



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Minutes - Draft

FAB-Finance, Audit & Budget Committee

Thursday, May 26, 2022

2:00 PM

Special Called Meeting

This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available

(1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage,

(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV

Meeting Started At: 2:01PM

Attendees: Commissioners Rader, Johnson, Terry, Davis Johnson

Present 2 - Commissioner Jeff Rader, and Commissioner Larry Johnson

Not Present 1 - Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson

I. MINUTES

2022-1651 Commission District(s): ALL
Minutes for the May 10, 2022 Finance, Audit, and Budget
Committee

MOTION was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner Johnson

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Cochran-Johnson

II. APPOINTMENT INTERVIEW

[2022-1666](#) Commission District(s): All
Approve Appointment of J. Caroline Freeman as Associate Judge of the Probate Court of DeKalb County, Georgia, and Approve the Compensation for said Position at an Annual Salary of \$129,377
MOTION was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 6/14/2022. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner Johnson

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Cochran-Johnson

*-information provided by Judge Hargrove on the reasoning for increased capacity at the DeKalb County Probate Court
-interview conducted by the committee to Ms. Freeman*

III. AGENDA ITEM

New Agenda Items:

[2022-1545](#) Commission District(s): ALL
SS- Maintenance and Support of Benchmark Court Case Management Software (Sole Source-Multiyear Contract): for use by DeKalb County State Court. Consist of providing computerized maintenance and support of Benchmark Court Case Management software. Awarded to Pioneer Technology Group, LLC. Amount Not To Exceed: \$750,000.00.
MOTION was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 6/14/2022. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner Johnson

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Cochran-Johnson

-information provided by Clerk Mary Bell, Wayne Purdom

IV. DISCUSSION

Midyear Budget Planning Timeline

-information provided by OMB Director Sigler, and John Manson, Central Staff

-TJ Sigler: the date for the passage of the millage rates and the budget is July 12th

-Question JR: our current budgeting environment is informed by resources of the American Recovery Plan. There has been some unclarity about when the second tranche of ARP funds may arrive. Can you tell us when we certified the initial tranche of ARP funding?

Z Williams: I want to say it was around April 26th or somewhere around there. It is my understanding that that date has passed. We have been in constant contact with the federal government; we were able to apply around a week or so ago. I'm hopeful that by the time we meet again there is an agenda item to put to this

-Question JR: with the final rule's adoption, and the existing provisions, there is a relatively broad range of purposes to apply this money. What are we doing to consider the needs of the county within the eligibility needs for the ARP criteria, so that we are taking advantage of circumstances when the need arrives?

Z Williams: last year, although it was our first time doing that with ARP funds, we realized they were more flexible than CARES funds. There were areas that could be addressed that CARES did not address. It seems this next tranche will be even more flexible. For departments, we are taking a look at the needs, and we will look at the ARP funds - and see if there is the possibility to provide those funds, is it a short term activity, and is it more appropriate for ARP or General Funds? I anticipate it to be more expansive this time due to the increased flexibility

-Question JR: it would be helpful if Central Staff were to have an element of the budget review that we demonstrates we have fully exploited our ability to replace county tax funded activities with ARP funded activities, to the extent possible. This way we can say that we have checked on that, and 'this is the amount that can be diverted to ARP', versus monies otherwise. If we are able to save tax fund monies, those are the ultimate flexible funds, so that every time we take the chance to use ARP for a qualified use that may not be as broadly applicable as our tax funds budget, then we are able to build more flexibility in the rest of our budget.

-Z Williams: absolutely. We will be talking with Central Staff on budget related issues and the debt management policy in some of the same conversations. In the context of those discussions we will articulate why requests are being made for specific funding sources

-Question LJ: once you replace the money that you were going to use, where will that money go?

Z Williams: it depends. We are proud to have a 2 month reserve; sooner or later there will be an economic downturn and we want to be positioned for that. This is a great opportunity to hedge against future downturn. If we have urgent issues that need to be addressed that's what we will do

-Question LJ: will you look at 2 types of pots - one for human infrastructure and one for physical infrastructure?

Z Williams: absolutely

-Question TT: we had discussion a few FAB meetings ago on where we are with current ARP spending - are there any updated spreadsheets on that?

-JR: at the last meeting we found that there is still a gap in reporting on projects that were approved either through the BOC or Administration, where projects had been committed, but before the expenditure hits the books. It seems that the amount committed is less than we hoped it would be. The collateral issue is to shorten the period between the commitment and the disbursement; that's probably the more important accomplishment. Ms. McNabb are we closer to identify items related to commitments made but expenditure not yet formalized to reflect that?

Z Williams: the short answer is yes - we are meeting every other day primarily on the small grants - the \$10.5M allocated to the Board that has been a constant challenge. That is one area that has been the most difficult because it involves several moving parts. As discussed earlier in PECS regarding CSB allocation, there have been IGA's with other organizations that have been easier. I anticipate a presentation in the next week on the large expenditures and the smaller grants that commission offices have allocated, as we show the progress on that.

-Question TT: is there a spreadsheet?

Z Williams: we can email it to you - it was presented at the last FAB. We will have an updated one that will show progress on a lot of the smaller contracts - that \$10.5M commission allocation. We will have a list of every item the Board has voted on and exactly where it is

-JR: if you could also have a similar list of commitments the Administration has made that did not require a vote by the Board - that would be useful for us too, because it could very well be that some of the things that we're thinking of we may have missed the Administration's movement in that direction. If you have a fence of money toward a particular purpose, let us know so that we're not trying to fence off the same territory.

Z Williams: understood

-TT: Commissioners are on the front lines of every problem in DeKalb County, and we are talking with constituents in a very personal way in things that impact them directly. When it comes to ARP, the commissioners are given the allocation, and I've

seen good projects but they are district-specific. The rest of the funds are for county-wide initiatives. The majority of the ARP budget the Administration handles - I think we should have a strategic planning process. By not asking the BOC for input you are missing a piece of the Governing Authority.

-Z Williams: your points are absolutely valid Commissioner. As we are preparing to get the next tranche, maybe the FAB committee may discuss a list of what we'd like to see or something along those lines to provide opportunity for input into the process.

-TT: that makes sense; I like that idea

-JR: regarding the budget planning timeline, the last time we accepted these funds, we accepted the grant and then we appropriated the entire grant. Then we gave the Administration authority to spend those funds consistent with the constraints on the grant. If we want a more structured process, the steps would be accept the grant and reserve those funds for appropriation; that can be a burdensome process but it can also be a process that fosters communication. Notwithstanding that, we do have a Central Staff, and I'm going to ask them what they are doing to prepare to support the commission to accept the review of the midyear budget, and if there is anything different to how we might be looking into the ARP allocation maybe we can speak to that also

-information provided by John Manson

-Question TT: regarding the public input process, I think we ought to be doing some of these budget hearings in different formats/different times to allow for more public participation. It's not clear who's responsibility it is in that regard. We should have more creativity as well in how the budget is presented.

-JR: I'm going to ask Central Staff to go to all the BOC members and ask them for their process of presentation tools, and get with Mr. Sigler on delivering those needs

-LJ: I want to thank our Central Staff as they have met with me and discussed this process; I think the main increases will come from ARP funding, and not necessarily general funds - I think the discussion should be had regarding adding that funding to departments, and will be focused around that in some instances

Debt Refunding Process

-information provided by COO Williams

-Z Williams: we are in the process of developing an instrument for an open competitive process. Ultimately the CEO will determine how we move forward. The team has been working on this for the last few weeks.

-JR: Central Staff has been interested in that and I have asked them to review the debt policy; we need to get ahead of these issues a lot more

-TT: I would like to have a meeting to understand the process further

-Z Williams: we will be presenting based on the current debt policy

-Question TT: is the finance department in favor of us changing the policy?

JR: we don't have a recommendation at this point. This learning curve would be better climbed in a more interactive environment than this. If Staff could share the previous memos with you perhaps that would provide light to the situation

-JR: it may be important for Staff to put together a folder to take commissioner input into consideration

-MDJ: I'd like to get that information, because there are complex issues. Hindsight is everything, but we have to look at all aspects of what we're doing. We're talking about transparency and procedure. Once we look at the process to determine if the process needs to be improved. I will not concede right now that changes need to be made until adequate review

Meeting Ended At: 3:14PM

MOTION was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner Johnson

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Cochran-Johnson

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC