



Coweta County Board of Commissioners

Work Session/Called Meeting

22 E Broad Street
Newnan, GA 30263
www.coweta.ga.us

Shannon Zerangue
770.254.2601

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

8:30 AM

Commission Chambers

~ Minutes ~

COWETA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Bob Blackburn	District 3 - Chairman	Present	
John Reidelbach	District 4 - Vice Chairman	Present	
Paul Poole	District 1	Absent	
Tim Lassetter	District 2	Present	
Al Smith	District 5	Present	
Michael Fouts	County Administrator	Present	
Eddie Whitlock	Associate Administrator	Present	
Kelly Mickle	Assistant Administrator	Present	
Nathan Lee	Assistant County Attorney	Absent	
Fran Collins	Deputy County Clerk	Present	
Tod Handley	Public Works Director	Present	
Matt Lovett	Env. Mgmt. Director	Present	
Jenny Runions	County Planner	Present	
Thomas Bush	Lieutenant - Animal Services	Present	
Lakina Gay	Office Manager - CI	Present	
Hans Wilson	Finance Director	Present	

The Honorable Board of Commissioners of Coweta County, Georgia met in Called Meeting/Work Session on Tuesday, August 16, 2022 for the purposes of discussing the compactor site program, the 5311 transit program, animal services and a mixed use update.

Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Blackburn called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

REGULAR SESSION

1. 13250 Discuss the Compactor Site Program

Administrator Fouts presented a brief history of the County's compactor site program, explained that staffing has changed from a contractor to part-time County employees, and noted that activity at all compactor sites remains strong. He reviewed the location of the sites, highlighted the hours and days of operation, and explained that the majority of sites are located within right-of-way or on small parcels. He explained that access to these sites is not only challenging for citizens, but also for our hauling trucks. He pointed out that if the compactor program continues staff would like to return to the Board with a few proposals to make investments in some of the sites, particularly the high-volume sites on Andrew Bailey Road and Lora Smith Road. Before investments in repairs are made, the Board may desire to close or relocate some of the centers. Conversations have been held in the past regarding consolidation of locations into three (3) to five (5) sites around population centers.

Environmental Management Director Matt Lovett explained that the Andrew Bailey and Lora Smith sites are his biggest concern. Both are in heavily populated areas, have safety concerns, and are severely undersized. In his opinion, relocating these sites to an industrial area would be best.

Administrator Fouts explained that staff has considered relocating the Andrew Bailey site further back on the Andrew Bailey Park property, but it would require crossing floodplain and could be relatively expensive. If interested in pursuing this option, we could also include pervious parking for the park.

Public Works Director Tod Handley explained that the Andrew Bailey Park property contains floodplain, the topography is steep, the drop-off from Andrew Bailey Road is considerable, and expansion of the site would require crossing into floodplain and potentially wetlands.

Commission Lassetter explained that the compactor program is great for citizens that participate. In the past, the Board reduced hours of operation at some of the sites because of low usage, but with service issues from private trash providers in the county, he would guess that usage of some of the sites has recently increased. Lastly, he would like to review current data on site usage prior to reducing/increasing hours or closing sites.

Mr. Lovett explained that the Lora Smith and Andrew Bailey sites are currently equal in usage and have had instances of twenty (20) customers onsite at the same time which is challenging.

Commissioner Reidelbach agreed that the Andrew Bailey site is dangerous, and he would like to see current usage numbers and staff proposals.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts explained that staff has discussed consolidating both sites into one and investigated some locations; however, the challenge is finding a site located in a commercial area that will support it. A few years ago, staff investigated expansion at the Andrew Bailey site, and the estimated cost at that time was \$200,000.

Associate Administrator Whitlock explained that at that time the estimate to expand the Andrew Bailey site was \$200,000-\$300,000, but today the cost would be considerably higher and would include construction of a retaining wall and obtaining permits to encroach upon wetlands.

Administrator Fouts explained that at this time staff isn't recommending a reduction in hours and a few small repairs can be made to keep the sites open.

Mr. Lovett explained that staff has been making small repairs without having to make a large investment.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts explained that until around 2015, an appropriation from the General Fund to the Solid Waste Fund was required to cover operating costs. He further explained that the components of revenue include bag sales and gate fees for the transfer station and the C&D landfill. With the reduction of hours and change in fees, the site is now sustainable. The fire at the transfer station and replacement of heavy equipment have required specific appropriations.

Finance Director Hans Wilson explained that most of the current appropriation for the transfer station is for equipment or other capital needs. The County does not make any money from recyclable materials. The transfer station and the C&D Landfill have exceeded budget expectations but hauling fees have increased.

Commissioner Reidelbach pointed out that revenue was lost following the tornado when C&D fees were suspended for storm debris.

Administrator Fouts explained that the County will receive some reimbursement from the

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a portion of lost revenue. The net between expense and proposed reimbursement is approximately \$200,000. Staff will provide the current usage data at the compactor sites and examine potential solutions, especially for Andrew Bailey and Lora Smith.

In response to questions from Administrator Fouts and Associate Administrator Whitlock, Mr. Lovett explained that the Andrew Bailey and Lora Smith sites are the top priority. More staging area is needed at the Lora Smith site and the Andrew Bailey site is too close to the road.

Associate Administrator Whitlock explained that staff will need to determine cost proposals for improvements at those sites.

Associate Administrator Whitlock brought up concerns about the future of the C&D landfill. Mr. Handley explained that the capacity report for the C&D Landfill is based on last year's usage rate and because of the debris from the tornado its latest report states that it will be at capacity by 2030. However, based on a normal year's usage, estimates are that it will be at capacity by 2035.

Associate Administrator Whitlock pointed out that there will be additional expenses associated with opening cells at the landfill in the future.

Administrator Fouts explained that there is existing land for future growth at the C&D Landfill, but in 10-15 years offsite expansion may be required. The landfill was closed in 1993 and the County is hauling trash out from the transfer station. If the County does not expand the C&D component, one option could be to transfer that material out of the county. The cost benefit of this would have to be examined versus purchasing land and relocating. Another challenge is finding a remote location to minimize impact to surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Handley pointed out that haul rates of material out of the site are more than funds collected and that rates may need to be adjusted and charges for mattresses may need to be increased.

In closing, Administrator Fouts explained that the County contracts with Republic for hauling with rates based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). He stated that the Solid Waste rates can be reviewed during the next fiscal year.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

2. 13251 Discuss the 5311 Transit Program

Assistant Administrator Mickle explained that the County's 5311 Transit program (Dial-a-Ride) started in 2009. This program provides on demand, door to door public transportation to any location in Coweta, operates Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and currently consists of six (6) shuttle vans. The program is contracted out by the Board of Commissioners, with a Third-Party Operator (TPO). The Board recently voted to appoint members to the Transit Technical Coordinating Committee (TTCC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). RMS Transit was selected in January 2020 as the TPO and is responsible for handling the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the system, scheduling calls for service, managing routes, supervising and training drivers, submitting monthly service reports, and general bookkeeping. The Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) also provides oversight and support. She further explained that funding for the program comes from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) 5311 Grant, a local match, and reimbursement from the Department of Human Services (DHS). The County does not have a contract with DHS. DHS provides funding to TRRC for certain types of trips for eligible human services providers including the DHS Division of Aging (DAC), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), Department of

Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities (DBHDD), and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). TRRC reimburses the County on a monthly basis for those eligible trips (which qualify as the County's local match).

Assistant Administrator Mickle briefly reviewed transit trips by funding source to common destinations, transit pickup locations in the county, ridership locations by aging program, Rutledge Center, and Pathways. She provided a breakdown of destinations after the senior centers reopened in the 2nd Quarter of FY 2022 and explained that in grant year 2020, the County received Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding that covered 100% of program costs. That funding along with DHS reimbursement created a reserve of approximately \$127,259. In grant year 2023, program costs will likely increase because of an hourly rate increase for RMS.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Mickle explained that historically TRRC has provided oversight for the program but have experienced transitions in staffing. During this time, County Planner Jenny Runions, Assistant County Planner Kim Dutton, and herself have stepped in to provide oversight. TRRC previously billed the County \$1,000 per month for oversight, but they recently stopped invoicing the County for this assistance.

Assistant Administrator Mickle explained that this year staff received more complaints and cancellations than prior years and is working with TRRC and RMS on solutions.

Administrator Fouts explained that because the transit program involves GDOT, TRRC, the TPO, and county staff, a possible solution is to insource the program. County staff members including Assistant Administrator Mickle, Ms. Runions, Ms. Dutton, and others including the Fire Department (which provides maintenance), spend an enormous amount of time on the transit program. If calculated in terms of dollars, the time staff has spent would be significant. The program is complex and is a great service for those that do not have transportation, but it comes at a cost. Challenges have been experienced because of the provider who has not met the expectations of the Request for Proposal (RFP) that was issued years ago, but they are now being held to that standard.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts and Assistant Administrator Mickle explained that TRRC has a regional program for transit in other counties. Coweta has a stand-alone transit program, and that decision was made years ago so that the County could maintain control and the Commissioners could pick and choose how the program works. The County "piggy backed" onto an RFP process TRRC conducted years ago which selected RMS Transit. RMS is headquartered in South Georgia, dispatches from an office in Griffin, and the transit buses are housed and driven in Coweta.

Assistant Administrator Mickle pointed out that in the near future, the County will have to transition to a more urban hybrid 5311/5307 program and the transit program will become even more complex. Although funding sources will remain the same, DHS trips being counted as the County's match will change, and local funds will be necessary to fund the program. Another point is that there is an option to add additional buses that could be dedicated to run non-DHS trips if the Board chooses to do so.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts explained that the current rider fee is \$3.00 per trip (\$6.00 round trip). To meet the demand from public riders, a bus will have to be added. It is currently difficult for citizens to schedule a ride outside of the DHS trips. Another option is for providers like the Rutledge Center to provide their own transportation and contract directly through DHS and receive similar funding. The County has allowed them to utilize the system more than originally intended. In addition, July 1, 2022 begins the next grant cycle and contract year, and the contract allows for RMS to negotiate a new

rate. The rate for 2023 in the original contract is \$38.14 per hour but now the contractor is requesting \$45 per hour. Staff is working on an amendment to extend the contract. He further explained that if the federal wage rate, fuel, or insurance costs rise above 20%, the contract allows for some negotiation, but staff is facing challenges receiving accurate information from the contractor.

Administrator Fouts explained that a dedicated Transit Manager position has been included in the FY 2023 budget.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lassetter, Assistant Administrator Mickle explained that TRRC administers the DHS contract and provides a reconciliation report for revenue hours at the end of every month.

Administrator Fouts explained that the County also pays annual dues to TRRC. He further explained that the next steps include negotiating the contract with the contractor to provide continued service and returning to the Board with a proposal to insource the service or proceed with an RFP.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts explained that changing contractors is a complex process because it includes GDOT, TRRC, and DHS. It could take approximately a year to complete.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

3. 13252 Discuss Animal Services

Administrator Fouts explained that some gaps have been identified in the County's *Animal Control Ordinances*. The issue has been discussed with the Board and the County Attorney, and everyone agrees that the ordinances should be revised to help staff and the citizens. Staff is working on a draft amendment to present to the Board for consideration in September. The ordinance will meet State law minimums, but it will include more stringent regulations for insurance and other requirements of the vicious dog statute. He explained that the statute may not be retroactive but will be researched by the County Attorney.

Administrator Fouts further explained that the next matter is capacity at the animal shelter. Because of the growth in human and animal population, a decision is needed whether to expand, split the function, or some other alternative to alleviate overcrowding and to remain in compliance. The shelter operates under a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) permit who also conducts inspections. A few years ago, the USDA outlawed the use of temporary kennels; therefore, if structured kennels are not available, animals can only be held less than 24 hours. The shelter is often at capacity and unfortunately some animals are held longer than staff wishes. Staff has partnered with rescue groups, promoted adoptions on social media, and increased efforts to get animals adopted. The reality is that there are times when some animals have to be euthanized. Currently, the County does not have a policy regarding euthanasia and as part of the ordinance amendment in September, staff would like to propose some requirements in order to maintain compliance. One suggestion is that when the shelter reaches 75% capacity, a process will be started to notify the public and rescue groups that animals will have to be euthanized if certain animals are not adopted. The process will be transparent and will be based on the age, condition of the animal, and the length of time that the animal has been at the shelter.

Ms. Lakina Gay, Office Manager for Coweta County Corrections, explained that currently there are animals that have been in the shelter for over a year and this is not fair to the animal to be in a kennel that long. She further explained that Clayton County has a 21-day limit then rescue groups are contacted, and a list is posted on social media to let citizens know that the animals are in danger of being

euthanized. Coweta County is proposing a 30-day limit, then notices will be provided to rescue groups and social media, and if the animal(s) are not adopted and the shelter is at least 75% capacity, staff will turn to the euthanasia policy to remain in compliance.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Lieutenant Tom Bush, Animal Shelter Manager, explained that rescue organizations do not pay a fee to remove an animal and the goal is to get the animal out of the shelter.

Administrator Fouts explained that over the years staff has made changes such as medications and spay/neuter to prepare animals for adoption and reduce the wait time. If an animal is healthy, the shelter gets it ready for adoption but sometimes must call on the rescue organizations because of the numbers of animals at the facility.

Ms. Gay explained that using social media helps, but the current process and adoption rate continues to cause capacity issues, and often times requires action to remain compliant.

Commissioner Lassetter expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts and explained that he believes the proposal sounds reasonable. No one wants to euthanize animals, but it has become a harsh necessity.

Administrator Fouts explained that in addition, staff is requesting that the Board consider an expansion of the animal shelter or separation of the intake and adoption facilities. The concept is potentially a stand-alone facility for 24 dogs and 30 cats, located in a commercial space for greater access to the citizens and increased visibility. If the Board is supportive of the idea, staff will coordinate with the municipalities that have a current Intergovernmental Agreement with the County.

Associate Administrator Whitlock explained that the concept has been discussed for a while. Separating the adoption process from the shelter allows the shelter to operate as a true intake facility. The adoption center will serve the public and provide more exposure and focus on adoptable animals. The animal shelter is loud, not conducive for adoptions, and poses a potential for the guard line at the prison to be compromised. Lastly, a needs assessment has been performed and a floor plan has been developed for a new building or for retrofitting an existing building should either be a desire of the Board.

Chairman Blackburn pointed out that pet drop-off rates have drastically increased nationally.

Administrator Fouts explained that the County is experiencing increased abandonment of pets by owners. The County does not allow owners to turn-in their pets at the shelter and will issue citations to owners identified if animals are abandoned. If the Board is not considering separation of the intake/adoption processes, staff is concerned that the shelter will have to be expanded in order to keep up with population (citizens and animals). Staff is requesting direction from the Board regarding the direction they desire.

Commissioner Reidelbach explained that there will be costs associated with separation of the intake/adoption processes (i.e., real estate, staffing, etc.) and expressed his belief that the adoption fees should be increased if the adoption center becomes a reality.

Lieutenant Bush explained that adoption fees were higher in the past but have gradually been reduced with a goal to increase adoptions because of overcrowding. Currently, the shelter is in a remote location, and this creates a challenge because some citizens aren't aware of its location. An adoption center with better visibility will most likely increase adoptions, and fees could be increased if necessary.

In response to a question from Commissioner-Elect McKenzie, Administrator Fouts

explained that staffing of a separate adoption center would be part of the analysis performed by staff. Depending on coordination of all parties involved, staffing options will be explored and presented to the Board in the future for consideration.

Associate Administrator Whitlock explained that another issue being discussed is expansion of the intake facility. This option will only result in the expansion becoming overcrowded as well. A pet adoption center is a concept that will allow the intake function to truly operate as an intake function, and if combined with an amended ordinance that includes euthanasia, it would mitigate the need to expand the intake facility.

Following the discussion, it was the consensus of the Board for staff to continue to explore the potential to separate the intake/adoption processes by creating an adoption center.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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4. 13288 Mixed Use Update

County Planner Jenny Runions explained that staff has prepared a summary of the concepts for the proposed mixed-use ordinance. This includes light industrial land use with commercial/office use. Staff researched other communities that have incorporated the light industrial component. In addition, staff recommends that no single land use less than 30% be allowed in order to keep the development a true mixed-use (live, work, play), with exception of developments that are less than 50 acres which could go down to 20% commercial use. If light industry is a component of a development, staff recommends at least 10% commercial office which will help sustain land values. She reviewed the proposed uses allowed in the commercial/office use, in the commercial/office use plus light industrial, the maximum residential density for single family and multi-family developments, and the density incentives for each.

Administrator Fouts explained that within the mixed-use matrix there are commercial, industrial, and residential uses allowed. For example, if a site has 20%-24.9% percent commercial use, the maximum residential density would be 18 units per acre. If more commercial percentages are added, the higher the allowable residential density. This will provide some flexibility that the Board wants and includes density incentives.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Ms. Runions explained that mixed-use research included Fayette and Forsyth counties, the cities of Alpharetta and Roswell, studies from Georgia Tech and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) model. Additionally, research was conducted into mixed-used developments in Athens-Clarke County, Chatham County, and the cities of Savannah, Roswell, Knoxville (Tennessee), Birmingham (Alabama), and Mobile (Alabama).

Ms. Runions explained that the draft ordinance also proposes a base density similar to the *Residential Retirement Community Care District (RRCC)* with 8,500 square feet minimum lots for all single-family homes and 18 units per acre for multi-family homes. The minimum living area will use an average to provide flexibility in design. For single family (attached or detached), the average is 1,400 square feet and for multi-family the average is 1,000 square feet.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Ms. Runions explained that light industrial uses include research facilities and laboratories, catering establishments, bakeries and other miscellaneous food production, electrical appliances and equipment sales and repair, studios, offices and clinics, technical schools, garden shops, commercial nurseries and greenhouses, general woodworking and metalworking, small scale micro-manufacturing, 3D printing,

hardware prototyping, robotic design, business incubators, kitchen incubators, and other additional light uses.

Ms. Runions also explained that gas stations would be restricted.

Administrator Fouts explained that staff is asking for any additional changes from the Board prior to setting a Public Hearing in October.

In closing, Ms. Runions thanked the board for previous input and explained that staff is requesting any additional feedback based on this proposal.

RESULT:	PRESENTED
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ADJOURNMENT

Motion To: **Adjourn**

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Reidelbach, District 4 - Vice Chairman
SECONDER:	Al Smith, District 5
AYES:	Blackburn, Reidelbach, Poole, Lassetter, Smith