

HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
5:00 P.M., MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024
HABERSHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE
JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM
295 LLEWELLYN ST, CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523

The Habersham County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Monday, April 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. in the Jury Assembly Room of the Habersham County Courthouse located at 295 Llewellyn St, Clarkesville, GA 30523.

Present was Chairman Ty Akins, Vice Chairman Bruce Harkness, Commissioner Bruce Palmer, Commissioner Dustin Mealor, Commissioner Jimmy Tench, County Manager Alicia Vaughn, County Attorney Donnie Hunt, County Clerk Brandalin Carnes, staff, members of the media and the public.

Chairman Akins called the work session to order at 5:04 p.m.

Commissioner Akins lead the invocation.

Commissioner Mealor lead the pledge of allegiance.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

a. Phased In Approach to Recycling

Solid Waste Director Johnnie Vickers addressed the Commission. Habersham County currently has three recycling centers. The landfill located at 4900 Dicks Hill Parkway provides recycling services and these services are also provided at two additional recycling centers located at 4142 Toccoa Highway in Clarkesville and at 507 Nicolon Drive in Cornelia. The two recycling centers accept glass (clear, green & brown), aluminum cans, #1 and #2 plastics, paper, and cardboard. The landfill accepts the same materials as the recycling centers but also accepts metal. Mr. Vickers gave the Commission an overview of what it costs the county at this time to have recyclables hauled off versus what compensation they receive (if any) from vendors. The general idea being presented was that the county could not only reduce costs but receive revenue from recyclable materials if the landfill had the resources necessary to haul it themselves. Mr. Vickers informed the Commission that the landfill is in the process of purchasing a new roll-off truck for this purpose and that two new open top 20-yard containers have been purchased for recycling as well. In addition, they have put out a bid for the purchase of two 30-yard self-contained compactor units which would replace the cardboard reefer trailers at the recycling centers. This would enable the landfill to haul cardboard without paying a vendor to do so. Mr. Vickers would like to see the county explore the idea of building new recycling centers with a design that allows for users to be able to drive up above roll off containers and toss in recyclables for ease of access. He is also would like to research the possibility of a recycling processing building for the purpose of storing recyclable commodities to sell when market prices are higher. Having a covered area to store the recyclable commodities would also keep the rain out of them, which can affect the price. One new potential avenue for both revenue and diversion of material from the landfill lies in the possibility of recycling clothing and textiles. He is in the early stages of discussion with vendors about this. Mr. Vickers feels that it would be beneficial to partner with the school system to work on a recycling education pilot program. There are fourteen (14) schools in the Habersham County School District. A recycling education program would not only have a wide reach with the many students that attend, but it

would also reduce the amount of waste that is coming into the landfill from the school system itself. This program would require the funding for the purchase of collection trailers to be placed at the schools.

Commissioner Akins stated that he feels that the overall desire of the Commission is to explore reasonable avenues to extend the life of the landfill as long as possible until solutions can be found for either constructing a new landfill or setting up transfer stations. The Commission is trying to provide affordable landfill services to the citizens for as long as possible. He asked Mr. Vickers if the purchase of the rollback truck and trailers that was mentioned during the presentation were included in the current fiscal year's budget or if they were part of a request for the upcoming fiscal year's budget? Mr. Vickers informed him that the purchases were already included in the current budget year. Commissioner Palmer asked Mr. Vickers about the possibility of applying for a grant that is available from the Environmental Protection Division to allow the County the reimbursement needed to hold a scrap tire amnesty event? Mr. Vickers that they have reviewed the paperwork needed to apply for this grant. If they were to pursue holding a tire amnesty day, they would try to do so for a two-day period with a third day being scheduled in the event of rain. He cautioned that the County must be careful in how it runs the event as often times business want to bring in several hundred tires at a time, which is not the intent behind those events. Commissioner Akins inquired as to whether the fees charged by the County for accepting tires are sufficient to cover the cost of having them hauled? Mr. Vickers informed him that from his experience, if the County charged people the amount that it actually costs to accept tires then they would dump them on the side of the road as the fee would be more than they are willing to pay. The County would then ultimately be responsible at that point for collecting the tire and paying to have it hauled off, without the benefit of receiving a fee to reduce the cost. The fees charged for hauling tires is a delicate balance between charging enough to help with cost but not enough to cause people to dump tires on the side of the road. Commissioner Palmer stated that he had received a complaint from a citizen about being charged for their cardboard and asked Mr. Vickers if this was not accepted for free? Mr. Vickers stated that the landfill does not normally charge a citizen for recycling cardboard, however if they brought in a mixed load of garbage on a truck that had to be weighed in than it would be incorporated in the cost. Commissioner Akins asked Mr. Vickers if he has included a projected cost in his budget request for the upcoming year for a recycling processing building? Mr. Vickers stated that he has worked with County Manager Vaughn and Finance Director Tim Sims to come up with an estimate to be included in his CIP requests. Commissioner Harkness had confusion in regard to recycling paper, asking why the County would choose to continue to have paper hauled off for recycling when the cost is so high as opposed to shredding it and putting it into the landfill? Mr. Vickers informed Commissioner Harkness that the cost of airspace in a landfill is so expensive that it outweighs the cost of hauling the paper products. Commissioner Akins asked Mr. Vickers if he could draft a summary of the costs for the additional budget items that are being requested for the upcoming budget year versus the revenue that Mr. Vickers feels could be received from the recyclable commodities.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

There were no additional comments made by the Commission.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Meador, seconded by Commissioner Harkness and voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the work session at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
Commission Chairman Ty Akins

Attest: _____
County Clerk Brandalin Carnes

DRAFT