: This is not even the direction I'm trying to go down here. The direction I'm trying to go down is can we have some conversations about important issues facing this county. Can we have those conversations going forward as a group? Can we work in a work session? Can we work together? Can we work together with the school board instead of us taking shots across the bow at the school board and them taking them back? How do we get to the point where us and the Sheriff's department, us and the Fire department, how do we work better together is all I want to know and I don't know, you know ...I guess it's not doable. Nevermind. Just nevermind.

Commissioner Gardiner: Have them recorded it on cassette.

Commissioner Ausburn: I shouldn't have asked, I just felt just like this deal here with Ms. Burry got out of hand.

Chairman Turk: I didn't say a word because I thought it was totally out of hand.

Commissioner Ausburn: And I don't know if this was the time but there should be a time when that's discussed. You know what I mean, I feel like there is a time and I feel like going forward we need to work on some communications amongst ourselves and I don't how to...if we don't talk about this, we can't ever get it out here. But anyway, go ahead. I'm sorry.

- Ms. Hammond stated the center needed painting, gutter & wood treatment. Mr. Failyer stated this could be paid from the 2017 SPLOST.

- Public Transportation Director Tracie Hammond

Recessed meeting at 2:02 p.m.

Reconvened meeting at 2:45 p.m.

- Extension Service Macy Glenn
 - Ms. Glenn stated they had the option to host and Extension Intern in Family & Consumer Science - fulltime for 12 weeks with no benefits for a total cost of \$3,500.
- Library Director Stacey Krumnow

Recessed meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Reconvened meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Vice Chairman Maxwell left the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

- Adult Literacy Board Member James Dumas & Teacher Sharon Clark
 - Mr. Dumas asked for one additional part time Math teacher for a total of \$5,000
 - Mr. Dumas also asked for 10 scholarships for a total of \$1,830
- Department of Family & Children Services Chris Sprewell

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Chairman

County Clerk