

Regular Meeting Summary
Jenkins County Board of Commissioners
Tuesday, July 11, 2023
4:00 P.M.

The Jenkins County Board of Commissioners met for its Regular Monthly Meeting on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 4:00 P.M. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room at the James L. Henry Administrative Building. Commissioners in attendance were Chairman Horace Weathersby III and Hiller Spann. Commissioner Jonathan Powell attended via telephone. Commissioners Pamela Dwight and Tracie Coney were not in attendance. Others in attendance were County Administrator Grady Saxon, County Attorney George Rountree, and a crowd of 184 citizens (see list attached).

Chairman Weathersby announced that there was not a quorum of Board Members present, so no business could be conducted today. He stated that there were six guests on the AGENDA scheduled for Personal Appearances and that THEY would be allowed to speak, but no others would be allowed to speak or ask questions.

Chairman Weathersby gave the Invocation and then led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then welcomed all those in attendance.

Mr. Walter Hudson was not present for a Personal Appearance.

Mrs. Vondesa Lee expressed concerns about the landfill. She inquired about the proposed Solid Waste Management Plan and what the review period/process would look like. Attorney Rountree explained what the plan was and that it was a requirement of the State of Georgia. Mrs. Lee inquired if the Public would be allowed to comment before the vote is held. She also discussed that a parcel of land adjoining the current landfill was under contract by Atlantic Waste until September for the purpose of expanding or establishing another landfill, and that the timeframe would allow time for a permit to be issued by this Board. She stated that there were only 58 working days until the end of September. Attorney Rountree stated that the County was not a party to any contract for purchasing land for that purpose. He stated that Atlantic Waste has applied for a permit under the existing Solid Waste Management Ordinance for the purpose of operating a landfill. He stated that the County has hired an engineer to review the landfill proposal and application, and that the proposal and application has been sent to the CSRA Regional Commission for review. Mrs. Lee also inquired about the \$25 per ton fee at the landfill and wanted to see those fees reduced for the citizens of the county. Mrs. Lee stated that today's turnout speaks to how the citizens of Jenkins County feel about this matter. She also stated that if a landfill was not acceptable for all the other counties, that it wasn't acceptable for Jenkins County either.

Mr. Reginald Sapp stated that he was "on both sides of the coin" of waste management. He stated he was a certified hauler of medical waste. He stated that the last thing you want is a stack disposal. He stated the life of a liner would be 20-25 years. He also stated that landfills

give off “forever toxins” which stay in your body once ingested. He stated that there were no filters that would remove the toxins from the water. He stated that he tried to install a transfer station in the industrial park before and was told that the county didn’t want it. He also stated that landfills emit methane gas, which will seep into the ground water and cause a rotten egg smell in the water. He stated that the most appropriate thing to do would be let the voters to decide on the matter rather than allowing a handful of citizens to decide on a landfill. He requested that the Board think about the future of the children of the county. It’s more important than the millage rate and a little savings.

Mr. Robert Jenkins stated he had served on the Water Council for the State of Georgia under Governor Purdue. He said that the council fought with landfills over infiltration and leaching. He stated that the toxins would leach from the landfill and eventually get into the atmosphere and eventually in the ground water. What would we do if there was a disaster? Who would pay for all the future problems associated with a new landfill. Jenkins County is a farming community and use a lot of water. He stated that the children and grandchildren would have to deal with the associated problems should this landfill be allowed. He fears that Jenkins County would be called a “trash dump” and would be prohibitive for new people moving into the county. He stated that it’s the obligation of the County Commissioners to keep the people of their districts informed of things of this magnitude.

Mr. Greg Lee handed the Board members a “No Landfill Flyer”. He addressed the concern with water quality and the aforementioned “forever toxins”. He is also concerned about the increased truck traffic in the County. He wants the citizens to have a say in what the Commissioners want to bring into the County that will affect the future. He’s concerned that ordinances can be changed to allow the problem to become bigger. He stated that he was prepared to fight this. He urged everyone to educate themselves about landfills and the problems associated with them. He stated that the citizens that live near the landfill MATTER.

Mr. Damon Mullis with Ogeechee Riverkeeper discussed groundwater. He stated that liners are not fool proof. He stated that over time, groundwater would be contaminated. He stated that moisture from waste would filter down to the liner and would have to be pumped out and taken to a wastewater treatment plant, treated, then discharged into a river. A landfill is a permanent hazardous waste site that the County would be responsible for maintaining for the future. He stated that the County Commissioners would be the first line of defense in protecting the community.

Chairman Weathersby thanked all those that attended and presented. Attorney Rountree stated that the proposed SWMP should be made available to anyone who wanted a copy.

Mr. Reginald Sapp inquired if Atlantic Waste would be required to issue a bond for remediation. Attorney Rountree stated that the SWMP included protections for the County in that an applicant would have to contribute to a fund for that purpose.

Another citizen inquired if citizens would be allowed additional input.

Another citizen loudly exclaimed "We Don't Want It".

Mr. Reginald Sapp explained that if the landfill was approved, an injunction would be filed so the matter could be placed on the ballot for voter approval.

Commissioner Spann provided that line of thinking for considering the proposal was primarily financial. Several people interrupted Commissioner Spann as he was speaking. He stated that there were currently two unlined landfills in the County. He also stated that monitoring for methane gas and water contamination is conducted annually. He stated that the County had been assured that these problems would be controlled. He stated that the Board would review all the citizen concerns.

Mr. Wayne Burke inquired if the citizens would be allowed to vote on this matter. Commissioner Spann stated that all county household garbage is sent to the transfer station in Screven County.

Mrs. Janice Schmidt was concerned about the value of her property going down should another landfill come in.

Mr. C.J Green exclaimed that "this County is nothing but money hungry. The landfill is nothing but a money scheme. The second thing is the taxes. They kill us on the taxes-money hungry."

Chairman Weathersby thanked everyone for coming.