

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE WILCOX COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD ON AUGUST 2ND, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE COMMISSIONERS
MEETING ROOM IN THE WILCOX COUNTY COURTHOUSE.

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Mel Powell	Chairman
Jowan Johnson	Vice Chairman
Alfonza Hall	Commissioner
Lanier Keene	Commissioner
Michael Pomirko	County Manager
Indya Tisdol	County Clerk
Charles Futch	EMS Director
Mitch Aultman	EMS
Kristian McRae	EMS
Larry Brown	EMA/Fire Coordinator
Janice Brown	Coroner & Abbeville Fire Chief
Robert Rodgers	Sheriff
Christy Welch	Sheriff Dept.
Michael Welch	Sheriff Dept.

PITTS:

LISA WILLIS Mayor

Chairman Mel Powell called meeting to order.

Vice Chairman Jowan Johnson gave the invocation.

All gave the Pledge.

Commissioner Clay Reid motioned to approve the prior months meeting. Vice Chairman Jowan Johnson seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

Sheriff Rodgers told the commissioners that there is crisis at the Sheriff Department. The month of July he had four people to quit, and one will soon be leaving. Sheriff Rodgers stated that he will only have one deputy per shift when the deputy leaves. Managing traffic stops, fatalities, and general patrolling will leave him with one deputy per shift. Sheriff Rodgers said that crimes will increase like it was before he took office.

On August 18th, Sheriff Rodgers said he will have to transport 21 prisoners to court with only four deputies working. Only three people can fit at one time in a patrol vehicle. He stated that he is proposing a dollar increase for office staff and jailers, and a two dollar increase for deputies. The Sheriff stated that Pulaski County, a surrounding county, starts their deputies at \$19/hour. Sheriff Rodgers stated that the state of Georgia is one of the lowest paid when it comes to law enforcement. Sheriff Rodgers said that he is losing employees because of this. "Payroll, health benefits, and equipment have been his main talking points over the past two years, and he isn't getting feedback for either at the moment" said Sheriff Rodgers. After conversations he has had with his deputies, Sheriff Rodgers said that they will not be here much longer. He also said that the deputies who have left and the one who is about to leave in the coming weeks have left and is leaving on good terms. The relationship in the jailhouse and within the community is not an issue or concern, but the pay is. Sheriff Rodgers stated that the deputies are being paid on a poverty level. Job positions have been advertised for three weeks now and he doesn't have any applications on his desk. Sheriff Rodgers told the commissioners that they do not have a choice because he is not going to do the job by himself.

August 18th, 21 prisoners will have to be transported for court including people who are out on bond and housed at other facilities. Sheriff Rodgers said that he cannot serve warrants right now because he has

nowhere to put the inmates. He also mentioned that he was stressed with employees dropping like flies. He had one deputy to leave for a \$6 increase. Sheriff Rodgers told the commissioners he needs a vote or discussion because he needs feedback quickly. He had one guy to tell him that he would return for a \$2 increase and work part time. With things the way they are now and being short staffed, Sheriff Rodgers said that the money will be paid in overtime anyways when it comes to transporting inmates.

Vice Chairman, Jowan Johnson, asked County Manager, Michael Pomirko could if they could have an answer by Thursday to the Sheriff's pay increase request. Michael responded and said that a workshop meeting could be held on Thursday.

Sheriff Rodgers said that one of his deputies had to respond to calls alone. During one response a guy was in the middle of the field with only underwear on with a rifle pointed at the deputy. Another call the deputy responded to a guy trying to commit suicide. The Sheriff said that killing yourself is not a crime, but he doesn't want his deputies getting hurt while responding to these calls alone.

Commissioner Clay Reid asked if they have a workshop on Thursday to discuss the Sheriff's concerns. Sheriff Rodgers said that he could have some numbers by Thursday. County Manager, Michael Pomirko, told the Sheriff after he gets the numbers to him and they have a workshop meeting, he'll see what can be done.

A business owner from the City of Pitts asked the commissioners why the Sheriff was told no about increasing his employees' pay, if he has a set budget. County Manager, Michael Pomirko, responded by asking the Sheriff did he state during a conversation they had that he plans to replace someone in the position that's now vacant due to an employee retiring. Commissioner Lanier Keene and Chairman Mel Powell responded to the business owner and said that all county officials will be receiving a \$5,000 raise effective January 1st of next year which is mandated by the state. The business owner said to the commissioners that they have to collectively make a decision when it comes to county business and stop just having conversations.

Commissioner Clay Reid stated the Sheriff's budget has increased over the past few years. He said that when started as commissioner in 2012, deputies were being paid \$11.50 or so and now they are up to \$15.22. Action has been taken by the commissioner said Commissioner Clay Reid.

Business Owner from the City of Pitts said that the commissioners should have made a decision on building the jail. Commissioner Lanier Keene said that the jail not being built was not the commissioner's fault. Commissioner Lanier Keene said that Sheriff Rodgers wouldn't sign off on the building. Sheriff Rodgers responded to Commissioner Keene saying that he didn't have to sign off. He said that he does not have control over the building. He said that he has the say so as to whether or not the building is up to standard for his inmates. Commissioner Lanier Keene said that the jail was not built because the Sheriff was not pleased with the architects' layout, and that the building was not big enough for the Sheriff. Sheriff Rodgers said that it was up to the commissioner to decide if a new jail would have been built.

County Manager, Michael Pomirko, informed the commissioners that three vendors put in a bid for the new EMS building on July 26, 2022. Two of the bids were for electrical and one was for electrical. One bid that was submitted for electrical did not meet the specs that were asked for. Once we get a plumber then we will be able to set a date and start construction. Michael said that he should have some quotes within two weeks from plumbers. Michael asked the commissioner if they wanted to take a vote on the bids that were submitted. Commissioner Clay Reid stated that he would like to wait to hear from another vendor. Michael said that October 3rd could potentially be a start date and it would give contractors time to get their hand on material.

Chairman Mel Powell asked about the plumbing quote. County Manager, Michael Pomirko, said that we have some coming in.

County Manager, Michael Pomirko, informed the commissioners that The Scruggs Company asked for an extension to complete the 2022 LMIG because asphalt and other material are being rationed out amongst other counties, such as, Dooly, Pulaski, and Dodge to make sure that everyone is taken care of.

Commissioner Clay Reid motioned to extend the project for the 2022 LMIG. Vice Chairman Jowan Johnson seconded that motion that carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lanier Keene stated that Statham Shoals paving had been completed.

