

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA, HELD ON JANUARY 9, 1998, IN THE COMMISSION MEETING ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE CHATHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE, LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, 124 BULL STREET, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Billy Hair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Friday, January 9, 1998.

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II. INVOCATION

Commissioner Martin Jackel gave the invocation.

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III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

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IV. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll.

PRESENT:	Dr. Billy B. Hair, Chairman Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas, Vice Chairman, District Eight Frank G. Murray, Chairman Pro Tem, District Four David L. Saussy, District One Joe Murray Rivers, District Two Martin S. Jackel, District Three Harris Odell, Jr., District Five Ben Price, District Six Eddie W. DeLoach, District Seven
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IN ATTENDANCE:	Russ Abolt, County Manager R. Jonathan Hart, County Attorney Sybil E. Tillman, Clerk
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V. ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS

1. ELECT A CHAIRMAN PRO TEM AND SET THE DAYS AND TIME FOR REGULAR COMMISSION MEETINGS FOR 1998.

Chairman Hair said, the first item on the agenda today is organizational items. This being our first meeting of 1998, we need to elect a Chairman Pro Tem. Commissioner Murray has served in this capacity for the past year and has done a very good job. If there are no other nominations, the Chair will entertain a motion to renominate Commissioner Murray as Chairman Pro Tem. Commissioner Thomas said, so moved. Commissioner Saussy said, second. Chairman Hair said, I have a motion and a second. Any discussion? All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner Odell was not present when this vote was taken; Commissioner Murray did not cast a vote.] Chairman Hair said, the motion is unanimous.

Chairman Hair said, the next is the Chairman's items. Commissioner Thomas said, Mr. Chair. Mr. Abolt said, you have to set your meetings too, sir.

Mr. Abolt said, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Thomas and members of the Board, at this time in addition to electing the Chairman Pro Tem, it is required that you set your meetings for the calendar year 1998. In the staff report before you we are following the same pattern of previous years. As the community realizes, it is tradition for the Board to meet on the second and fourth Fridays of the month. There are two —, three exceptions actually, as you've done in the past. First is that many of you choose to attend the NACo Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, between the end of February and the first of March, plus with the holidays in November and December, in those three months, February, November and December, we are recommending that you meeting on the first and third Fridays of those three months.

Commissioner Rivers said, so moved. Commissioner Saussy said, second. Chairman Hair said, I have a motion and a second. Any discussion? All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner Odell was not present when this vote was taken.] Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

1. Commissioner Thomas moved to reappoint Commissioner Murray as Chairman Pro Tem. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner Odell was not present when this vote was taken; Commissioner Murray did not cast a vote.]
2. Commissioner Rivers moved to set the meeting dates and time in 1998 for 9:00 a.m., on the second and fourth Fridays except in February, November and December on the first and third Fridays. Commissioner Saussy seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner Odell was not present when this vote was taken.]

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VI. CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING GOLF COURSE.

Chairman Hair said, the first item under my section deals with a discussion regarding the Henderson Golf Course. We have discussed this on several occasions as a Commission. It is my belief that the \$600,000 that we're paying annually and will be paying for the next 16 or 17 years is an item that we can relieve the taxpayers of, and there's a tremendous amount of interest in that property right now, and what I'm asking my fellow Commissioners to do today is to simply directing the staff to do an RFP for the golf course and see what is out there in terms of interest and see if we can come out from under that debt. The golf course would still remain public, as it always would. The only thing that would change would be that the taxpayers would no longer have to pay the \$600,000 a year. And I don't think we lose anything by putting it out for bid, just to see what kind of interest is out there and how much of the debt we would come out from under. I'll entertain Commissioner DeLoach and then Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner DeLoach said, the Chairman was not a member of the Board when we decided that we would go into this golf course and set up this program that we set up originally. I'm not sure where the \$600,000 comes from. I'm sure somewhere along the line we have that number. My understanding is that we're going to fund it for \$250,000 this year. I'm not sure —, what's the —? Chairman Hair said, the principal and interest on the debt is —. Commissioner DeLoach said, I'm not worried about principal and interest. What are we going to have to spend as far as taxpayers on the golf course this year? Mr. Abolt said, just under a half a million dollars. Commissioner DeLoach said, okay, \$400,000 not \$600,000? Mr. Abolt said, no sir, no sir. Commissioner DeLoach said, okay. Now let's go on with the numbers and talk about the reasoning behind that originally. Two things. There's a public golf course and then there's a municipal public golf course. There's a lot of difference in both of those. The original reason that Ben [Price] and I and several others were interest in the golf course over at that area was that there was nothing or nowhere for anyone else to play other than Bacon Park as far as a public course, a municipal was concerned. The studies had showed that there was a need for at least five municipal courses in Chatham County, public courses, and we did not have but one. So with the help of some private sector people who were also in need of making arrangements to make their property worth more than it originally was, the County entered into an agreement with them to set up a program where these people would build a golf course and we would in turn buy that golf course from them after it was completed. Now if it were the intent of the County to just buy a golf course and run a golf course, that would fine and good, we need to sell it, although in Indianapolis, Indiana, the City of Indianapolis has five —, has six golf courses, all of them municipal golf courses, and make money on all six, and use it to help fund their city government. So it's not unusual for people in municipalities and counties to be in the golf course business. But if that were the only reason, I would not have a problem with discussing selling the program —, selling the golf course. The main reason that we did this initially, and everyone up here voted for it that was here at the time, was to help increase the tax base for Chatham County, the idea being that if we increase the value of this property in this area there, we would not only increase the value of this property, but we would also increase the value on the base of our tax base that we have in Chatham County. As of today, there's five new motels being developed right there in front of Henderson Golf Course. As of today, there's better than \$5,000,000 worth of improvements in that area. There's a process of developing a multi-family home set up there, apartment, high end multi-family home, which will add another \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000 to the County line. All total in that area, the proposed development that this County Commission saw and looked forward and developed is \$70,000,000. That is the proposed build out in that area of what we are doing there. Now short term and shortsightedness is no doubt we need to sell something that is costing us \$300,000/\$400,000, but if you look long term, which this Commission did when we voted originally to do this, it gave the public an opportunity to, one, play golf at a reasonable price and, two, help the tax base so you folks won't have to pay as much taxes as you would have if you had not had this income. That is the true facts of this. It is not a question of whether we're selling or buying a golf course or we're developing one. It is the fact that we are developing the tax base in Chatham County. If we turn around and sell this, there's two problems with that. One, we don't know the quality we will have

when that person comes in there and buys that. The County is not running that. I've heard that from the Chairman and a number of others that we need to get out of the golf course business. We are not in the golf course business. We have the golf course set up and people who are in a private company are running that golf course. If they're not doing a good job, we have the right to put someone in there to do a better job. The fact of it is we're not running it. We're trying to get the best value for the people in Chatham County. Now as far as the people playing golf, we're going to subsidize the Tybee Pier this year, \$100,000; we're going to subsidize the pool, \$200,000; we're going to subsidize playing soft ball, I don't know how much; football, I don't know how much. What is golf? Is golf not a sport? To me it is something that the public should have a right to play. Now you say you can go play in any public course. So I took the time to call around and get some rates on this because I live over in West Chatham County and not blessed with as much money as in some other areas, so I figured we'd go and we'd just check around and see what the rates were. I took Henderson Park, working with senior citizens, which is the reason that I initially come up with this with Jay Harrell, who was Mayor over in Garden City, a place for senior citizens to play golf. Rates during the week run \$20. They've got a weekday special of \$16.50. Weekends is \$27. Now we can go to Bacon Park, City of Savannah, and we can play for \$16 or we can play on the weekends for \$19.25, but if you want to go to a private, a public private golf course, which is where I live, Southbridge public course, all of you can play there if you wanted to. You could pay \$25 during the week as a senior citizen, special rate, or \$35, or you can go on the weekend and play for \$45. Now you tell me who's getting the best benefit here. We're providing a service to the people of Chatham County with this golf course. We're developing property in this area for the people of Chatham County to increase the tax base. It's not —, shortsightedness always sells something that's costing you money, but if you'll look long term and long sighted, you'll realize that having us lined up with this development that's going in there, we will long term increase the value of Chatham County and reduce your taxes as far as a citizen. That's all I've got to say about that.

Commissioner Murray said, yes, I can certainly understand both sides of it, and I don't --, I'm not trying to dispute some of your figures that you got from the different golf courses. I don't play golf. I certainly don't have time to play, but there's a national convention coming in Savannah in August of this year who has talked with the people at Henderson Golf Course to try to get that golf course for this convention and their figure was \$35 per person to play. There were no discounts given to them and they were going to take the whole course for the time they were out there. So, you know, I don't know whether they're trying to work with people or not, and that's not my point. I was on the Board when we approved it. I voted in favor of doing the golf course. I personally think the golf course is good if it can be handled and operated properly, and I think it can be a money generator for the County once it's paid for. I also understand the Chairman's point of trying to look at it, and I don't have a problem of just looking at what can be worked out. Whether we can sell it or not, if we can and what would we get out of it doesn't mean we have to do it when the numbers come back in. I'm not opposed to looking at that at all, and I think we need to look at it even though right now I do support the golf course, but I think we need to look at some other options on how to finance and how to do some things so we don't have the revenue going out that we have at this point. So I would support at this time at least looking at it. I'm not saying that we would agree to go with it once these numbers came back in.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Commissioner Murray. Commissioner Price.

Commissioner Price said, we have a lot to be proud of with the Henderson Golf Course. Do you know that it's rated —, it was when it was opened, the top 10 new public golf courses in the country by PGA Magazine? I've played all the courses in Chatham County. I'm an avid golfer just like the Chairman is. I can tell you even with the courses at The Landings and elsewhere, there's no more challenging course than Henderson. Henderson is a fantastic course, and I'll tell you something else. When I agreed with Eddie's [DeLoach] idea of getting this whole thing started and increasing the tax base, providing more recreational services to the County, it all made sense. It all made a lot of sense. We probably wish it was further along with the number of rounds per year it's doing so we're not having to subsidize it to the level that we're having to subsidize it right now, but that is the case. It may be that we'll have to subsidize it longer than we think we'll have to subsidize it, but the whole thing and the whole reason why we did this in the first place was as an incentive to raise the tax base, as an incentive for more recreation. It doesn't mean —, I mean, it's been accomplished. The course is there. The tax base is increasing. If we were to sell the golf course, what's going to happen? I mean, it's my understanding we own the golf course. Is the golf course on the tax digest right now? Russ [Abolt], the golf course is not on the tax digest right now. Chairman Hair said, that's correct. Mr. Abolt said, that's correct. Commissioner Price said, so if in fact we sell it, we'll increase the tax base even more, and that's good. Is it going to develop any less because a private corporation or entity owns it? No. Is it going to stay public? That's the real question here. That's the real question. Is it going to stay public? We put the dollars in it. It looks like we might be able to sell it and get out of it, walk away and hurt none the less, but have benefitted the community, have increased the tax based, have encouraged an area of development. Some of the fastest home starts and home building you see right now is going on at Henderson. They're building like crazy out there. They're beautiful homes out there. That's all going to help us. There's no doubt about it, but the real question is whether or not this is going to be something that is going to benefit the County in the long run, whether we own it or the private sector owns it, and the greater benefit I see is if the private sector owns it if it can remain a public —, and open to the public. And I think it will, and the reason why is because, particularly where it's located. It's right off of I-95. It's growing every year, but they're getting more and more business with the people that stay in the hotels out there. It's becoming a destination, a stop-over for a day or two. It's bringing more tax dollars into Chatham County. People are visiting downtown. They're looking at the historic district. They're going throughout Chatham County. I've played golf out there enough that I've had to actually pick up some people to play with me from time to time and I play with people from all over the country that are traveling around. One guy had the unique opportunity, a retired teacher from Indiana, he was spending his whole Summer traveling all throughout the Southeast playing public golf courses, and he had done that for three years in a row and every year he had been back to Henderson. He said it was one of the best courses he's played all throughout the Southeast. So I know what we have. I know what a value it is, what an asset it is. And if we can find a way through the RFP to require that it remain public because of the initial public dollars invested, that's the reason, then I think it's a win/win situation, and for that reason I think it's worth looking at. Here again, if we go out with an RFP and we don't like what we see or we have more time to think about this and it's going to take time for this RFP to get done, we'll have more time for public debate about it, for more interest in it. Let's go forward with it. I move we go forward with the RFP.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Commissioner Price. Commissioner Thomas.

Commissioner Thomas said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to be redundant because just about everything I wanted to say has been said, and I think we have validity on both sides, but I see no reason why we cannot look into this suggestion that you have and, therefore, I would like to move forward with that. Commissioner Murray said, second.

Chairman Hair said, we have a motion and a second to direct the staff to move forward with developing an RFP to put the golf course on the market. All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Murray, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of seven to one. [NOTE: Commissioner Odell was not present when this vote was taken.] Chairman Hair said, the motion passes. Thank you.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Price moved to go forward with an RFP to see if there is any interest from the private sector to purchase Henderson Golf Course. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Murray, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of seven to one. [NOTE: Commissioner Odell was not present when this vote was taken.]

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2. DISCUSSION REGARDING SURPLUS PROPERTY.

Chairman Hair said, the next item under my section deals with surplus property. The County currently owns a tremendous amount of very expensive surplus property, and it is my belief —, this property currently of course being owned by us is not generating any tax revenue. It's not on the tax rolls. If this property is truly surplus, I think we should put it on the market and sell the property, thereby putting it back on the tax rolls, benefitting the tax payers, plus the revenue from the surplus property sales I would suggest that we take 50% of the revenue and put it in reserves to build our reserves back up. That will enhance our bonds and rating, and take the other 50% and spend it on one shot items. Not recurring items, no salaries, no positions, but on capital improvements or on vehicle replacement and things that would just be one shot items. Here again, all I'm suggesting is that we have the staff direct —, to look at the surplus property, put RFP's out on the surplus property and see what kind of prices we can get for it. Again, as a Commission, we will accept or reject any bids on any piece of property, and at the same time though suggest that if we do this, that the monies would not be used for recurring items, that half would go into reserves and half would go into one shot purchases.

Commissioner Rivers said, I'll make that in the form of a motion. Chairman Hair said, we have a motion on the floor that we do it. Do I have a second? Commissioner DeLoach said, second. Commissioner Rivers said, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a question. Chairman Hair said, second, and Commissioner Rivers has a question. Mr. Hart, can we take surplus property and put an RFP out on it or do we have to let it go on the courthouse step, as we —. Mr. Hart said, I don't know, Mr. Rivers. I'm going to have to look at that. Most things are going to be sold for public auction if —. Mr. Ken Earls said, louder please. Mr. Hart said, if it's declared to be surplus. Commissioner Price said, will you speak up, Jon [Hart]. Chairman Hair said, speak up, Jon [Hart]. The audience can't hear what you're saying. Mr. Hart said, I'm sorry. I am not sure which one of those mechanisms we would have to go buy. I'd have to look at that. It may involve the type of equipment we're talking about too. Chairman Hair said, we're talking property. Mr. Hart said, either one of them, we'll be able to do it one way or the other.

Chairman Hair said, so we just —, whatever method —. Commissioner Rivers said, Mr. Chairman, I would direct staff to look into the methodology that we would use to dispense with that property. I think we need to know exactly how it's going to be handled. Chairman Hair said, right, and once that mechanism is in place, determine for the property. Is that okay with the second? Commissioner DeLoach said, yes. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Murray and then Commissioner Price.

Commissioner Murray said, Russ [Abolt], we've got some people here in reference to a piece of property in Chatham County, and I spoke to you earlier about it, would that piece of property be considered as surplus? Mr. Abolt said, my understanding is as the Chairman, any land that the County owns title to —. Commissioner Murray said, okay. Mr. Abolt said, for which we have no future use. Again, in my limited understanding —. Commissioner Murray said, so if the County government would have no future use. Mr. Abolt said, yes sir. Commissioner Murray said, okay. Mr. Abolt said, in my limited understanding of what you were talking about, I believe the answer is yes. Commissioner Murray said, okay, good.

Commissioner Rivers said, I need to know one other thing. Chairman Hair said, certainly. Commissioner Rivers asked, how would that impact the property that's already in the Land Bank for whatever reason. Chairman Hair said, no, it would not be affected by that. Only true surplus property that we no longer have a need for that's sitting out there that's not collecting revenue we would put it out there, sell it, you know, put it back on the tax rolls, take the money, half in reserves and half in one shot items. Commissioner Price.

Commissioner Price asked, Russ [Abolt], have we ever looked at an estimate of value of what we've got in surplus —, we have in surplus property? Mr. Abolt said, again, sir, the difference, as I understand in talking with the Chairman yesterday, surplus property would be property that in the past has been used by the County. We're not talking about property that may have been acquired and has a clouded title because of nonpayment of taxes. An example would be the previous Juvenile Court property. There's been some discussion about the property at Hodgson Memorial. Those are the parcels the Chairman is talking about in my understanding. Commissioner Price said, so we don't have a bead on numbers. Mr. Abolt said, no sir. Commissioner Price said, okay.

Chairman Hair said, that's why we want to have staff to look at it and search out where it is and find out where it is. Commissioner Price asked, do we have a motion on the floor? Chairman Hair said, we do have and a second.

Mr. Hart said, all I was going to say is in regards —, there's a division as between personal property and real property. Real property is very statutorily set forth. You've got to declare the property being obsolete and no longer needed. Insofar as trucks and vehicles, that does not necessarily have to follow that statute. So we're going to have to look and see whether we can do it either by bid or sale. That's what the difference is. Chairman Hair said, I'm primarily interested in real property. Mr. Hart said, yes. Mr. Hart said, that's pretty much statutory. Chairman Hair said, that's what I'm —, that's my major issue.

Chairman Hair said, all right, we have a motion and a second. Any further discussion? All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Rivers moved to direct staff to look at the surplus property for which the County no longer has a need, determine the method by which the sale of such surplus property may be made, issue RFP'S if appropriate, and see what kind of prices we can get for it, and any revenues from the sale of the surplus property would be divided one-half into reserves and one-half for the purchase of one shot items, such as capital improvements and vehicle replacement, and not to be used on recurring items. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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3. DISCUSSION REGARDING WATER SYSTEMS.

Chairman Hair said, the third item under my section deals in a similar vein of continuing concept of sort of restructuring and privatization, and the County Manager and the Vice Chairman and I had a discussion on this yesterday. We currently own and operate some very small water systems. I asked the County Manager yesterday what percent of the systems do we own and I think you —, correct me if I'm wrong, Russ [Abolt], but I believe you told me it was under 5%, it was a very small percentage. Mr. Abolt said, yes sir. Chairman Hair said, that we were out there owning, and again all I'm asking the Commission to do today is to direct the staff to see if there's any interest in privatizing those water systems and, if there is, again we would not be obligated in any way to take any bids, but to see if there's any interest out there and if we could also come out from under that. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, yes, we have done this several times over the past and, yes, there are some private water system companies that would like to buy it. I personally am opposed to that, and I'm opposed to it because of the problems we've had with the private water systems in Chatham County. We're in the process, if I'm not mistaken, Russ [Abolt], of upgrading that system, with the systems we have —. Mr. Abolt said, Isle of Hope is the only one. Commissioner Murray said the Isle of Hope area is in the process right now. There's already been a contract issued for that, and I think we need an awful lot of discussion on that. You know, if you want to put something out to see if people are interested, fine, but I think we need to look at it real hard before we make a decision to sell this.

Chairman Hair said, well, that's all I'm saying. The same thing with the golf course. Let's see if there's any interest out there. We —, Russ [Abolt] and I discussed this yesterday. This was done four years ago and then you had a change in administrations and the incoming administration did not want to go forward with it, the previous administration did, but all this would be, would be similar to the golf course proposal, that let's just see the interest. Again, have the staff bring back to us a recommendation. If we have it on our table, we can reject it or accept it or whatever, but at least we would have an option at that point.

Commissioner Murray said, that's fine, and if we do something like that I would like to have a public hearing on it based on those people that own our system because those people pay a much lower rate than the people in the private systems do at this point.

Chairman Hair said, I think that's a great idea, and I think certainly a public hearing would be appropriate. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Rivers.

Commissioner Rivers said, Russ [Abolt]. Mr. Abolt said, yes sir. Commissioner Rivers said, that's an enterprise account. Is that account in balance or are we making a —? Mr. Abolt said, we're breaking even and any money over and above operating cost, as Commissioner Murray alluded to, has been used for capital investment. Commissioner Rivers said, but we are —, it's an enterprise fund that's holding its own and we can't use the money anyway. So, it doesn't —. Commissioner Murray said, it has to be used in the system. Commissioner Rivers said, it doesn't quite make —. Commissioner Price said, it doesn't really give us any benefit. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Price.

Commissioner Price said, it doesn't overall from an M&O standpoint do us any benefit. You know, it's a very fragmented system, it's out among all these other systems that are owned by private water users. You know, I tell you who would have a great interest in it in some strategical occasions, if not the whole part of it, would probably be the City of Savannah. I know it would probably raise the eyebrows of a lot of Commissioners thinking well why would we want to give something to the City of Savannah, but they are the main water provider in the County. The only thing I would ask if we go out for an RFP is, you know, for value, you know, received —, in order words we aren't going to give it to the City. We wouldn't give it to the private water owners either, but let's include the City in the discussion to see if there is any interest. I think that any time we have something like this that we have as an option to consider, and I don't know, it was several million dollars the last time we looked at it, and here we are faced today with the possible elimination of the County EMS. What do you think the citizens are going to want more of. I mean, they're going to want the emergency medical response compared to having to pay like their neighbors do in the next subdivision to them, you know, maybe a couple of dollars more per months for the water. I think it does need public debate. I think we need a public hearing on it. I think we need assurances. You know, there are some private water owners that haven't kept their systems up like the others have, and one of them in particular has really given

the rest of them a pretty bad name, or not a bad name but have —. Commissioner DeLoach said, well, a bad name's good. Commissioner Price said, have clouded the issued. Commissioner DeLoach said, a bad name's good. Commissioner Price said, they clouded the issue —, well, that's right. Commissioner DeLoach said, yes. Commissioner Price said, so you've got one bad apple in the bunch and we all know who that is —. Commissioner Rivers said, don't bring it up here. Commissioner Price said, and my point is maybe a way to let the stronger systems that are more reliable that are out there and that have their systems on either side of our fragmented systems and then can connect their systems and have better backup potential, have better service to their users, that makes sense. Another point that I would like to make is this. I work in a world of corporate investments, watching what corporations do, and one of the things I watch from corporations is a lot of time they spin off companies, a lot of times they trim down in order to go in the direction they need to go in, in order to become more profitable, in order to achieve for their shareholders better value. Well, I think government is not much unlike that. I think that we should try to achieve better value for our taxpayers, our shareholders. We should try and achieve that in a way in which —, maybe we've got too much government and that's why we're faced with this budget deficit and that's why we're faced with these hard questions about cuts in the Police Department and the EMS Department and other places. We've got some assets, we've got some things that we could spin off and that we could turn around and head in the right direction with. And this is one of them. And so I think this really needs a good thorough look at, and I —, have you got a motion on the floor? Chairman Hair said, I don't think so. Commissioner Price said, I move that we go forward with it. Chairman Hair asked, do I have a second? Commissioner Odell said, I'll second. Chairman Hair said, we have a second, okay. Commissioner DeLoach and then Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner DeLoach said, that fellow with the bad name or that water system with the bad name should throw a light up in front of everybody that we do not need to let the water system in Chatham County go to the private sector until the government has some kind of control over the quality that our citizens have. I do not —, we need a water authority, we need a franchise authority, whatever we need before we let something like this go to the private sector and have it turn out like this other area turned out, we really need to take a long, hard look at that because it's a nightmare for those folks who are trying to deal with it, and it's not something that Chatham County needs to perpetuate, and that's exactly what we're doing when we're selling something without any controls on it. And we will not have controls once it goes to the private sector. We have no —, nothing we can do.

Commissioner Murray said, yes, to follow up on some of those, we don't have any control over the private water systems. I've been up here for nine years and out of those nine years I've had a lot of calls from the private —, about the private water companies. Russ [Abolt] has a file in his office now that's fairly deep about the private water systems. We have no say-so in what they do, we have no control over the rates, we have no control over the quality of the water that they put out or anything else. That is a State regulated function, not a local. We have asked many times for our State Legislators, when they go into session, to allow the County or Chatham County to franchise or to set up a Water and Sewer Authority. They have failed to do that at this point. Hopefully they will look at it again this year. That would give us some control over these things. As far as the City of Savannah looking at our water system, for those few who don't know that sit on this Commission, the unincorporated area that's on the Savannah water system pays approximately 50% higher rather than the people in the City of Savannah do. That's not more than just a couple of dollars a month on their water bill. That's quite a bit more, so I think we had better look at it very close before we start talking to the City of Savannah about taking over our system.

Commissioner Jackel said, on the previous items I thought we at least ought to take a look and then we could decide, but since we do not have any ability to control the water system, I don't see at this time it pays to even take a look and see what would be out there. Until we have some way of assuring the people that if our system is bought out they would have quality water, I think we would be doing them a disservice.

Commissioner Price said, you keep talking about our people and, yes, we do represent the people that are using these County-owned water systems, but bear in mind they're only 5% of the total population. Commissioner Murray said, that's still 5%. Commissioner Price said, and we have to think about the benefit of the majority of the citizens in this community, and, you know, we keep holding onto this asset for fear of the boogeyman coming to, you know, to do something bad to these folks. I can tell you there are a lot of satisfied private water company users out there, and I've heard this thing about the file in Russ's [Abolt] office and all this for all these years, but have we ever put a file together on our own system? Have we ever seen a file that's been put together on the City of Savannah's water system? Let's compare apples to apples here. Let's not just, you know, have this notion that it's this way and it's always going to be this way. What I'm asking my fellow Commissioners to do is keep an open mind about this whole process and at least let's go through the steps of the public debate and looking at what interest there is out there for our fragmented system that serves less than 5% of the population.

Commissioner Murray said, just one follow-up. Chairman Hair said, okay, Commissioner Murray, with one follow-up and then I want —, Commissioner Rivers and I want to make a comment. Commissioner Murray said, I'm not opposed to looking at it. I said that up front. Commissioner Price said, okay. Commissioner Murray said, at the present time I'm opposed to actually doing it when it comes down to it, and we talk about that 5% of the population of Chatham County that are on the County systems, I've had a couple of complaints about that and they've been addressed. But I've had more complaints about the other systems. As far as the resources coming back from that, that's a one shot deal for Chatham County. It's not a reoccurring fund that would be coming in, and right now it's not costing Chatham County any money to operate this system. We're not losing money on it, it's not costing us a dime to keep it. So I don't see the point in this particular item, where I do with the others, looking at it a lot closer, but we'll look at it. I don't —, I mean, I don't have a problem voting to look at it.

Commissioner Rivers said, Mr. Chairman, if we want to get out of the management of the water system, then that's the only drawback that this system has, and the City of Savannah is a municipality, it's in the water business, and if we could negotiate, go back to the table again, we weren't successful the last time in regard to the table, but maybe we can convince them that they should expand and give regular rates to those in expansion, I guess it was incurred as upgrading our system. If our systems are in good shape, then there's not that much [inaudible] of the money to go around to that system.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Commissioner Rivers. Okay, the motion on the floor is just to direct staff to look at it, also hold a public hearing on this. That's the motion. Not to make any decisions about getting rid of it today. Simply to look at

it, see what's out there and to have a public hearing. All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Odell, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Jackel, Murray and DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of six to three. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Price moved to go forward with seeing if the City of Savannah or a private water system is interested in purchasing the County-owned water system and to hold a public hearing on the same, but not to make any decisions at this time about getting rid of the water systems. Commissioner Odell seconded the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Odell, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Jackel, Murray and DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of six to three.

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4. DISCUSSION REGARDING EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM.

Chairman Hair said, okay, the last item is —, I'm not going to ask the Commission for any decision today, I just wanted to put this on the agenda because again today sitting up here we're having some very, very tough decisions to make today on the budget, on EMS, on School Resource Officers, and here we are continuing to subsidize and will subsidize for the next 17 or 18 years to the tune of \$1.2 million a year, the Eighth Air Force Museum. I think the taxpayers will be better served if we took that money and put it in central services and not in the museum. We are legally obligated to this museum and we will continue to support this museum until that foundation can attempt to privatize it. My only purpose today is to continue to keep it on the front burner and to emphasize to the leaders of the Eighth Air Force Museum that they need to go full speed ahead with an attempt to privatize the museum and get the taxpayers out from under the \$1.2 million P & I every year that we'll have to pay for many, many years to come.

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CHATHAM COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Hair said, I would like to recognize our Youth Commissioners who are here today, who always serve us very well. We have Whitney Cox from Savannah Christian and we have Lazarus O'Sako from Groves High School. We appreciate you being here today and feel free to join right in. If you'd like to say anything or comment on any items, raise your hand and I'll recognize and we'll get you into the debate. Okay? Thanks for coming.

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VII. COMMISSIONERS' ITEMS

1. CITIZENS' FINANCIAL REVIEW OF COUNTY'S OPERATING BUDGET (COMMISSIONER PRICE

Commissioner Price said, I had a citizen call me with an idea I think is worthy of our discussion and consideration. Every year we go through this budget process and it seems like the last several years that I can remember we get bogged down and have to do the resolution to continuing the end of this year in the next year, and I don't see where it would confuse or hurt us in any way but only benefit us if we had some extra help in looking at the budget. And what I'm talking about is a citizens' committee that's not empowered to make decisions as far as staff cuts, is not empowered to make decisions. It's nothing but an advisory committee. We can take their advice or we can leave it, but a committee made up of retired people or people actively employed who are in the financial world who may be retired chief financial officers and may be CPA's, they may be comptrollers, but individuals who look at large budgets and may have during their lifetime looked at many large budgets over the years in the corporate world and in —, there may be a lot of retired government people here that have looked at larger budgets than the County's budget. And there may be others out there that have an interest, but what I'm recommending for us to consider is that each Commissioner decide within their district who might be there who could represent that district, at least from a giving advice standpoint, the giving of it, and might could work with us either throughout the year. It could be a committee that's more active during our budget session in the fall, it could be a —, I've talked to the County Manager about this. I believe that he, although he has voiced some reservations about it from previous experience, he has indicated a willingness to allow these individuals to be able to go out and meet with department heads, to meet with the different staff, and I would believe the judicial side of government as well, to understand government better, to understand what it is we're doing and how we might be able to do that with less cost, and also how we might be able to do that and take advantage of some of the new technology that's out there. And it's for those reasons that I recommend that we consider having a citizens' advisory committee that will help us with the budget each year. I really wanted to bring this up in general discussion to see what your feelings were about it and you might want to hear from staff, I'm sure, as well, but I think the real thing with staff is they don't want people to come in and feel like they're going to be second guessing what they're doing or what they've been doing has not been sufficient or not been proficient. And I'm not saying that it hasn't, but I think that a fresh look at this budget will for the most part, you know, with probably the exception of Priscilla [Thomas], who happens to be fortunately in the place

of being retired, which most of us would like to be, most —, all of us up here are self-employed and all of us requiring of our time to do this budget, and it's our responsibility and ultimately we've got to make that decision, and I'm not trying to shirk that responsibility, but what I'm saying is, as do a lot of boards in the corporate world and in the government world, they have committees set up to advise them of particular issues they have to face, and an ongoing issue like the budget each year I think is logical for us to have a citizens' advisory committee made up of professionals that we recognize who can help us with the budget each year. Anybody have any ideas or any thoughts on that?

Chairman Hair asked, anybody like to make a —? Commissioner Murray and then Commissioner Rivers.

Commissioner Murray said, I think it's a good idea. I certainly don't have a problem with it. I know that over the years The Landings have had several different committees out there that meet. One of them was a taxation committee and they worked quite a bit on the financial sheets that we have in the County. It was them that spurred the bill that Senator Johnson had approved to renegotiate the fifth penny. Had it not been for that group we probably wouldn't have got that far with it, so there are a lot of people throughout the community, some retired and some not retired, that I think would be willing to serve on something like that, and I think it would be good input to have.

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Rivers and then Commissioner Saussy.

Commissioner Rivers said, I think the idea of an advisory group probably is a good idea, but to let it loose into staff, we have a staff, we have a professional staff that does its business. An oversight committee we can find to offer recommendations. I don't think they need to get involved with staff. The decision is ours. I don't think that this budget has gotten to the point that it is because of staff. It's because of the decisions that the Commission has made that has put this budget in the shape that's it's in plus the fact that we have lost revenue through other means that we were depending on and that we never replaced into this budget. So, you know, advisory staff —, an advisory committee would be good to advise us, but I don't think they should be going into departments and —.

Commissioner Price said, may I respond to that, Billy [Hair], just briefly since I put the idea on the table? Joe [Rivers], I don't have in any way any mind of these people going into departments on an ongoing basis. The only reason that they might on an initial basis is to understand or actually go out and see what's going on from the standpoint of understanding how government works, not from the standpoint of trying to tell these folks what to do, but from an educational standpoint to understand what we're faced with. That would be, and that would only be whether they wanted to do that or not. Not a requirement. If they had an interest in doing it, all I'm saying is they want to understand how we operate better and would like to be able to go out and at least understand that, but not to be out there on a regular basis telling these department heads and the County Manager how to operate. They're not advising, they're not telling them anything, they're simply advising us.

Commissioner Rivers said, that wasn't what I was talking about. Can I reply to what Commissioner Price was saying? Chairman Hair said, certainly, certainly. Commissioner Rivers said, me, myself, if I got anything with the departments I always clear it with the Manager, and certainly if we got an advisory board that needs to do anything with any department, or have any questions in regards to any department, then it should be directed through the County Manager. Commissioner Price said, that's that I —, that's my intention. That's what I'm thinking of.

Commissioner Saussy said, I think it's a pretty good idea too, but I do have some reservations if we're going to let them go into the staff and look into everything there. Once the budget is formed, then look at it that way and give us some ideas on it would be fine. I assume what you would want is each Commissioner would have an appointment. Commissioner Price said, right, your choice. Commissioner Saussy said, okay. That would be good. I would like, if we're going to do something like this, that we make sure that these appointments are qualified people and it is not political. Commissioner Price said, and they're not axe grinders. Commissioner Saussy said, right.

Chairman Hair said, that's a very good point. Commissioner Thomas and then Commissioner Odell.

Commissioner Thomas said, Commissioner Saussy said exactly what I wanted to say about the appointments because we know how those can get. I do want to say that I think that in the greater part of our budget discussions that we do have input from our citizens, and I think very actively participation, and I think that we should continue to encourage that as well. When we have our different public hearings and to get input and I think that would be a great time for them to take those different items and help us to go through them, but I don't want to give us the actual procedure that we have through our County staff at this time, but I think it's worth looking at.

Commissioner Odell said, even now I have the opportunity to get all of the input that I can use. I'm not certain if I could use any more input. I have 11 neighborhood associations in my district, and any of those associations or any individual has the right to contact me and I'll provide them information. I think we've done that. My concern is that we are heavily laden with committees. We have some very difficult decisions to make regarding our budget. I think the citizens of Chatham County have —, they voted for this body to make those decisions. If we have a problem that we're trying to solve by this committee, I'd like to know what that problem is. My information is that input is good. I don't think that there is any structure now which prohibits any Commissioner from getting all the input he or she may need. I just do not want to add another layer to an already heavily laden structure. I think input is great. I just don't want another committee to believe that they are in fact the elected designee who will make the decision, who will go to staff, who will tell staff we need these kinds of information, and I'd like to see us think about the impact that this will have on whether or not we might need additional people to simply calendar potential substantial responses. I have input through my neighborhood associations and the individuals. I think it's a good idea, I just don't want to see another layer of another committee. In fact, I'd like to see us get rid of some of the committees we have now.

Commissioner Price asked, Billy [Hair], may I respond to —? I understand what you're saying, Harris [Odell], and certainly I don't —, I'm not proposing this to make more work for us. Not by any means. Commissioner Odell said, or Russ [Abolt]. Commissioner Price said, or Russ [Abolt] or anybody else. Just as staff right now responds to the media, responds to the

general public with information, that's all that they would be doing with these individuals. They wouldn't be doing anything more, and the only thing I said is if any of these individuals wanted to understand the government structure, understand how it's operated, just from the standpoint of helping us with the budget, looking for ways to cut costs in the budget, not to cut employees, not to go in and second guess management, but just give us a fresh look at, through the eyes of professional, you know, financial type individual, whether it's a comptroller or CPA, CFO, or whatever it is, just to have that type of help. If we didn't have the Grants-in-Aid Committee that we have, think of all the additional work and time it would take if that wasn't in place. So all I'm saying is look at it as an asset. We have the right at any point in time if we don't like what's going on and what they're doing and how it's operating, we will go —, we create and we can disband. We don't have to keep it going. It's at our option. We always make the decisions. It's getting the advice and the consulting that I see a lot of professionals in the corporate world get, and even at the Federal level and government get on a regular basis that we may not be getting, that we may be having to rely more upon ourselves and [inaudible] for.

Commissioner DeLoach said, I'm sort of like Harris Odell on this thing. I get plenty of input from the Mayors from my area and citizens from my area. I don't feel like I need to add another layer on top of that. What it all gets down to, it looks more like to me that we're shifting responsibility more than we are actually taking responsibility. The folks over in my area elected me to make the decision. I daresay that —, I daresay nine of us up here probably don't know the department heads that are tied to Russ's [Abolt] budget. We surely don't know all the constitutional officers, heads and all that, and we're going to ask a citizen to come out here and go and look at all the department heads and talk to them and ask them how they function when in reality we don't know. If they want to know the truth about it, we base our decision based on the direction of our County Manager, which our system is set up as, and we basically go from there. So there's no way that we can expect a citizen to go out there and try to delve into the everyday operation of Gary Udinsky's Tax Assessor's office and come back to us and tell us that, hey, you don't know what you're doing there, we could eliminate six positions in Gary's [Udinsky] thing. Hey, I don't know. I'm not over there running Gary [Udinsky] everyday. Nobody else up here is, and we can't start letting someone else who is not elected decide how we run County, or City, or State, or Federal Government. We need to go ahead and let us take responsibility. Let us go ahead and pass a budget based on what we know and the direction that we want to go in. The main thing that we need to do is go ahead and take the responsibility and get the job done. Don't mess around with it. Do it and let it go. That's my concern about adding a citizens' advisory committee.

Commissioner Price asked, Billy [Hair], may I make one last response? Eddie [DeLoach], we're not talking about citizens that are going to be empowered to do anything but advise us. They're not going to make the final decision. We always will make the final decision. That's what we're elected to do. This Board is not in place to try and be headhunters, to try and be going out after people or employees to threaten employees, to make employees feel uneasy about anything. The employees already, public employees already are subject to the scrutiny of the general public. I mean, that comes with the job. That's part of the job description on all of our County employees. Just like the City employees, the State employees, the Federal employees, they understand that. That's part of being a government employee. But this is simply your choice. You go out in your district and you find somebody that you think that would be constructive in recommending or giving advise, who would understand what we're trying to do with this, the goal of this committee is to help us reduce costs, to help us reduce costs at a reasonable level without affecting the basic service that we provide the general public, and I really believe if we've got the right people, and here bear in mind you're the one making that decision on who your appointee is, then I think it could work very well.

Chairman Hair said, my comment on this would be, I think this is the kind of thing that if it is done well, it could be wonderful, but if it's done poorly, it could be a nightmare, and I think the key to this would be the quality of the nine people put on this committee and the second key would be that their mission would be clearly defined and clearly understood before they accepted the appointment. My concern is that if you have nine of us giving nine different missions and explain this nine different ways, that you're going to have nine people coming together all with different ideas about what they're here to do. I think —, in concept, I think it's a good idea, but I think we need to be very, very careful in the implementation of this because I think if we don't, what you're going to do is generate another lobby group out there that's going to push for certain things. Maybe somewhat of a compromise position might be that rather than having a general committee like this, that we may have a group like this that would look on very specific areas of the budget that we know we've got a problem in and we need to come up with some solutions. For example, maybe where we need some technical expertise. Something like that. Commissioner Price said, okay. Chairman Hair said, I think we get more value of that than we would if we just had a broad general committee that looks at the whole \$321 million. We may gain more if we do something like that that's very directed at a particular part of the budget that we see —. Commissioner Price said, it's our committee. We can direct them on what direction to go in. Chairman Hair said, okay. Commissioner Price said, I mean, that's —. Chairman Hair said, okay. Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, I think we've had a lot of discussion on it and I think we have a lot of different opinions, but until we can get something down on what are the responsibilities of this committee would be, and things, then maybe we can have it done by the next meeting. I would just like to —. Commissioner Price said, we'll work on that. That's a good idea.

Chairman Hair said, you want to do that, Ben [Price]. Could you bring it back at the next meeting and maybe have specific —. Commissioner Price said, I'd like to sit with the County Manager and do that. Commissioner Murray said, that's fine. Commissioner Price said, I want him to have complete input if we do it. Chairman Hair said, Russ [Abolt], you and Commissioner Price work together on how, something you think would be beneficial to the County staff and also would be beneficial to the Commission, and come up with a very defined —. I think a clearly defined mission is the key here, and I think we would all feel more comfortable if we had a clearly defined mission. Commissioner Price said, that's fine. Chairman Hair said, so is that —, we bring that back at the next meeting and put that in the form of a motion. Commissioner Price said, let's say a month from now. Chairman Hair said, okay, two months —. Commissioner Price said, first meeting in February. Chairman Hair said, okay, first meeting in February. All right, thank you.

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VIII. PROCLAMATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None

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IX. TABLED/POSTPONED ITEMS

your agenda packet. The files are available from the Clerk. Those on which staff is requesting action are indicated by asterisk (*).

- 1. **REQUEST BOARD APPROVE GENERAL FUND M&O CONTINGENCY TRANSFER OF \$55,000 FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PERFORM CERTIFICATION, OUTREACH AND TRAINING FOR MINORITY, FEMALE AND LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES; REQUEST BOARD TO ENTER INTO AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PROVIDE CERTIFICATION, OUTREACH AND TRAINING SERVICES TO MINORITY, FEMALE AND LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES ON BEHALF OF CHATHAM COUNTY. (NOTE: At the time of agenda preparation a meeting of Dr. Thomas' committee is pending.) Tabled at meeting of January 24, 1997. Further note: Committee has been unable to meet in intervening period. Tabled at the meeting of February 21, 1997.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was not placed before the Commissioners for consideration.

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- 2. **BOARD CONSIDERATION OF ACTION REGARDING ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES. Tabled at meeting of April 25, 1997. Further note: Assigned to committee at meeting of May 9, 1997.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was not placed before the Commissioners for consideration.

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- 3. **BOARD CONSIDERATION ON CHANGING THE COUNTY'S FISCAL YEAR. Tabled at meeting of May 9, 1997.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was not placed before the Commissioners for consideration.

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- 4. **BOARD CONSIDERATION OF MODIFICATION TO EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REGARDING NOTIFICATION AS TO PARTICIPATING EMPLOYEES. Tabled at meeting of May 9, 1997.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was not placed before the Commissioners for consideration.

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- 5. **BOARD CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FROM THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FINE COLLECTION. Tabled at meeting of June 13, 1997. *Please see memo from Clerk of Superior Court asking that item remain on the table.***

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was not placed before the Commissioners for consideration.

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ORDER OF BUSINESS

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Murray wants to rearrange the agenda, and I think it's a good idea. Commissioner Murray said, yes, I would like to move that we take Item I, the adoption of 1998 budget, and move it to the end of the agenda items today —. Commissioner DeLoach said, second. Commissioner Murray said, so we can go ahead and clear the slate of everything else and have them out. It shouldn't take us long to go through that. Chairman Hair asked, you're talking about all through the readings and everything? To the very end of the agenda? Commissioner Murray said, yes, it shouldn't take us long to get through all of this.

Commissioner Price asked, may I caution just one thing about this? I recognize we have quite a number of EMT's and folks from EMS here. The only thing I would hate if they have to be here through the meeting and they need to get out on an emergency call or they need to get back to their jobs. Commissioner Saussy said, I would hope that they're not on duty now. Commissioner Price said, some of them are shaking their heads no. Chairman Hair said, I would certainly hope they're not on duty either. Commissioner Price said, if that's not a problem then from the emergency response standpoint, I don't have a problem with that.

Chairman Hair said, okay, we have a motion, do I have a second? Commissioner DeLoach said, yes. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, okay, we'll put the budget item at the end of the agenda.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Murray moved that Item X-1 be moved to the end of the agenda. Commissioner DeLoach seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

[NOTE: Item X-1 was postponed and was heard as the last item on the agenda.]

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X. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL ACTION

(Unless the Board directs otherwise, adoption of an Action Item will mean approval of the respective County staff report and its recommended action.)

1. ADOPTION OF THE 1998 BUDGET RESOLUTIONS FOR CHATHAM COUNTY.

Chairman Hair said, I want to make just an opening comment before we get into debate on the budget, and first it will be a procedural comment that after I make an opening statement, we'll allow Commissioners to say whatever they want to say and ask any questions about the budget, and at that point in time we will call on the audience, anybody here, and I know there are a number of you who want to speak to the budget. I will ask each one of you to be very brief because there are a lot of people that want to speak. I also will ask you if you represent a group to only have one person from that group to speak to the budget items to reduce redundancy, but everyone —, I assure you that everyone that wants to speak on the budget will be allowed to speak on the budget before we take a vote in terms of [inaudible].

Chairman Hair said, my statement, my opening statement would be that —, and I've expressed this to many of you in discussions, basically what we have today is we have the last option that the County Manager gave us, which is known by us as Option 8, which was on the table at the last Board meeting, and then we have an alternative budget proposal submitted by Commissioner DeLoach. Those are the two basic budget packages that we have on the table. After careful review of these two packages, it is my belief that Option 8 is a much better budget package. It addresses many of the issues that most of us have put on the table in the past. It also, and probably the most important in my mind is that it is a budget that has no tax increase and it also, I think, it's very significant to point out is the budget package that the County Manager has set down with each of the department heads, both his department heads and the constitutional officers, and they all have agreed to this budget package. So, this has been thoroughly reviewed by the department heads. That's not true of the other package, but that is true of the Option 8, but I think it is the superior budget package, and I would suggest, just from a procedural point of view, that when we are ready to vote on one of these packages today, that we vote first on the budget package, whichever one the Commission wants to vote on, and then we take any additions or deletions to the budget as separate votes. I think that would be a much cleaner way of doing it. If we sit here and discuss each line item of each one of the packages, I think we'll be here until next Wednesday, but I think if we put a base budget on the table and then —, for a motion and a second, then deal with that, and then deal with every addition or deletion as a separate item. I think —, I suggest that to my fellow Commissioners as a procedural way. Commissioner Price and then Commissioner DeLoach, then Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Price said, looking at Option 8, Russ [Abolt], countywide drainage maintenance would end after 1998. Mr. Abolt said, that's correct, sir. Commissioner Price said, explain that in more detail. I mean, right now we're —, that's a service we're providing. Mr. Abolt said, this actually was a hybrid of, I think it was, Option #6. We identified for your discretionary choice the one penny in sales tax, the additional \$2.8 million that came to us from the fifth penny in sales tax in 1997 to which the County Commission responded in leadership fashion to say that you're going to do county-wide drainage maintenance. That was a very straightforward, a very direct and a very ambitious program, which, you understand, that was the only revenue we had to do it. At the insistence of this Board back in the Spring, Commissioner DeLoach took the lead, we went out to bid on it rather than just having Public Works do it, and the bids came in in a very competitive fashion, Public Works being one of the bidders, and we were able to take that \$2.8 million and stretch it really for what amounts to almost a three-year period to do that type of maintenance. The Option 6 though says that it's still discretionary to you as far as the use of that SPLOST —, LOST money, excuse me. LOST money may be used in any fashion you wish within the M&O budget, so in fashioning and crafting Option #8 to make it work, to get some commitment in 1998 to drainage, it was my plan to draw down the \$1.2 million that remains in this account, which is completely discretionary, use it to offset general expenses in the M&O, and then have in hand a half a million dollars to do drainage maintenance in 1998, but obviously come 1 January of 1999, we have no money to continue that.

Commissioner Price asked, who would handle that then? Mr. Abolt said, as it was the year before last, the cities would have to do that. Commissioner Price asked, when we renegotiated the Local Option Sales Tax, wasn't there some commitment the County made for drainage maintenance? Mr. Abolt said, not at that time. The time the —, the negotiations on the loss, which Commissioner Murray and others who were directly associated with this will remember, the issue of drainage was not on the table. The issue of assuming the cost for housing the prisoners was on the table —. Commissioner Price said, right. Mr. Abolt said, and also a very strong argument on the part of the County Commission that you could accurately argue and argue very fairly that that fifth penny is meant for property tax offset, and that property tax offset is not being afforded all citizens in Chatham County as it should. So the intent there was to do something on your property tax offset, but —, and then there was a couple of events that created some serious drainage problems, and again —, and I say this not trying to be self-serving to you but to be very honest to the community, you all stepped forward and said you're going to do something about drainage, and you did something about it without increasing taxes and the one option that we had was a recommendation in my budget of a year ago, which was to identify that \$2.8 million, which was not reoccurring, but to use that for county-wide drainage maintenance and take it as far as it will go.

Commissioner Price asked, the unincorporated area will still be maintained? Mr. Abolt said, yes sir, yes sir. Under this proposal, we have a half a million dollars to sustain the current program that we have and we will carry that as far as we can. Commissioner Price said, I'm still not quite sure I understand. Through '98, you will do this, but then in '99 —. Mr. Abolt said, there's no money. There's no more LOST money. Commissioner Price said, then the unincorporated area at that point in time, the maintenance of drainage ditches in those areas are still going to be our responsibility. Correct? Mr. Abolt said, yes sir. Commissioner Price asked, where would the money come for that? Mr. Abolt said, in the past that has come out of the Public Works Department budget. So prior to 1997 there was an allocation in the Public Works budget to do this from general property tax, and there was a decision made by previous Boards to, from a policy standpoint, to affix a portion of that on the M&O budget, the reason being is that if ditches don't drain, it's going to affect more than the unincorporated area. Commissioner Price asked, how does all this, or how does this proposal affect the drainage that —, the Capital Improvement Plan that was on the referendum —? Mr. Abolt said, this is maintenance, sir. There's no relation whatsoever. Commissioner Price said, so there would still be money available by going out and doing capital improvements —. Mr. Abolt said, oh, please, yes. I don't want to mislead anybody. Commissioner Price said, let's make that clear. Mr. Abolt said, come from the first of October of this year, you will be —, the County will be collecting that sales tax to build storm sewer projects all over the County. Commissioner Price said, okay, and after we do the building and all that, the maintenance of those capital structures

will then be —. Mr. Abolt said, as with the major road projects, it always falls within the governing jurisdiction that has jurisdiction. So, if it within the City, the City maintains it, if it's within the unincorporated area, the County maintains it. Commissioner Price said, okay, well, I think the issue is going to come up again in the future, we're going to have to increase the amount of maintenance revenues, or maintenance expenses, because as we build out our systems and our canals get built and the drainage is done in a that needs to be done, we're going to have a lot more to maintain than we do now.

Commissioner Price said, the one question I have is, the whole issue with EMS has caused me to stop, rethink and relook at what an impact this would have, not only for the citizens because they are first and foremost, but also for the individuals involved. You and I spoke on the phone the other day and you said there might be another option, another twist that could be used here, and I'd like to just get it out on the floor for the Commissioners to be aware of it, that the county-wide drainage maintenance money that you're talking about here, that half a million dollars —. Mr. Abolt said, \$700,000. Commissioner Price said, \$700,000, that we might be able to forego that, to use that money to keep the EMS program going for a year. Mr. Abolt said, if that is the choice of the Board. You do have a statement made as far as doing ditch —, your drainage maintenance county-wide. That's a discretionary act, obviously. Financially, you can, yes. This is Option #6, I get confused with options, but you could, if you chose, to get out of the drainage business as of now. That frees up a half a million dollars that would also allow us, if we were to continue in the EMS business, not to lose the revenue, plus we would avoid what amounts to the separation cost, and we could keep EMS. Commissioner Price said, well, just like the water system, just like the golf course and all this other stuff that we're doing, if we're looking at privatizing, I think we need a public hearing on the effects of privatizing EMS. I don't want today —, and I applaud Commissioner Saussy's efforts to try and get this done and I'm not saying I oppose, I'm not saying I'm in favor of it. All I'm saying is at this point in time when we're trying to pass a budget today, to me it seems to be a little difficult for us to trying and include the elimination of EMS halfway through the year when I think we need more public input, when we need more answers to questions that are out there about the effect of whether or not the private ambulance services can pick up and provide what we need to have provided to our citizens, regardless of income, regardless of whether they're indigent, or whether they're the wealthiest people in Chatham County. We need to have those type of answers before us, and I'm not sure we have those answers before us today and that EMS can be provided, or can be considered in this budget consideration. So I would say to my fellow Commissioners, it's an option and it's not an option that I like, but it looks like it may be the only option that's there, look at the drainage area, the money that was going to be spent on the County-wide drainage maintenance that's not part of the capital improvements program from the sales tax dollars through the drainage improvements we're going to make simply it's a county-wide effort we're going to do. If we cut that money out, Russ [Abolt], what would happen if we have areas where ditches get clogged up, you know, excessive rain, what would we do? Mr. Abolt said, well, sir, it goes beyond the LOST money for drainage maintenance. In the Public Works Department, which is one of the major departments in SSD, I literally have cuts in there that are dramatic at best, or worst. I'm concerned about other areas of Public Works, but we realize we get through it this year. To answer your question, it would be only based on a priority of calls, and given the limitations of Mr. Kaigler and his staff. I cannot guarantee, as I could a year ago, that when the County jumps, you know, both feet into drainage maintenance, we're going to do a first-class, number one job. We're not going to be able to do that, certainly even in a program that's only going to live, you know, for the balance of 1998. But also in other areas of public works services, for 1998 it's going to be as Commissioner DeLoach said, it's going to be a watershed year because it's going to be difficult. You know, grass will grow on the rights-of-way, weeds will grow, there will be some deterioration of the pavement. You know, it's a get-by year. Commissioner Price said, okay, will my concern here again is the situation with EMS and whether we really —, I think we should require or should have a public hearing on that before we go through the process of eliminating that, and the balance the back of the budget on that to me it may not be the wisest thing to do at this time.

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner DeLoach and then Commissioner Murray and then Commissioner Thomas. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner DeLoach.

Commissioner DeLoach said, if I could I'd like for y'all to look at the proposal I put before y'all earlier, and just kind of go over some of the points. One point that we need to make here, I understood the Chairman to say there would be not a —, there would not be a tax increase. Russ [Abolt], based on Option 8, is there any increase in taxes? Mr. Abolt said, the tax rate does not change. As I understand your question, the issue which this Board raised in the past is revaluation, and in Option 8 there is predicated a growth in the digest based on our best estimates that would incorporate both new growth and valuation, and in the M&O budget that's \$900,000 in additional revenue and \$145,000 in SSD. Commissioner DeLoach said, okay. Gary [Udinsky], based on your previous experience, reevaluation, what is that? Mr. Udinsky said, probably my best answer and the most recent answer is a good example, and that is we just recently saw a \$10,000,000 sale of property in downtown Savannah that we had previously valued at \$6,000,000. A revaluation would cause that value to probably go to closer to \$10,000,000. So that's probably the best example of what revaluation is. Commissioner DeLoach asked, would you call that a tax, Gary [Udinsky]? Mr. Udinsky said, I call it revaluation. Commissioner DeLoach asked, would you call it a tax? Does Danny Powers collect any more tax money at the end of the year than he did the previous year based on a re-evaluation? Mr. Udinsky said, certainly, at a given millage rate there will be more tax —. Commissioner DeLoach asked, so what is that, Gary [Udinsky]? Mr. Udinsky said, well, I think the property —. Commissioner DeLoach asked, is that a tax? Yes or no. Mr. Udinsky said, yes, that is a tax. Commissioner DeLoach said, that's all. That's all I need. Thank you, sir. Mr. Udinsky said, but the property was improperly valued in prior years. Commissioner DeLoach said, no, no. That's all I need to know, is it a tax. Okay, we are raising taxes here if we do the proposition, or the proposal that is before us now, #8. Now, if we don't have a problem with that, Mr. Chairman, and I understood previously when you and I set here and agreed that we would not raise taxes and there was room to cut in this budget that we would not raise taxes. Now I don't want to raise taxes. I want to be fair though. With that in mind, I would like for us to take the budget that I proposed, and I want everyone to understand when I said it earlier, and I'm saying it again now, this is not a budget that anyone likes. No one likes it except the taxpayers. I am one of those because I am not raising your tax. I also stated earlier that this was what I would call a watershed or a plateau for us as far as taxes are concerned. This should be where we call the cutting to the bone and that is the bottom of the line. You can't go any deeper. If we do, we lose services, and we build from there. We have to have drainage throughout Chatham County. We agreed earlier, and I've heard everybody sit up here and say that they promised, you know, if we got an agreement with somebody, we need to follow through with it. We had an agreement with the municipalities of West Chatham, and I'm sure the rest of the area, that we would take care of the drainage program of Chatham County. With that effect, we took and set aside \$2.8 million for that purpose. When we did that, we also stated that in the future that would be

our responsibility. I cannot see backing off of that responsibility because that is our responsibility. As far as the proposed EMS is concerned, I spoke to some of the Commissioners up here and I made the idea I think we need to once and for all determine what program Chatham County is going to use, whether it be a public, whether it be a private, whether it be a hybrid of this or that. That's not the issue. The issue is it doesn't need to come up every year we do a budget trying to use one or the other as a scapegoat to run from and hide behind or one that we can use as whipping post to determine where we go as far as taxes are concerned. To that effect, I think we should take and look at taking Dr. Victor and the committee that we've formed, based on the municipalities and those other folks, sit down, let those people go with the private sector and the public sector, sit down and find out what is the best service for the citizens of Chatham County, not what's best for MedStar, not what's best for Chatham County EMS nor Mercy Ambulance Service, but what's best for Chatham County. To do that, I feel like we should say, we've got a time period on this of, say, three months. By the end of March they should be able —, we have to give them something to work with. We have to prepare those folks either in the private sector or in the public sector who are going to "lose a job." I'm sorry, but this is fact, okay. I might as well get it out on the table the possibility of someone losing a job. We need to have those folks prepared for that. In July somebody could lose their job. Now I feel like we should vote today, separate from this whole budget, to say that in July we will raise County property taxes one-half mil if we do not have an agreement with the private sector or with Dr. Victor's group and we continue on with EMS and never mention it again. That way we have a service we can live with. We have a service that we're not going to beat over the head every time budgets come up. Now that's something we can live with. It's something these people can understand who've got a job with us who are depending on income from us. If we do that, we come to some agreement and we sit down with MedStar, Mercy and the Chatham County, and we develop a program that works for Chatham County, a way to implement it, and then we go from there. If we don't, July 1 we propose —, I propose that we put this tax in effect at a half a mil and cover our costs on EMS. That is what I say we do so that we can bring this thing to a head once and for all. That takes care of EMS. That's out of the way as far as I'm concerned on my proposal. That is one thing that I will put in front of you.

Commissioner DeLoach said, now as far as the rest of my budget, I understand that this budget is very tight. I understand it hurts a great deal, but we do not need to raise taxes in Chatham County. We do not need to raise taxes. Re-evaluation or otherwise, we do not need to raise taxes in Chatham County. Chairman Hair asked, can I ask a question? Commissioner DeLoach said, yes sir. Chairman Hair said, about your proposal. Didn't you just propose a half a mil tax increase? Commissioner DeLoach said, yes. The private sector and EMS do not agree on a proposal and we walk away, I will, I will, I will raise the tax in Chatham County one-half mil if it doesn't happen by the end of March. Chairman Hair asked, so you are proposing a tax increase? Commissioner DeLoach said, this budget does not propose a tax increase right here. This budget does not propose a tax increase. So let it be known, my budget does not propose a tax increase. It causes a great deal of pain, especially to the constitutional officers. I understand that. It hurts very much for —, as far as Sheriff St. Lawrence, and I realize that. I know the budget is extremely tight for them, and I can see that, but the point is it does not raise our taxes. It gives us a budget that we can live with and it gives us a place to start with and build from there. I would recommend that y'all vote for this budget, y'all live with it and carry it forward and see if we can't develop the EMS based on that program I just suggested. That will give us drainage, that will give us an EMS, either in the private sector if it doesn't stay public or with my recommendation of a half a mil in July if it does. That's —, I'll do that. Commissioner Rivers asked, but do you have five votes to do that? Commissioner DeLoach said, I don't know. Commissioner Rivers said, that's the whole thing. Commissioner DeLoach said, that's what I would do.

Chairman Hair said, I agree with Commissioner Rivers. Commissioner Murray and then Commissioner Thomas. Could I respond to something that Eddie [DeLoach] said before? I think we've been allowing responses. First of all, I think to clear the record here, this Commission did exactly the right thing in July by rolling back the property millage rate to offset reappraisals, and I have said and will continue to say that I will propose that every July when the tax digest comes in to roll back the tax to offset reappraisals. Reappraisal is one of the worst problems we've got in this County, but I will say to this and the public needs to know, this Commission has absolutely nothing to do with reappraisals. That is done by the Tax Commissioner's office. We control the millage rate. Now we should do the right thing —. Mr. Danny Powers said, oh, no. Chairman Hair said, sorry, Mr. Commissioner, the Tax Assessor. Commissioner Murray said, go ahead and take credit for it. Chairman Hair said, Danny [Powers] just puts all that money in the bank and draws all that interest. Chairman Hair said, and I want to make it very clear that this Board did the right thing by rolling back the millage rate to offset reappraisals, and I hope that every year I'm sitting up here I'm going to propose it every year, and I think we will have —, we'll propose it next year and we'll do that again. Reappraisals will not change no matter which budget we pass today. Mr. Udinsky is going to keep appraising property the way he always appraised property whether we pass Commissioner DeLoach's budget or our budget. It's not going to be affected by which budget we pass today. And the final point I want to make is about the drainage. I do think the County has an obligation to assist with county-wide drainage and I think we do have an obligation with these municipalities and I think we ought to maintain that commitment we've got to them. It does maintain —, Option 8 does maintain the commitment in this budget through '98, and then in the '99 budget we can deal with it again. It doesn't —, we're not eliminating county-wide drainage. We have an obligation to maintain drainage and we have an obligation to these municipalities, and I think we ought to live up to it. This budget does that. Okay, I'll call on Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Rivers asked, Mr. Chairman, can I respond to what you just said? Chairman Hair said, certainly, certainly. Commissioner Rivers said, you know, I think prudence calls for certain things when you talk about reval. Reval benefits even the manufacturers who already have a tax base, so when you're talking about reval, we're not talking about —, we talked about \$800,000 spread out over the total base, also going to the manufacturers who also got a 20% or 30% deduction already on last year. I don't —, I think there's inequities in that system, and until we straighten that system out and until we get all of these kinks and stabilize this budget as far as these nonrecurring revenues or items that we have within our budget, then we need to look at reval as a usage until we stabilize that budget. Now, I agree with Eddie [DeLoach] on broadening the tax base. Yes, we do get some revenue when we broaden the tax base, and that's one of the main reasons that we keep trying to stabilize this budget, or we're going to be in the same fix that we're in fighting over this budget on which programs we're going to cut. Eddie [DeLoach] just said just now that we take and utilize the money from drainage for EMS, or someone said it. Ben [Price] said it, Ben [Price] said it. All right, if we do that, that's a nonrecurring revenue that we are running an ongoing program, and it's time for us to stop. Bite the bullet, get this budget stabilized, and then go home. And if we want to give reval back, fine. If we want to, fine, but the tension should be put on and stressed on how do we get the State to look at another way of determining property value and making equitable things throughout this County.

Commissioner Murray said, okay, the first comments that I'm going to make will be addressed to the news media, mostly to the *Savannah Morning News*, *Evening Press*, about an editorial that was in today's paper and an article that was written a couple of days ago about the municipalities subsidizing the SSD. That, in fact, is not true. I don't know where the information came from. Wherever it came from, you didn't get the right information, and I'll tell you why I feel that way. First of all, Chatham County, one County if I'm not mistaken, and any property owner in Chatham County pays an M&O tax to Chatham County. The SSD is set up. We also pay an SSD tax. Four hundred thousand dollars is being moved from SSD to the M&O tax we all pay anyway, and out of the SSD the property tax that's paid probably equates to about half of the property taxes paid in Chatham County as a whole. So what we're doing is moving numbers on paper. We are not subsidizing anybody. If anything, the SSD has been subsidizing the M&O for years while this \$400 [sic] fee, it was \$600,000 before wasn't it, and then we reduced it somewhat. This is strictly a policy decision to make. It is not subsidizing one side or the other. We all pay the M&O tax and that's what it's going to be taken out of and that's where it should be taken from. So I just wanted to clarify that. That is my personal opinion. Some people may differ with that, but wherever the information came from I disagree with them too. As far as the EMS, I think sometimes, and I will take credit for this probably coming up as it did because I asked some questions about EMS at one of the budget sessions we had, and my question was: What percentage does the EMS, Chatham County EMS have now, how many stations do we still have, and what I was trying to find out was information for myself on where we go, the way it's being done right now because I do know that the other ambulance systems, the private ambulance services, can put up their stations anywhere in Chatham County they want to put them up, and we're not in the position to go put one up right next door to them as they've done in some of our cases. EMS has responded in a lot of cases where the other ones could not respond. We are strictly an emergency situation. They strictly go to emergency calls. They do not go to transport patients from one hospital to another and those type things. I think we sometimes forget how EMS and why EMS was set up to begin with. It was set up because they were having fist fights on the street to see whose ambulance would pick who up and the response times we were having and a lot of problems that we were having with private services at that time. I have some real problems at this point if we take EMS out of the budget at all. I know years ago —, several years ago we had a situation where there was an awful lot of overtime coming up and EMS had a tremendous amount of overtime. At that time we asked staff to do a study to find out what we needed to do to offset that and how many people would we have to add to the EMS group. They came back it was cheaper to add those positions that we needed to add than it was to pay the overtime that we were having to pay at that time. In my opinion, we probably have the most dedicated, the most qualified technicians running EMS anywhere in Chatham County, and I'd probably put them up against most people throughout the State of Georgia. Commissioner Price said, here, here. Commissioner Murray said, they do a terrific job and I just don't feel like that this should be coming up every time we have a budget session to cut EMS and move it, and I am not going to support moving EMS and doing away with it. I don't know what's going to happen with the rest of the Commission. I brought up at another point, I'd asked questions at the last meeting when we did not approve a budget about MPC. I felt like we needed more cuts in MPC. We had discussion a month or so ago about the Chatham County Police Department. We need to down-size that because, especially on the westside, there's a lot of land being annexed in that was on unincorporated land, so we didn't need the police services that we had. Well, I disagree with that. I feel like if you don't need them on the westside, we can certainly use them out in the Islands area, but my point being that if we keep decreasing the size of the unincorporated area, why do we need to keep paying 50% of the MPC budget when our size keeps decreasing and we will not be utilizing them as much at that point. Now, I don't think anybody in here can answer that question. If they can, fine, but I don't think we should be paying 50% of the MPC's budget when the unincorporated area continues to shrink. The other thing and, Milton [Newton], this is certainly nothing against you, but I'd asked Russ [Abolt] a while back to do a study on what it would take to bring MPC or do our own land use planning and zoning issues and things within Chatham County rather than being a part of the MPC at that time. It came back that most of those things we could do and some of them were said that we still had to stay with MPC on that. I could be wrong, but I disagree with that. I feel like that we could still do that inside, in-house, we could still have a public advisory board set up in-house on the County, and I think it is something we need to look at with our budget. I think MPC does a good job, I think sometimes things go in a lot of different and sometimes records aren't kept quite as well as we need to be keeping records. Not just MPC, but all of us, but I think that's something else we need to look at and I think we need to look at the dollars that we are spending on MPC and do we actually have 50% of the service now from MPC with the unincorporated area shrinking as it is.

Commissioner Murray said, another issue I brought up at that same meeting was grant-in-aids [sic]. I know that's not popular for anybody, but I feel like the grants-in-aid budget should also be cut down from what we're doing the others. If we've got hard times, we've all have hard times, we all have to suffer that. The grants-in-aid program would have to suffer along with it, but I cannot support cutting EMS. I will not support paying the funds that we have on record right now for MPC. I don't know, we've got several of the members here now, some of the staff, and the grants-in-aid I cannot support the amount of money that we've allocated for grants-in-aid at this point.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Thomas.

Commissioner Thomas said, thank you, Mr. Chairman and my fellow Commissioners. Everything that has been discussed here this morning has merit. Everything. I reviewed each of the budgets, and the one that Commissioner DeLoach has proposed do not address the minority business development. Right? Am I correct, Commissioner DeLoach? Commissioner Price said, I don't think Eddie [DeLoach] heard you. Commissioner DeLoach said, I'm sorry. Commissioner Thomas said, your proposal, your budget proposal, does it address the minority business development? Commissioner DeLoach said, we have had that on the original discussion, on the \$50,000 on the study that we were talking about? Commissioner Thomas said, yes. Commissioner DeLoach said, yes, that will be taken from the —, can I add to that answer to cover an area for the Sports Complex? For the Weightlifting Complex? Commissioner DeLoach said, there's a request —, the proposal calls for a 50¢ charge per visit in there. That is going to create an unbelievable burden on people the way it operates there because people are coming in and out, in and out, and if you've ever been there and worked out or done anything, then you know the way the traffic flows there. They have not got a problem with the overall thought of having a "charge" per se, but they would love for it to be more on a —, either a yearly or monthly basis so that the folks could, one, give scholarships for those people who can't afford to have that possibility of participating, and, two, just make it easier to control the cost of it.

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner DeLoach, I'm going to have to ask you to address Commissioner Thomas's question. We'll deal with that later. Commissioner Thomas asked you specifically if the minority was in there. Commissioner DeLoach said, yes, it is in there and, yes, it covers that issue.

Commissioner Thomas said, I want to see it. Commissioner DeLoach said, okay. I don't know how to say it. The last budget we tried to pass, the one last —, we said that it would be offset by the funds that were collected from the —, weightlifting charges of the Weightlifting Center. That's where the additional funds would be located to cover the cost of the stay, and that would be in this proposal here. Written in, whatever, you know. You can hear when it's —. When I make the proposal, I'll say it's news here. Commissioner Thomas said, all right. My feelings about this is that we have spent over \$200,000 or more to have a complete study, and that's one reason why this report is still on the table since we have not actually completed that. I am concerned that if we do not address this at this point that we will never address it. We can't keep putting this on the back burner, you know. We are a diverse community, we are a diverse group of people here. We must take the initiative to address these concerns and go forward with this. I too agree that we have many obligations and this is one, and unless we can adequately deal with this, then I cannot in good faith go with your proposal, and I just think it's time that we need to look across the Board. As I've always said, when I sit here, I don't just deal with my constituents. I look at the total citizenry of Chatham County. Whatever is best for Chatham County. No, I don't want taxes raised either. I'm sick of them too. I've got more than I can pay, but we have to bite the bullet wherever we have to come up with whatever decision we have to make. Now we've made some real poor decisions, and we need to correct those. Commissioner Rivers has addressed time and time again about certain funds that were non-reoccurring revenues, and we still are doing the same thing each year. We have got to look at the total picture, the total picture. And so, with that I would hope that we would consider to make sure that we're addressing the needs of the minority business development.

Commissioner Odell said, Mr. Chairman, without going through the individual items that I have personal concerns about, as Ben [Price] has done, Eddie [DeLoach], and Frank [Murray], and we have left Martin [Jackel] and David [Saussy], I would like to pare this down between the two budgets, either Budget 8 —, Option 8 or the DeLoach plan, and I would make the motion that we approve Option 8 with modifications to follow. Commissioner Rivers said, second. Commissioner Thomas said, second. Chairman Hair said, I have a motion and a second. Any discussion of the motion? All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Odell, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Murray and DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of seven to two. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

Commissioner Odell said, Mr. Chairman, while I have the floor, at this point what I would like to do, and would hope that we would do, is to go through systematically and given those Commissioners who have not had an opportunity to speak a few moments in that we're going with Option 8, just give them a few moments to go through the items that they can and cannot live with. EMS, if it comes to EMS, or MPC coming in-house, that MPC has to come in-house, I believe that we can save money that way. EMS is not an option to me. It is not something that my constituents would allow me to vote in favor of abolishing. I think we have an excellent EMS service. As far as the revals, and I'll just take a brief moment to say this, if you have a property that sold for \$10,000,000 and they have fought to have it listed as \$6,000,000, the impact of that to me is not a tax increase, the impact to me is that they would now be paying their fair share of the taxes, and to give that back generally to everyone to me just seem blatantly unfair and I think it puts everyone, especially the County, Russ's [Abolt] side, in an untenable position. Our budget is so close that as a business we could not operate, and we're all businessmen. We know that if we had this reserve in our business, we'd be technically bankrupt. So I don't recommend we give back a penny of those revals. I do not recommend a tax increase, but I do not recommend that we roll it back if we have had that growth and now people who have been underpaying taxes are paying their fair share and we want to set back the tax increase. I've heard the arguments. To me it's not a logical argument. Unfortunately, obligations as far as drainage, that compared to EMS and then that has to lose, the drainage has to lose. I have some other comments, but I don't want to belabor it.

Commissioner Jackel said, I'm not happy with this budget, but I came up here and wanted to do more, and apparently we're doing less. I don't really see any solutions to the budget situation as I see it now. I only see some very hard choices. I think we have probably made these hard choices and now we have to somehow figure out what else we can do with this budget to do some of the other essential things. I do need to hear from the EMS people and a question that I was asked by several of my constituents was when they were handling 100% of the business they had five stations and now they're handling 20 to 25 and they still have five stations, and they be able to answer that question to my constituents. I'm sure there is one, but I need to know that one. That's all I have at this time.

Commissioner Saussy said, yes, I think we've got somewhat a dilemma here, but it's not that it can't be overcome. As far as the EMS goes, the stories of 27 years ago have got to quit. We are 27 years in the future. I don't think those things are happening now, I don't think they ever will happen again. We're starting a new millennium in two more years. I think we are far beyond that so I —, let's just cut that out. I do like Eddie's [DeLoach] idea of having a time of studying this and, in fact, I would like to see rather than what Eddie [DeLoach] has proposed, I would like to see an independent study. In fact, it has come to my attention that at least one of the private concerns has —, possibly would propose that also and possibly may come up with —, I would like those people to speak on that as well as EMS, if they would, when the time comes. One of my other concerns is cutting the library. We've got a multi-million dollar library that will be coming into line in another year, and I think if we cut that back, we are really hurting the future of this community. We've got to have books to go in it, we've got to have computers, and things like that, to go into these libraries, otherwise we're not going to have a very educated community. Granted, we've got the schools, but the libraries are not only just for students, they're for people that learn after they get out of school and they do a lot of research and things and, frankly, cutting the library is cutting our livelihood and our children's livelihoods in the future. We must do better on our library system. How are we going to fund them? I don't know. We'll have to come up with those things. Those are my main concerns. The drainage I think we must, must continue that. We must have the maintenance in there. Otherwise, why are we putting all this money into it? We would be right back to where we started from years ago. We can't do that. Nobody wants a tax increase, but if we're going to have services we may have to increase taxes. If we have to do it, if the public wants these services, we've got to have money. We can't do without it. The revaluations will help in that. Those are my main concerns. I just think that we've really got to grab hold to this thing and go ahead and do something, bite the bullet and do it.

Chairman Hair said, okay —. I'm sorry, Commissioner Saussy, were you finished? I apologize. Commissioner Saussy said, I'm through. Chairman Hair said, oh, you're through. Okay. Commissioner DeLoach and the I think we'll be ready to take input from the audience. Commissioner DeLoach.

Commissioner DeLoach said, okay, I just —, looking at #8 here, it looks like that's where we're working at. I don't understand, we're going to eliminate EMS as of July, is that right? Chairman Hair said, that's currently what has been passed. Commissioner Price said, with modifications. Commissioner Saussy said, but I think we can modify it. Chairman Hair said, surely you can modify it. That's what is on the table right now that has been passed, that's correct. Commissioner Price said, that's the framework for it. Commissioner Odell said, looking at both of them, this is closer to it with some modifications. Commissioner DeLoach said, and we're going to eliminate county-wide drainage? Chairman Hair said, no that's not true. Russ [Abolt] just said, I think there's 700 —. Mr. Abolt said, 500,000. You'll do a half a million dollars worth of drainage work in 1998. Chairman Hair said, about a half a million dollars, so it isn't eliminated. Commissioner DeLoach said, county-wide drainage maintenance would end after 1998. Mr. Abolt said, yes sir. Chairman Hair said, we're voting on the '98 budget, we're not voting on the '99 budget. That would be a decision we make next year this time. We're voting on the '98. Commissioner DeLoach said, well, I still —. Chairman Hair said, but the budget includes it for '98. Commissioner Price said, I had the same concerns. I understand what Eddie [DeLoach] is saying. Commissioner DeLoach said, I just want to make sure we're continuing on the drainage program as I understand it. Now as far as the reval or whatever y'all want to call it, when we did away with it, I think the Chairman and all of us voted to do away with it last year or eliminate it, I recall then it was a tax. I don't it's changed remarkably over the year. I think the saying goes that if it's —, what is it? Commissioner Odell said, if it looks like a duck --. Commissioner DeLoach said, if it looks like a duck —. Commissioner Odell said, walks like a duck —. Commissioner DeLoach said, walks like a duck --. Commissioner Odell said, and seen in the company of ducks —. Commissioner DeLoach said, seen in the company of ducks, it's a duck. Commissioner Murray said, it's a chicken. [Unintelligible comments were made when several Commissioners began speaking at one time.] Commissioner DeLoach said, the point is, it's a tax. Now if we need to do that, then I just —, we just need to be able to stand up here and say it. There's no need to be semantics about it and there's no need to analyze and make it into something other than what it is. It's a tax that we're going to increase on the citizens of Chatham County. So with that, I understand that and we'll deal with that down the line, but I really hope that we do something other than say we're going to continue EMS as it is, because that's not fair to the people who are part of EMS as it stands now. We have got to take this thing out and look at it separately so that we can deal with it so that everyone will be able to vote on the budget because I don't think it will pass, #8 won't pass right now based on the way it's written.

Mr. Ken Earls said, you've already passed it. Commissioner Jackel said, it has passed. Chairman Hair said, we've already passed it. Commissioner Price said, with modifications, with modifications. Commissioner DeLoach said, with modifications, extreme modifications. Chairman Hair said, the modifications have to be separate motions. Commissioner DeLoach said, okay.

Commissioner Rivers said, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Rivers. Commissioner Rivers said, we looked at the possibility if we pass this we want to keep EMS in, we have to find a permanent revenue stream, and I am going to recommend that that permanent revenue stream begin to come from the reevaluations in some form or another. Also, if you want to split that reval, which I estimate if we are lucky could possibly be —, Gary [Udinsky]. could that reval possibly be anywhere close to what it was last year? Is that a possibility? Commissioner DeLoach said, get your crystal ball out. Mr. Udinsky said, we used —. Chairman Hair said, Gary [Udinsky], before you —, point of clarification, Commissioner Rivers. It would not affect the '98 budget because he's already factored in using the evaluation increases into budget so that would only be effect —. Commissioner Rivers asked, you've got the reval in there? Chairman Hair said, that's already in there. You couldn't use reval for EMS. Commissioner Price said, but it's an estimate. Commissioner DeLoach said, the tax increase is —. Mr. Abolt said, yes, please. It's an estimate made in October. Commissioner Price said, it's an estimate. Commissioner Rivers said, I thought you based your budget based on a 4.1% digest. Commissioner DeLoach said, 5%. Mr. Abolt said, no sir, 5.1. Commissioner Rivers said, digest. Mr. Abolt said, yes sir, digest growth. Commissioner Rivers said, digest growth. Mr. Abolt said, which is made up of reval and digest growth. Commissioner Rivers said, and you took the reval and the new growth? Mr. Abolt said, yes sir. Chairman Hair said, that [inaudible] in '98. Commissioner Rivers said, well, that becomes a moot —, it becomes a moot issue. Chairman Hair said, that's the point I wanted to make. I just wanted to make sure you understand. Commissioner Price and then Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Price said, Joe [Rivers], I like the direction you're going in, and let me say this. Keeping EMS in '98, I think that there are not enough votes to eliminate it. I mean —. Commissioner Saussy said, we don't know. Commissioner Price said, well, I, I —, from just kind of looking around and hearing what everybody's saying, I don't think the votes are there, but to be able to come in, and I was out of the room here just for a few minutes when Eddie [DeLoach] was talking about a consideration of a half mil increase in July, if you're looking at revals, we don't know —, and that's always the problem we run with the fiscal year we run. You know, we really don't have it balanced out, revenues coming in, and knowing what they are, and how to budget them, and how to spend them. We're always running on estimates, and that, you know, that goes back to, you know, the recommendation that's still on the table today of looking at changing our fiscal year, but we're not going to talk about that today, but what I'm saying is if we get into July and August and we see that the digest has grown more than 5% and we've seen that we've got more —, and it always seems to be the case, how were we able to roll the millage rate back this last Summer because it was more than what we estimated? That could happen again, and it is —, it sounds like we're betting on the come that something good is going to happen, but if it doesn't we still have the option of raising the millage rate to cover the EMS cost. All I'm saying is, using the revals and using the tax digest growth, whatever it's going to be, let's take another look at it in July or in August, and let's make that tough decision of whether we have to raise the millage rate or not then. Commissioner Rivers said, but, Ben [Price], we missed the whole purpose last year when I asked that we utilize the monies that we —. Commissioner Price said, I understand that. Commissioner Rivers said, and we set the budget straight, and when we came in with that \$800,000, the focus was to make that budget whole by putting that —, inducing that money into the budget to offset those programs that we had put in there two years that had non-recurring revenue that caused us to use up all our fund balance. Some how or another we missed the focus of the whole —. Commissioner Price said, I recognize that. Commissioner Rivers said, projection and here, I was about to propose the same thing, not realizing that Russ [Abolt] has already used that money. But if we keep doing the same thing we're doing year after year, we're going to be right

back to this very same position on next year. Commissioner Price said, well, all I'm saying is instead of rolling the millage rate back, let's wait and see what it is. We've already budgeted in this Option #8 for half a year expense for EMS, let's take a look at it at that point and make a decision whether or not we have to bite the bullet and do what none of us want to do to put the budget back in order and raise the millage rate. I don't want to talk —, I mean, I don't want to think about having to do that. I don't want to have to vote to do that, but if it comes down to keeping something as vital as we recognize it to be, such as the EMS service, we may have to do that, and that's what we need to come to grips with today. One way or the other, all of us need to come to grips with that, whether we're going to accept that or go ahead and privatize it. Commissioner Rivers said, well, I think it should be in the budget.

Commissioner Murray said, yes, I guess this question is probably addressed to the attorney, and it refers to the EMS, and I want all of us to listen real close because I'm not sure what it is, but I understand that EMS works with some type of certificate. Mr. Hart said, yes sir. Commissioner Murray said, and if we do away with EMS we lose that certificate. Is that correct? Mr. Hart said, that's possible, yes sir. Commissioner Murray said, and if we lose that certificate the possibility of us getting that —. Mr. Hart said, there's several ways to go around that. I mean, if we totally took EMS out of the —, if we totally took EMS out of operation, then we would not be entitled to our certificate, okay. The question would be at some point in the future if the County wished to go back in the EMS business, they would have to be recertified to get their certificate back, if they could. Now, the County Commission would have the possible option, if they so chose, to limit EMS but place that certificate in operation in another department on a much smaller scale to maintain their certification and not lose their certificate. There would be ways around that. Commissioner Saussy said, which means they would only have to have one operation. Chairman Hair said, ambulance. That's right. Mr. Hart said, I mean, you'd have to look at that very closely to see how that could be handled. Commissioner Saussy said, it could be in —. Chairman Hair said, emergency services, it could be in the Police Department. Commissioner Saussy said, emergency services, right. Commissioner DeLoach said, CEMA or —. Commissioner Murray said, that's fine, but I still do not support doing away with it. Commissioner Rivers said, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Murray has the floor. Commissioner Murray asked, what is the process going to be, are we going —, you going —, once we finish, are you going to let the public speak and then we go listen to them —. Chairman Hair said, that's correct. Commissioner Murray asked, and then we —. Chairman Hair said, as I stated at the beginning —. Commissioner Murray said, the motion was that those things we want to pull out of that? Chairman Hair said, as I stated at the beginning, we would have all Commissioners say what they wanted to say, we get input from the audience, and then we'll take any amendments to the budget. Commissioner Murray said, well, I'll wait until I hear from everybody else.

Commissioner Rivers said, Mr. Chairman, I want to put a motion on here now. Chairman Hair said, okay, any time you want to make a motion. Commissioner Rivers said, that we leave EMS within that budget and whatever other things that we're proposing to do about EMS, then we consider that after we are through with the budget. Chairman Hair said, if you do that, you have to have a source of revenue. The budget is already balanced. If you add that back, where's the money going to come from? The budget would be out of balance. You would have expenses greater than revenue, and we can't pass an unbalanced budget. Commissioner Rivers said, let's look at whatever else we're going to pull out to balance it. Chairman Hair said, well, your motion needs to include the funding source if you're going to —, and the figure would be what, Russ [Abolt]? Commissioner Rivers said, let's leave, let's leave it as —. Mr. Abolt said, \$607,000. Chairman Hair said, \$607,000. You've got to have —, you've got to cut something by an equal amount if you want to do that. Commissioner Rivers said, all right. Leave it at the six months and go with what Eddie [DeLoach] suggested and come back and make a determination of whether we're going to raise the millage or not. I'll raise the millage. Chairman Hair said, well, that's —, that's already in there. You're going to do that. Commissioner Rivers said, if John Q. Citizens say that they want that service, then, hey, I'll bite the bullet.

Commissioner Murray said, I don't think we can let our EMS people sit out there wondering for six months whether they're going in positions or not. Commissioner Thomas said, right. Commissioner Murray said, it's just not right to do that. Commissioner Rivers said, well, then let's find an alternative. Let's make a motion to leave it in and then find some other alternative. So I'll propose a motion that we leave EMS in the budget. Chairman Hair said, okay, we have a motion. I'm going to need a legal ruling on the motion. The budget that has already been passed is balanced. If you add back \$607,000 the budget would be unbalanced. Would that make that an illegal motion? Mr. Hart said, I don't know that it would be an illegal motion, but ultimately this —. Chairman Hair said, improper. Mr. Hart said, an improper motion. It could be placed on the calendar for a motion and be ruled on then, but ultimately you're going to have to balance your budget and you're going to have to have a second motion following that taking out —. Chairman Hair said, something of equal amount. Mr. Hart said, taking out an equal amount.

Commissioner Rivers said, I was going to amend the budget and if that put it out of kilter, then we'll do some balancing. Mr. Hart said, if we're out of balance, that motion cannot stand. Chairman Hair said, that's my point, Joe [Rivers]. Your motion is not a motion that we can vote on because it puts the budget out of balance, and by law we can't pass an unbalanced budget. Commissioner Rivers said, I'm not finished —. Commissioner Price said that's not what the attorney said. Commissioner Rivers said, we can't —. Mr. Hart said, you can vote on it, but you're going to have to have another motion somewhere along the way —. Chairman Hair said, we've got to cut something else for the same amount of money. Commissioner Price said, but the motion would be valid, we'd just have to follow up with the resolution of it one way or the other today. Mr. Hart said, correct. Yes, you could not leave without a balanced budget. Commissioner Price said, you can make the —. Chairman Hair said, I mean, you've still got to balance —, you've got to cut something else for the same amount of money. Commissioner Price said, but the motion would be valid, we'd just have to follow up with the resolution of it one way or the other today. Mr. Hart said, correct. Commissioner Price said, is that what you're saying, Jon [Hart]? I would think that the motion —. Mr. Hart said, you could not adjourn the meeting without a balanced budget. Commissioner Price said, the motion would be in order as long as we —. Chairman Hair said, the motion is not in order unless there's an offsetting amount. Commissioner Odell said, they're two separate things. Let me just speak a second. One is that his motion is appropriate and —. Commissioner Rivers said, I'll rephrase it. Commissioner Odell said, let me finish. As to an —, he needs a second motion thereafter to locate the source. Chairman Hair said, that's correct. That's my point. Commissioner Odell said, but really that motion is [inaudible] —. Chairman Hair said, that's correct. As long as there is an offsetting motion that balances it out. Commissioner Odell said, he has to balance —. Commissioner Price said, let him reword his motion. Commissioner Rivers said, the budget is balanced. I'm going to reword it that we infuse that EMS system into the present

budget. Now it has nothing to do with throwing the back budget out of kilter at that point. The motion is out there as a stand-alone motion. We have not included it in the budget. I'm proposing that we put it in there. Chairman Hair said, there has to be a follow-up motion as the law says. Commissioner Rivers said, well, we can find the offsets. Chairman Hair said, I'd like to know. It may be important to vote on the motion. If I know what you're going to offset it with. I mean, I might be able to vote for the motion if I knew what you were going to cut to do it, but if I don't know what you're going to cut, how can I intelligently vote on that motion. I need to know what you're going to cut. Are you going to cut MPC to keep EMS? I mean, tell me what you're going to cut. Commissioner Murray said, there's still several items out there that we can cut. Chairman Hair said, exactly, but we need to know where they are. It's very unfair to any Commissioner to have to vote on increasing the budget \$607,000 without knowing what you're going to cut. I don't know what I'm going to cut. Commissioner Murray said, well, I'm sure somebody voting on the prevailing side could ask for reconsideration of the budget. I didn't do that so I can't vote.

Commissioner Jackel said, well, let's hear it from the EMS people. Let's see what we —. Commissioner Saussy said, well, not just the EMS. Let's hear [inaudible]. Chairman Hair said, we've got to hear from everybody. I think, Joe [Rivers], would you want to do this —? Commissioner Murray? Commissioner Murray said, yes. Commissioner Rivers said, I'll just withdraw the motion.

Chairman Hair said, all right. The way we're going to do the public input is we have what we call our bullpen up here, and we'll —, those of you that want to speak, if you will come and get in line on the front row up here. I'm going to ask that you keep your remarks very brief so that everyone has an opportunity to say whatever they want, and if you represent a group, please have one spokesman for the group. I think that would allow us to get the ample input and still make sure that we hear everybody before we take any final votes on amending the budget. Okay, Dr. Victor, we would —, I'll recognize you first, sir.

Dr. Irving Victor said, Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, I really want to thank you for allowing me to speak to you this morning. I'm Irving Victor. I was in the practice of urology for a number of years in this community until I was asked to accept a post as Vice President of Medical Affairs for St. Joseph's Hospital, which is now St. Joseph's/Candler. Additionally, I sat on the board at Memorial for a number of years, so I had an opportunity to visit with the private sector as well as Chatham County EMS, which I helped found back in the 70's. I would preface my remarks by saying that this is about the eighth or ninth time I've appeared before the Commission. The initial time the people on that Commission: Bob McCorkle, Eddie DuFour, Frank Downing, Pete Clifton, Bob Lovett, and at that time I proposed that Chatham County EMS be under the guise of the County for fiscal responsibility since we wanted a county-wide service, and they agreed to do this. I'll never forget Commissioner McCorkle asking me a question. He said, you keep talking about saving lives with this service; how much does it cost to save a life? And I said, if you can tell me the value of your life, I can tell you how much it would cost to save it. You can't put a price on saving a life. I admittedly have a personal bias for Chatham County EMS, and I want you to know that, but I also secondarily have a personal bias for the good and welfare of the community of our citizens. I have with me the remarks I made at the last Commission meeting, but there are people on this Commission who have heard them, and I don't want to bore them with that again. The service has done a tremendous amount for the community, and I really feel proud of being a part of it, together with its dedicated, hard working paramedics who have been saving lives in the field for the past 25 years. As a matter of fact, I had a call yesterday from Dr. Ricky Timms and he said, I want you to know one thing: if I have a heart attack or have an emergency on the street, I want to look up and see a brown uniform, nothing else. And I think that's a real tribute coming from a surgeon. Before making such a momentous decision as elimination of Chatham County EMS, I think that the council, the Chatham County Advisory Council, EMS Advisory Council, which I chair, should have had some sort of input to you folks. We are a council comprised of members of all the providers of pre-hospital care. We also have the head of the Civil Defense, the Chief of the Fire Department of Savannah, and also all of the Police Departments of the County, together with the three major hospitals. I think this group, as Commissioner DeLoach pointed out, has a great obligation and effort to give input to you folks as to what the situation is as relates to the pre-hospital care in this community. As I think it was Commissioner Murray, who said that there was fighting on the streets, and that is true, fighting over bodies, and I think that the Chatham County EMS Council plus Chatham County EMS will provide a stabilizing influence, total stabilizing influence for the continuance of superior pre-hospital care for the community. The loss of either of these two entities, I think, would deplete that stabilization. The Council has had no input, as I said, so we've had no opportunity to interact together to make a recommendation as to what would happen if Chatham County EMS was eliminated from the community. I don't know if you folks have had an opportunity to see this morning's morning news because a lead editorial, and I'm going to take the liberty of reading it to you because it looks like we might have been in collusion, but I promise you my remarks were written a while before I read this this morning; however, I will say this: we are signing out of the same page of the same hymnal. The title of this editorial is "Costly Savings." The proposal to close down Chatham County Emergency Medical Service is more than a financial issue. It's a major public safety issue. It's unclear that the Chatham County Commission, which holds the fate of EMS in its hands, has grasped the difference. County Commissioners are expected to discuss today, as you are, whether to dismantle EMS, a public agency that has provided emergency medical care in the County for 25 years. The move would save \$800,000 this year and yield a potential savings of a million and a half in the future. But at what cost? I think that if the people look at this issue factually and not emotionally, they will see that this is the right thing to do, said Commission Chairman Billy Hair, a proponent of the plan to eliminate EMS. Mr. Hair is right about one thing: The Commission's decision should be based on facts, and in this case a persuasive factual argument to eliminate EMS has not been made. Certainly the state of emergency medical service in Chatham County continues to change. Prior to the creation of EMS, several privately-run ambulance companies provided service. The coverage was uneven. Neighborhoods where people had the resources to pay for medical care got plenty of attention. Ambulances were less likely to roll into poor areas. The advent of EMS eliminated such inequity. The County operated service made coverage uniform. Indeed, its first priority was getting medical help on the scene as soon as possible and not making money. For several years emergency service has not been the exclusive domain of EMS. The advent and growth of private hospital-based ambulance services, which do quality work, has greatly reduced the burden on the County service, but EMS and the hospital-based services have some fundamental differences. EMS handles only emergencies, and I emphasize that fact. It does not shuttle patients back and forth between the hospitals and nursing homes. EMS is also directly accountable to the County Commission. A hospital-based service is not. The primary goal is to steer paying patients through the hospital doors. Certainly, it's to the public's benefit to see if public resources of EMS and the private resources of MedStar and Mercy Ambulance Services can be put into more efficient use. For example, having sites for different ambulance services that are separated by a few blocks seems

to be a waste. Why not a working partnership between the public and private services to lessen an overlap in any duplication. The place to begin is Chatham County EMS Advisory Council. The panel that includes medical, police, emergency management representatives. The Council could develop a plan to improve cooperation between the public and private services and probably save the county some money by reducing subsidy. Incredibly, the Advisory Council has not even had an opportunity to discuss the proposed elimination of EMS. That's like attempting surgery without taking x-rays. Too many questions are unanswered at this point for the County to make a tremendously [inaudible], and rely on privately run services for care. Coincidence. What is the cost benefit ratio? What if that through a monopoly has on service and prices. What sort of accountability would exist? How would reliability —.

Chairman Hair said, Dr. Victor, could you —. Commissioner Odell has a question for you. Dr. Victor asked, who? Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Odell. Dr. Victor said, oh, sure, I'm just about finished this. I was just reading this into —. Chairman Hair said, we need you to sort of wrap your comments up anyway, if you could. Dr. Victor said, yes. Commissioner Odell asked, are you including it for the record? Chairman Hair said, and we read that anyway. Dr. Victor said, good. Well, I figured you did, but they say repetition is good for emphasis. Chairman Hair said, I understand. Since it had my name in it, I made sure I read it. Dr. Victor said, yes.

Commissioner Odell said, Dr. Victor, you and I, we're no strangers. We've known one another for approximately 22 years and, as you know, I hold you in the highest esteem and I consider myself one of the supporters of EMS. From a business standpoint though, I have to ask this question. At one time we were doing 100% of the calls. Now, depending on the numbers that you will believe, we are doing between 15 to 19%. I guess my question is, if we looked at the utilization and we had a staffing change where we went from the number of days on to the number of days off and not increase the staff, is it not possible, in your opinion, looking at the locations of certain EMS units, that we could in fact close one unit without there being a harm to anyone or jeopardizing any services and reap the savings thereof, which I project at approximately —, well, I don't project. That's their job. They'll project it. Is that not possible? Dr. Victor said, well, I'm certain that's possible. I think that the key to all of this would be to evaluate the County-wide pre-hospital care for both the private sector and us and work out a plan that is palatable and that would save money to the County and yet not eliminate the Chatham County EMS system. Commissioner Odell said, absolutely, I agree. I don't want to see us get in the position that DeKalb County and other places have gotten into when they abolished their EMS. Procedurally though, how do we work that out? What suggestions can you offer to us as to procedurally what needs to be done between the elected body, those providers, and EMS so that we can develop a system that is (a) cost effective and efficient? Dr. Victor said, I agree. I think that's a good point. I think what I would recommend to you is to put it in the hands of the Chatham County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council and let them take that as a project, come up with all the facts and figures and present them back to you. Commissioner Odell said, and if they were to do that, in that time is of the essence, what kind of time period —, Eddie [DeLoach] has suggested between now and March. What kind of time period, if we were to do that today and said we needed a decision by the first week in March, is that a realistic request? Dr. Victor said, I would think that if you could give us until April 1 that we could do it. Commissioner Odell said, okay. Dr. Victor said, and see, we only meet on a once a month basis and we'll have to, you know, it's all this organizational business together with all the operational chiefs of the various services getting together. Commissioner Odell said, I understand, but as of April, the first week in April is it my understanding that at that point through this association that you could (a) provide us with where a savings, if any could be made, and a county-wide recommendation? Dr. Victor said, yes. Commissioner Odell asked, would that also include looking at whether or not certain services could be moved to the privatized, some of the services? Dr. Victor said, well, yes, I think that issue would have to be addressed by the group at that time. We would address that, Harris [Odell]. Commissioner Odell asked, if you could —, excuse me, by April 1st we could get a proposal back and for the first meeting in April that from —, and it's kind of amazing that Mr. Price had thought about setting up a committee [inaudible], but we already have this committee and we've not used it. Dr. Victor said, that's right, we've not had any input. None. It's not even been brought to our attention. We learned about it in the paper. Commissioner Odell said, I think that we —, it's [inaudible] that we would need to go through this process, and if you have been —, you're the chairman of the committee now —. Dr. Victor said, right. Commissioner Odell said, and you've probably got a [inaudible] understanding of it, we have your assurances that we could get it back by the first meeting in April —. Dr. Victor said, that's correct. Commissioner Odell said, and that there would be work with Mr. Abolt as far as if we —. My only concern is if you look at the station out near Candler Hospital, that to me doesn't seem overly necessary. You've got all —. I think we can get rid of one unit and not hurt anybody. Dr. Victor said, you see, Harris [Odell], the problem is, and I don't want to belabor it, is the fact that if we opened a station that was near some place that was needed, the private sector could come right in and open one next door. We have no control over that.

Commissioner Saussy said, but by the same token, the County can go in and do the same thing to the private sector. They can go anywhere. There is nothing on the southside that EMS is covering. It's all covered by Mercy. Why isn't somebody out there?

Mr. Ken Earls said, it was taken away. Dr. Victor said, he said the southside was taken away, and I'm not aware of that. Commissioner Saussy asked, what do you mean it was taken away? Mr. Earls said, it was moved to Pooler.

Chairman Hair said, Dr. Victor, can I interrupt you at this point, Dr. Victor. I think it's very clear that a consensus is beginning to develop, and what I would like to propose to my fellow Commissioners for consideration is that we take the \$607,000 from SAGIS this year and use it to fund EMS for the entire calendar year of 1998 and, in addition, that we would do a total independent study and with public hearings during 1998 and decide if we're going to eliminate it in the 1999 budget. It will be a lot easier for us to put the money back in SAGIS at the mid-year if we discover we have the revenue than it would be to put it back in EMS because we're talking about salaries and positions in EMS. SAGIS we can come out, we're talking about hardware, software. We can add that back a lot easier than we can add EMS back, and I think a fair compromise would be for us to fund —, make a motion to fund EMS for the entire 1998 year and use the funds from SAGIS to balance it, and then also coupled with that, that we would do a total independent study and that we would come back at the end of the '99 budget and deal with EMS in a permanent way after we've had a public hearing and after we've had an independent study done. Commissioner Murray and then Commissioner Price.

Commissioner Murray said, the only thing I'm questioning is the independent study and that is because they've got every one of the organizations represented and all law enforcement on that Council. I don't know why that Council can't do it for us. Dr. Victor said, I would think —. Commissioner Murray said, we'd have to go out and pay an independent study to do it. Chairman Hair said, I'm not suggesting a paid study. I just think the study has to be, you know, perceived by the public as being truly an independent study. I'm not suggesting they couldn't be a part of it, but I think that could be determined by the staff. I mean, I have no objection to them certainly being a part of the study. Dr. Victor, you certainly are more knowledgeable than most people are, and I think —, but I think that we just —, I think this would be a fair compromise. Commissioner Murray asked, do you want a motion made on that? Chairman Hair said, yes, I do.

Commissioner Murray said, I will make a motion, based on what the Chairman has just responded to, that we fund, but back in the budget, total funding for EMS for the year of 1998 and that those funds be taken out of —. Chairman Hair said, SAGIS. Commissioner Murray said, SAGIS, and if the money comes back later on during the year, we can put back into SAGIS, we will do that. Commissioner Odell said, I'll second. Chairman Hair said, we have a motion and a second. Commissioner Jackel said, I'd like to make an amendment that the study be done within three months. I think a quarter is long enough to do this study. Chairman Hair asked, would you accept that as an amendment? Commissioner Price said, that's not part of the motion. Commissioner Odell said, that's not part of the motion. Chairman Hair said, well, he's offering an amendment, but the person making the motion didn't accept it, so it's —. Okay, we have a motion on the floor to fund EMS for the entire 1998 year, taking the funds from the SAGIS account and doing an independent study the first part of the year, I think it would be appropriate to say the first part of the year, to an independent study to determine the feasibility, and then we would make a decision in the '99 budget if we're going to continue funding at that point.

Commissioner Price said, I think the first thing we need to do is consider what impact that has, and most people may know or they may not know what SAGIS is. It's the Savannah Area Geographic Information System. We took on a three-year major capital expenditure program. I believe it was in '96, to build an automated mapping system using geographic information system type technology that's going to help us be able to go in and do —, it's unlimited the type of ways you can use GIS. It's ironic that one of the greatest benefits of GIS is actually going to be emergency response, and here we're trying to balance all this out, I have grave concerns about what we're doing when we've committed to a three-year plan of capital expenditures and in the middle of it we've put this in abeyance or we put this on the side what effect that's not only going to have on the eventual benefits for emergency response, but also for all of the other various departments. I mean, when you say GIS, when you talk about SAGIS, you're not talking about one isolated department that doesn't have much impact on other departments. In lieu of doing that, I would ask the Commissioners to consider a motion that I believe Commissioner Rivers —. Chairman Hair said, we already have this motion on the floor. We have to deal with this motion first before we entertain another motion. Commissioner Price said, well, I understand, but all I can do is argue against it, and I think we're being penny wise and pound foolish by doing it. You know, you've got a great deal that is being accomplished that's yet to be realized by this Commission, that's yet to really be seen, but anybody that's in planning for government or planning for the private sector and how economically the benefits of the GIS system can be for this community will recognize that doing something like that I would consider not to be wise at all. It would be very foolish for us to do that. How would that, in fact, Milton Newton —, can I ask, this is pertaining to the motion, can I ask the impact that would have on the GIS system and what's going on with it? Mr. Newton said, the monies that are identified, I believe the figure was actually about —, what we have is about \$597,832, is for primarily the conversion of the water and sewer lines, the various infrastructure of the City and the County. You currently have four full-time staff members working on this project and dedicated to this project, as well as other people in the City and the County. This basically would stop their work. Commissioner Price asked, so what would they do, would they still get a pay check? Mr. Newton said, they're not paid out of this fund. Commissioner Price said, so they would still get paid, but what work would they do. What would their —. Mr. Newton said, they would do probably some digitizing, but nothing —, it would be several —. Chairman Hair said, it doesn't eliminate [inaudible]. Commissioner Price asked, how critical do you see this phase of the implementation of the GIS system. Mr. Newton said, we're right at the phase that they're about ready to let contracts to begin the conversion process of all of the infrastructure for the City and the County, put it onto the system for instant retrieval. Commissioner DeLoach asked, what [inaudible]? Mr. Newton said, it would stop. Commissioner Price asked, and what's the benefit of having that in place sooner than later? Mr. Newton said, it means that we would be able to —, everyone in the community, the County, the City, MPC, all the departments and other agencies would be able to use the data immediately. The things that they're looking at includes putting the aerial photography and infrastructure on the Internet so that any citizen in the community can pull it up, look up their zoning, look up where there water/sewer line is, look up what school district they may be in, what census tract they're in if they're filling out —. Commissioner Odell said, but they won't be able to call EMS, right. They can look it up on the Internet but might die in the process.

Commissioner Price said, let me say this, okay. Listen, you guys, please. Everybody listen to what I'm going to say. Commissioner Murray said, we've been listening all day. Commissioner Price said, I'm going to consider supporting this only under one stipulation. If we delay it, we implement it for the later part of this year. Chairman Hair said, if the funds are available I have no problem with that. Commissioner Price said, if the funds aren't available, I want a commitment from this Commission that if we have to we'll raise the millage rate to get this program back in place. Chairman Hair said, that's not part of the motion. Commissioner Murray said, Mr. Chairman, he's only one vote and we'll all vote the way we feel like we need to. Commissioner Price said, but otherwise what are you going to do with —. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Price —. Commissioner Price asked, we've spent how many millions of dollars on the GIS system already? Commissioner Murray asked, how many millions of dollars have we spent on EMS? Commissioner Price said, all right, all right. Never mind.

Chairman Hair said, all right, we have a motion and a second on the floor. Everybody understand the motion? All right, all those in favor vote yes —. Commissioner Thomas asked, what is the motion? Chairman Hair said, the motion is to fund EMS for the entire 1998 year and take the funds from SAGIS and, if funds are available, to replace those funds, capital outlay funds, into SAGIS, and also to do an independent study of EMS so that when we come to this point next year we will have had public hearings and an independent study to determine the feasibility of continuing EMS. That is the motion.

Commissioner Saussy said, Mr. Chairman, we have heard from EMS. I think it's only fair that we hear from the other people that might want to speak about it before we vote. Commissioner Odell said, we know Don [Tomberlin] will be brief. Chairman Hair said, yes, please be brief, Don [Tomberlin]. I mean, the motion is to continue EMS anyway, so I don't —.

Mr. Don Tomberlin said, please give me equal time that you gave my good friend, Dr. Victor. My name is Don Tomberlin and I'm representing Memorial Health System and MedStar. Commissioner Odell said, 22 years ago, I hired him. Mr. Tomberlin said, we would support an independent study. I think I'm biased. Dr. Victor indicated he's biased as well. I think we would agree that we should coordinate this independent study through the EMS Council that Dr. Victor shares. In addition to that, Memorial would be willing to assist in the funding of this study. I think this study would probably take 90 days at least before this could be completed and make a recommendation to the EMS Council that again would report back to this Commission. So we would be willing to fund that, and I would be willing to participate on that as well as Dr. Victor. I think we should keep into account that in essence 80% of the EMS service in this County is already private, so we're only considering 20% of privatization, and in that several issues have been raised today relative to —, and legitimate concerns, relative to indigent care. At the request of the County in 1991, I have a memo that came to us at the request of the County to assist the EMS County site located over near the Civic Center. MedStar responded because they were a, in the County's words, over stressed unit. We have been providing that service, uninterrupted I might add, since 1991. This past year we dedicated \$1.3 million of MedStar budget to indigent care. I think it would be fair to say that we are more than fair in offering our services to all those who need the service. Our primary focus is EMS. We have units that are also solely dedicated to EMS 911.

Commissioner Odell said, let me not stop you, but let me just ask you a question. We've heard the proposal from Dr. Victor and what would your proposal be? How would you propose we get from where we are to where we need to be? Mr. Tomberlin said, that we employ that independent study that we would jointly agree upon. I think everyone would agree with that, and we would offer to fund or partially fund that in addition to that. Chairman Hair said, that's in the current motion, Mr. Tomberlin, that's in the current motion.

Dr. Victor asked, may I say just one thing? Chairman Hair said, yes, Dr. Victor. Dr. Victor said, Don [Tomberlin] is a good friend of mine and I hate to debate, but if it's an independent, how could it be independent when it's funded by somebody who's interested? It just doesn't make sense to me. Chairman Hair said, well, I don't think we're going to settle the independent part today. The motion —, it's going to be an independent study, let's just make that clear. If this motion passes, it will be an independent study. We will determine what independent means later. There's no need for us to debate that up here today. That's really not relevant to the motion. It's going to be an independent study. It will be determined by the Commission as to what independent is, so we —, you know, we appreciate that, and we may come to you for assistance, I'm not suggesting we're not, and we certainly appreciate the offer, but I don't think that it's really germane to the motion at this point in time.

Commissioner Murray asked, can I ask some questions? Chairman Hair said, certainly. Commissioner Murray said, one question, I know recently the emergency room doctors, that's been changed and Memorial now contracts that out, but you had the original doctors in there for quiet a few years. Mr. Tomberlin said, that's correct. Commissioner Murray said, there's been a lot of changes in the hospital systems throughout the country, there have also been a lot of changes in the hospital systems in Chatham County, and those changes continue. Different management teams come in to manage each individual group. What's to say that at some point down the road, say Chatham County decided to give up EMS totally, what's to say that a couple of years down the road another management came in and their business decision was that we no longer need to be doing —, being in the ambulance business, we need to be doing something else with those funds. What happens at that point, and I guess on top of that a while back when we had discussions on something else about Memorial is involved trying to get the indigent business that we have today with the County, one of the questions came up, and I think the answer from Memorial was it's a training hospital. They have to have patients, indigent patients. Is that right? To do the training and to do the things that they need to do at the hospital? Mr. Tomberlin said, no sir. There's many training programs around the country that use private patients for that. It helps us with indigents as well. It has helped the equation, but it's not a requirement. Commissioner Murray said, I know it's not a requirement, but one of the comments was made by one of the personnel from Memorial when they were here that it is a training hospital and they know they're going to have to write off X-amount of indigent health care but they use that in the training. Now if that's the case, and I'm not going to say y'all do this, I'm not suggesting that, but what's to keep y'all from picking somebody up and taking them straight to Memorial rather than some other hospital?

Mr. Tomberlin said, the other factor here, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to indicate, there is a statewide program, and we are in the Region 9 EMS Council, regional council, that regulates the issues that came about —, these regulations came about in the 1980's as I recall. In that we have a plan that includes Chatham County in that region. It says patient choice is the first option when we pick up an EMS patient. In fact, MedStar delivers almost half of its business, if you will, to the patient's choice, which is usually the other hospital half the time it is. So we're not, because we're hospital based, does not dictate where that patient will go. The EMT's in their medical judgment have the ability to override the patient choice based on medical condition. So I don't think that is germane, but to answer your first question relative to the continuation of EMS, there are provisions and I think Mr. Hart has indicated there are provisions where you can maintain your license. We would be willing to even maintain that for you. We do that in another county. We maintain their license. Their Commissioners —, and went before their Commissioners, they had the same issues. We maintain that license for them at no cost except for the cost of the license itself. We would be willing to do that. We believe if we get a system —, that study, and get an independent system, no one will have the advantage, the County, Mercy or MedStar. Commissioner Murray said, again this is strictly my personal opinion and I've seen it happen throughout the County, especially in the Islands area, the County is not going to sit there and try to fund every time Mercy or MedStar puts a location in to go set up as close as they can to that, but I have seen MedStar do that. Mr. Tomberlin said, that is correct. Commissioner Murray asked, is the reason for that trying to force the EMS out to begin with because it's been going on for quite a while? Mr. Tomberlin said, no sir, what we're attempting to do is equalize imbalance. We moved a unit —. Commissioner Murray said, I don't see it that way. Mr. Tomberlin said, well, I'm going to try to explain it to you. Commissioner Murray said, well, try to. I'm some kind of dumb, I might not understand it though. Mr. Tomberlin said, I don't think you're dumb, Mr. Murray, but I do think you're uninformed in this regard, okay. What I would —, what we did at the County's request, and I have the letter from Mr. Abolt with me today, in 1991 the County was over stress —, his words, not ours. This request came in through the Chatham County Police through Major Davin, as I recall, Acting Chief at the time. They were over stressed. We took our resources and moved them into an area where we know it's highly indigent pay. That didn't bother us and we've spent millions of dollars since that time covering those places that we didn't expect to get the reimbursement from, nor did we ask the County to subsidize that. It would only be fair to equalize, if you

will. We're in a business. You're in business. It's only fair to equalize that and in no way does the business that's generated from the station on Wilmington Island offset the millions of dollars that we've lost off of the County downtown. Commissioner Murray said, all right. Well, what about Tybee? Tybee does not have a permanent unit down there. Commissioner Saussy said, they don't need one all year round. Commissioner Murray asked, they don't need one year round? Commissioner Saussy said, not all year round. Commissioner Murray asked, how can you say that? They've got 7,000 people live there year round. Commissioner Saussy asked, what about the southside? Commissioner Murray said, they have some places out there. Commissioner Saussy said, no they don't. They don't have any [inaudible]. Mr. Tomberlin said, in regards to Tybee, the relocation of the MedStar unit, Wilmington Island, puts those residents on Tybee Island closer to EMS service. The response time is now less. Commissioner Murray said, it's kind of like the bus service, they pay for it but they don't receive it. Mr. Tomberlin said, I'm not going to address that one.

Chairman Hair said, okay, any other —. We have a motion and a second on the table. Commissioner Rivers said, you've got a young lady that just raised her hand. Chairman Hair said, well, does it pertain to the motion? Ms. Osborne said, yes. Chairman Hair said, okay, please be brief.

Ms. Mary Osborne said, while you stated that the mechanism of support for the study is not germane now, I think that the Chairman and the fellow Commissioners need to understand that independence means independence. I understand, and if I understand correctly, the advisory body has all the essential ingredients leaving no partner out of the loop and it should remain independent and under the autonomy of the Commission.

Chairman Hair said, thank you. Thank you, Mary [Osborne]. Commissioner Odell said, call for the question. Chairman Hair said, we have a call for the question. All those in favor —. Commissioner DeLoach asked, can you repeat the question? Chairman Hair said, for about the ninth time, the motion is to fund EMS for the entire 1998 year, take the funds, \$607,000, from the SAGIS account, and if funds are available during the year, the money would be replaced back in the SAGIS account, and at the same time to do an independent study of EMS services and make a recommendation to this body for our deliberations for the 1999 budget. Commissioner Jackel said, in the first part of the year. Chairman Hair said, and early in the year, Commissioner Jackel, I think is appropriate. All those in favor of the motion vote yes, all those opposed to the motion vote no. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Murray, Odell, DeLoach and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Price voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of eight to one. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

Chairman Hair said, okay, are there any other major amendments that anybody wants to make to the budget before the numbers into the budget for official records?

Commissioner Saussy said, yes, I would like to say something about adding something in for the library. Commissioner Jackel said, I would too. Chairman Hair said, okay, if you'd like to make a motion, and again, like Commissioner Rivers, please make sure we've got to find the source of funding for it. Commissioner Saussy asked, how much have we got? SAGIS was how much? Chairman Hair said, \$644,000. Commissioner Saussy asked, and how much do we need for EMS? Chairman Hair said \$607,000. Commissioner Saussy said, so we've got 30 —. Mr. Abolt said, no, no, no. Commissioner Price said, wait a second. Chairman Hair said, there is no additional. Mr. Abolt said, I didn't want to confuse you with the details, but I'll tell you now. In your motion we have a position in it. We can still cover the position, eliminate the non-position, so please —. Chairman Hair said, we need the \$37,000. Mr. Abolt said, please. Please, I would suggest, unless there's some other reason, don't go beyond —. Commissioner Price asked, Billy [Hair], can I say something. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Saussy has the floor. Commissioner Price said, I thought he was done. Commissioner Saussy said, well, I'm trying to find out somewhere where we can add some monies to the library. Commissioner Jackel said, I would like to do that. Commissioner Saussy said, I don't know where —, I haven't had a chance to really —. Chairman Hair said, we'd be happy to entertain a motion if you could find the source of funds. Commissioner Odell asked, how much did you want to add? Commissioner Saussy said, as much as possible. I mean, we're taking out \$96,000. Commissioner Murray asked, are you talking about the construction or to restock? Commissioner Saussy said, no I'm talking about restock. I'm hoping the construction is going to come from the State. Commissioner Murray said, well, I think it will.

Commissioner Odell said, I think that we take \$250,000 from MPC with a study within six months to determine bringing them in-house. I understand what Milton [Newton] is going to say, and I appreciate that, but it occurs to me that Savannah has us now where we're paying 50/50 and it should be like 65 them and 35 us, so I understand their desire to keep things the way they are, but I think we could probably save a half million dollars a year if we brought MPC in-house, and I would move that we take \$250,000 from MPC and put that into the library. Chairman Hair said, I have a motion, do I have a second. Do I have a second? Commissioner Saussy said, I'll second it. Chairman Hair said, all right, for discussion, and certainly Milton [Newton] needs to discuss this, one problem I have with this motion is that it —, we have spent, or I have personally spent a lot of time trying to build bridges between the cities and the municipalities and I think we've probably got the best working relationships that we've ever had. Commissioner Price asked, this isn't the bridge into the 21st Century is it? Chairman Hair said, it bothers me a little bit that —, I don't know what impact this will be on the City of Savannah, and I would hate to put the Mayor and our Aldermen in a bind by this motion. That would be my only concern. If somebody could tell me that won't happen, I have no problem with the motion. Commissioner Odell said, it won't happen. Commissioner Saussy said, I'll second that. Chairman Hair said, I need an independent source. Milton [Newton] certainly needs to address this.

Mr. Newton said, I appreciate the opportunity. I sort of had come with on thrust to speak in one vein and I find myself speaking in another direction. Let me speak to the motion that's on the floor. Obviously, I feel very strongly about the cooperative nature of the City and the County, a long history of that cooperation since the mid-50's. Over the years the funding relationship between the City and the County has varied somewhat. Last year, for instance, the City funded 54.3% of the MPC budget and this year the City's share, I think, it's an even higher percent. The County's share last year was 45.7% and this year it will be, I think, even less. There's real value, I think, in having an agency such as the Planning Commission. Some of the activities that are done cooperatively that probably could not be done nearly as well individually includes such things as the Chatham Urban Transportation Study, which is a joint cooperative agreement where the —, all local governments in Chatham county have written —, have entered into a Memorandum —, a written Memorandum of

Understanding with the State of Georgia, with the Federal —, I think, the Federal Highway Administration has signed that, as well as the Hunter-Stewart and the Ports Authority and other agencies to agree to cooperate in planning pursuant to federal regulations.

Commissioner Odell asked, may I ask a question on that, Milton [Newton]? May I, Mr. Chairman? Chairman Hair said, certainly. Commissioner Odell said, I understand what you said. I guess one of the biggest upcoming events is the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Mr. Newton said, right. Commissioner Odell said, and I guess my question is, how far into the revisions of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan are we now at this point, considering the plan is due April 1st for '98? Mr. Newton said, we intend to meet the deadline requirements. The —. Commissioner Odell said, I guess my question is, I intend to be a millionaire by the end of the year, but I probably won't be unless somebody dies and gives me money. What components are in place to ensure that you meet the April 1st deadline? Mr. Newton said, we have identified —, the staff people that are working on the plan, David Rutherford, the Senior Planner, is the plan coordinator and has accepted the responsibility for seeing that that is completed. He has met with all the parties, is working with them to put together the plan of action to make sure that we complete it on time, and I trust that he can do that. Commissioner Odell said, I don't know him, and I'm not distrusting him, but the impact of this is that we lose qualified government status —. Mr. Newton said, that's correct. Commissioner Odell said, if this is not done, so this is substantial, it is not minor. How many certified land planners are on the MPC staff assigned to work on this project? Is that one, two, three, four? I'm just, I'm looking for a number. Mr. Newton said, it depends on whether you're asking how many have received their certification. There are two that are working on the land use plan. If you're asking how many qualified planners are working on it, there are probably six or seven. Commissioner Odell said, and I want to keep a good relationship with the municipalities, but I am not willing to do anything to maintain a good relationship with anyone. Along those lines I have a question, and my question is, the City currently in your office has one-step permitting? Mr. Newton said, that's correct. Commissioner Odell asked, does the County have in your office one-stop permitting? Mr. Newton said, the City has loaned —. Commissioner Odell said, let me ask you a question. Mr. Newton said, MPC staff does the County part. The City pays for the City's part, not through the MPC budget. Commissioner Odell said, I see. So the answer to the question, my question, is the City has it, which is true; the County does not, which is true. Mr. Newton said, at this time it does not. In our opinion it should. Commissioner Odell asked, and you don't foresee with the shrinkage with Garden City annexing some place out in Eddie's [DeLoach] district, you don't see that there is no savings by bringing it in-house? Mr. Newton said, I honestly have looked at that very carefully and that's a question that at first blush one would say obviously there are savings. I don't think there will be savings for the following reasons. First, the County is paying half the cost of a number of projects, the City is paying half of that. The ability to bring greater resources to the job, in my opinion, results in some cost savings. I'm not going to stand here and say that the County would not —, that it would be a lot more expensive to do it in-house because it will probably be pretty close. I think the cooperative nature of the animal has value far beyond that. Commissioner Odell said, yes, but, Mr. Newton, wouldn't you agree that your assessment basically would be like the mother hen saying how many of her chicks she needed to get rid of? That is —. Mr. Newton said, I think that element is there, but I also think that it's —. Commissioner Odell said, but if we looked at it independently by an independent consultant, that they might conclude that there's a substantial savings up to between \$250,000 and a half a million dollars if we were to do this. Mr. Newton said, I think if they assessed based it on doing exact same work that they could not conclude that. If they assessed it based on changes in the work program, they possibly could. Commissioner Odell said, thank you.

Mr. Abolt said, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Thomas and members of the Board, to give you another perspective, the reason I did not pursue it after the initial numbers went to Commissioner Murray and were shared with you all, realizing there's some one year costs, but yes it still deserves some evaluation, it seemed to me out of step with what you all have taken leadership on regarding the consolidation of Inspections and Recreation Departments. It did not seem —, you know, inconsistent with that. In effect in one case we're saying Inspections, you know, uniformity, one stop and all of that, let's do it that way, and yet we bifurcate the land use part of it, and that's why I backed off of it. It's a legitimate management decision. If you want to do something we'll do it, but it did not seem consistent with your philosophical direction.

Chairman Hair said, okay. We have a motion and a second on the floor. All those in favor of the motion —. Commissioner Murray said, wait a minute.

Mr. Newton asked, may I speak to the other point that I had intended to speak to originally? Chairman Hair said, okay. Mr. Newton said, basically it had to do with the Planning Commission's budget, and I'll be very, very brief. Under the County's funding arrangements, monies come to the Planning Commission in I believe five different pots of money. Unfortunately, these monies are not interchangeable. If we cut in one, we can't take money from the other pots to make up any of that cut. For instance, the water conservation from the water and sewer budget cannot be used for the things that are funded through the SSD budget, the E-911 monies have to be spent on E-911 projects. They can't be used for other things. The solid waste budget monies cannot be used for anything except solid waste funding. The net effect is that overall there is a proposed 12% reduction in the MPC budget; however, that gets focused down because of these independent, almost independent, pots so that in the local planning program there is a 20% reduction, which is a significant reduction, and I would ask your consideration of perhaps relieving us of some of that impact because this is the program where the comprehensive plan is, the house numbering, the zoning, the subdivision, the Zoning Boards of Appeal, those kinds of activities which are strictly local and yet this is the area where all of the cut is coming from, and since 65% of that is salaries and it is our desire not to cut positions, there's very little room there. This also comes for the rent, things of that nature, the maintenance of buildings, et cetera.

Commissioner Murray said, a couple of things I think —, Russ [Abolt], you had mentioned the City and us working together and those type things, and I can agree with that and I think we need to work together all we can, but several months ago, at the request of, I guess, then-Chairman Ron Kolman of MPC, I went to a workshop at the City Council meeting. That workshop, mainly because the Commission felt very strong that the managers, City Manager and County Manager, should not be serving on MPC. Those positions were created mainly because of the County to begin with because we felt like elected officials should not be serving on the MPC but we still needed someone there. We do have people there because we have that still work, they still gather information from them, but the City of Savannah didn't even want to hear that. They are very adamant that their manager serve on MPC. I think that a lot of people forget where the votes are. The votes to either approve or disapprove a zoning issue or some of the other issues that come back lie either with the City of Savannah

City Council or the Chatham County Commissioners, not with the MPC Board. They only make recommendations to us, and from that standpoint I still feel like that the City is not really trying to work with us on this thing. So with that I don't have a problem of still looking at maybe doing it in-house, and I think we need to stay there. I don't think we can just take money out now and say that's what we're going to do because we don't know all the ramifications with that. Milton [Newton], there was a —, did Milton [Newton] leave? Commissioner Price said, he's right there. Commissioner Murray said, oh. Out of the different areas that cuts are being, I know you have a staff and I know you have certain jobs that each one of these staff members are supposed to do, and I'm sure you have job descriptions for each one of them, so I would think that everyone is working within that job description. The other thing, and I think not just for MPC, but county-wide with all County employees, I think we need to take a look at the vehicles that we have and what are those vehicles used for, what is the need for it, and the justification for a County employee, whether it's MPC or whether it's County, to take those vehicles and use them, especially going back and forth from home, and what is in their job description that says they have to have a County vehicle to do their job or an MPC vehicle, whether you call it County or City. I don't know how y'all call y'all's and how they're determined, but I think we need to look at that, Russ [Abolt], county-wide, not just with MPC. I know that we have a policy that we have with the County that the County police do drive theirs. There's a reason for that, and if there's a need for a department head or someone to have one to go back and forth to home, then fine, but my other question with that is if we're doing that, is that a report be given to the IRS for personal mileage, and those type things being done, because I have to do that with my vehicle. Mr. Newton said, yes, we do that also. Commissioner Murray said, it's not a County vehicle. Mr. Newton said, we do that. It's reported as income. I might add that —. Commissioner Murray asked, so that shows on the W-2 Forms that go out? Mr. Newton said, yes it does. Commissioner Murray said, okay. Mr. Newton said, we identified since the question had been raised, we went back and took a look at what we have, and basically of the five vehicles that are available, if we were to, say, cut that to three vehicles and not allow people to drive them home, we would save about \$5,000 a year. Commissioner Murray said, well, I guess my question really is: What is the benefit? If there's a need for it, whether it's with MPC or some other County department, then fine, but if that need is not there and it can't be justified, then we shouldn't be doing it because we've got gasoline costs, we've got wear and tear on the vehicles, and a lot of other things that go into it. So that needs to be looked at across the board.

Commissioner Rivers said, call the question, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Hair said, I have a call for the question. All right, the motion is to take \$250,000 from MPC and to put it in the library budget. All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. Commissioners Saussy and Odell voted in favor of the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Rivers, Jackel, Murray, Price, DeLoach and Thomas voted in opposition. The motion failed by a vote of seven to two. Chairman Hair said, the motion fails.

Commissioner Jackel said, Mr. Chairman, I would like to —, I don't think a motion is quite what I wanted to do, but I want —, I can't find any money for the library. Now I stated when we started this thing that I'm very frustrated about where we are in our budget. I would like to recommend to the Commission that if any money becomes available that the library be one of our top priorities, if not our number one priority for any funds that we can in the future pinpoint any funds or if any of the —. Commissioner Rivers said, well, SAGIS already got one step on that. Commissioner Jackel said, well, I want the library to be next is what I'm pointing out, and I don't think it takes a motion, but that's —. Chairman Hair said, that's correct, it does not.

Commissioner DeLoach said, there's two things I brought up earlier, at the Weightlifting Center the problem with the 50¢ door charge type setup. I still want to bring that back up so we can get clarification on that for those folks that are working that program. If you want Mike [Cohen] to speak on it he can, but the issue is it's very difficult for them to control the amount of monies in and out and the people in and out, and they would like some kind of —, any other form other than this door charge to try to control that thing, and if they've got suggestions I'd like to hear them.

Commissioner Saussy said, I think we can do that —. Chairman Hair said, we —, go ahead, Commissioner Saussy. Commissioner Saussy said, I think we can do that by instead of a door charge, we could have a —. Commissioner Price said, membership. Commissioner Saussy said, membership, either monthly, quarterly or annual payments.

Chairman Hair said, I think that's a good idea and I would suggest the best way to handle that is for Michael [Cohen] to get with the staff. I really don't think this is something that we need to take Commission time for, but it's a good point, Commissioner DeLoach. I'm glad you brought it up.

Commissioner DeLoach said, there's one other —. Chairman Hair said, okay. Commissioner DeLoach asked, can I ask one other question for Chief Sprague? Chairman Hair said, certainly. Commissioner DeLoach said, Chief Sprague —. Chairman Hair said, Chief, would you come forward please. Commissioner DeLoach said, I just wanted to —, I just want to clarify a lot of stuff that's been said as far as the EMS and the other people that supply services and all. If MedStar or Mercy left today, would we be able to handle all the emergency calls that we've got now? Chief Sprague asked, if both of them went out, sir? Commissioner DeLoach said, yes. Chief Sprague said, no sir, not to my knowledge. Commissioner DeLoach said, okay, I was just curious. The reason I made that point was because back in 1991, as stated earlier, I think it —, a lot of times when we're doing the budget up here and we get requests from Chief Sprague, Chief St. Lawrence when he was Chief, asking to expand the EMS service because of the growth, a lot of times we don't necessarily vote in favor of that, and what that ends up doing is bottlenecking the EMS to where they can't expand into the areas they need to expand into, and that is the reason you have the additional private sector people moving into some areas. Granted, they move in and then they might take the better areas, but I think a lot of times it's more our failure to plan for the future than it is a direct reflection on the competition and all that. It's more filling in a void that we left there rather than necessarily a competition thing, and I think that's something we need to remember. Once we do this study and we all agree this is what we need to do, we need to be able to plan in the future to dedicate a certain amount of money for this EMS proposal long term.

Chairman Hair said, I agree, I totally agree. Thank you. Thank you, Chief.

Commissioner Saussy said, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say a few words about that too. There's been some erroneous information that has come to us as far as the EMS and what Dr. Robert Smith said, and I think that needs to be clarified.

Chairman Hair asked, would you like to clarify it? Commissioner Saussy said, well, the thing that came to us that states, and this was in the paper also, that Chatham County would be at the mercy of the two for-profit ambulance services in a matter of disaster. It says, Dr. Robert Smith of Chatham Emergency Management has some real concerns about the willingness and ability of the two private services to handle these types of situations. Further, he cited two hurricane scares we have had in which the private ambulance services were unable to participate in preparation for the storms. I think the facts need to be clarified on that, and if Dr. Smith —. Chairman Hair said, Dr. Smith's here, is he here? Commissioner Saussy said, he was. Chairman Hair said, could we get Dr. Smith to respond to all of us? I'd like to know that myself. Commissioner Saussy said, yes, because he —, it's my understanding that this is not what he said, and that's what was printed into the paper and also in the [inaudible]. Chairman Hair said, if we can't find him now, we can have him —, could you get that to us in writing? Mr. Abolt said, we're trying to run him down.

Commissioner Murray said, [inaudible] I saw on TV last night, I'd just like a clarification. The weightlifting equipment at the Weightlifting Center, who does that belong to? Mr. Abolt said, I'm asking Mr. Lynch to come forward. Some of the —, Chairman Hair said, the bulk of it is Team Savannah. Mr. Abolt said, the bulk is Team Savannah plus they received, I think, at least two grants from the Governor's discretionary funds to buy them, but I'm assuming the ownership there still remains within Team Savannah. I don't think that the building —. Commissioner Murray said, well, that's fine then, but I guess my next follow-up on that is how can we charge members of Team Savannah that own the equipment to go in and work out with it? Mr. Abolt said, it's our facility, it's a public facility. You're charging admission to a public facility. It's like if, you know —. Chairman Hair said, I think you raised a good point, Commissioner Murray. I think that's something that can be worked out though when we're talking about membership fees as to —. Commissioner Murray asked, what if they decide to take their equipment and go home what are we going to do? Chairman Hair said, we'll just have to —. Commissioner DeLoach said, we'll have a big [inaudible]. Chairman Hair said, I think it's a good point. They are willing to discuss, and I've met with Team Savannah officials as late as this week, and they're willing to talk about that and maybe in this discussion between Team Savannah and Russ [Abolt] determining the membership fee, I think that needs to be address are you going to charge a Team Savannah person exactly what you charge everybody else and that sort of thing. I think it has to be worked out and, for example, if they do put the equipment in there and they do maintain the equipment, I think that has to be factored into any decision about how much you charge, and I think that's the kind of discussion, Russ [Abolt], that y'all need to —. Commissioner Murray said, I understand that and I agree too that we should be able to charge a small fee to go in there. We're going to charge the swimming pool and the rest of the facilities, and we have to for the maintenance part of it.

Commissioner Saussy said, one other point, and I need to —, this is a clarification. I'm trying to find money for the library still. Under the indigent health care we supposedly have a reduction in the amount. Mr. Abolt said, yes sir. Commissioner Saussy asked, is that —? Mr. Abolt said, you spent that earlier this year.

Chairman Hair said, okay, Mrs. Whitaker —. Commissioner Price said, you've got Robert Smith. Chairman Hair said, I tell you what, Hilda [Whitaker], would you wait just a second? Mrs. Whitaker said, certainly. Chairman Hair said, I apologize. Dr. Smith, Commissioner Saussy wanted some clarification of the remarks that were attributed to you in the paper about the private ambulance services not responding in times of disaster, and it was his understanding that you didn't say that. Could you clarify what you actually said? Dr. Smith said, that is correct. The letter that I've seen that was attributed to me stated that they were unwilling and unable. I talked to the person that authored that letter before he sent it out and I told him that that was not true. There is not a matter of them being unwilling at all. That would be disservice to say that they are, but they have proven to be unable last year because of their own business commitments. That's all I said, and I also didn't use the term scare. Scare and panic is [sic] not part of my vocabulary. I think it would be a disservice to Memorial, Candler, St. Joe, MedStar and Mercy to say that they have not been trying. That would be a disservice. Chairman Hair said, thank you. We just needed that clarified. Thank you, Dr. Smith. Okay, now Mrs. Whitaker. Briefly.

Mrs. Hilda Whitaker said, yes, and you always say that to me. Chairman Hair said, well I know, but I want to remind you. Mrs. Whitaker said, well, the note I passed, Mr. Chairman, to you, I would like for you to specifically ask the Board to have an opinion of whether they want any of the money that's left in the MPC budget to go to the Adopt-A-Stream budget. I did give up my sandwich, I took my own lunch at the last meeting, as I promised on the 5th, but you can either fund approximately \$23,000 as the City has so we can keep the \$67,000 grant in hand, or you can chalk --, choke up, is what you'll have to do, \$100,000 to get it done because it's a federally required program of water quality that's required for us to do. So you can state that you want that money to be included specifically in MPC's work program —. Chairman Hair said, that money is already in the budget for MPC. Mrs. Whitaker said, I don't know whether it is or not. Somebody else will have to answer that question. I think it's been taken out. Chairman Hair asked, is Milton Newton here? Mrs. Whitaker said, I think it's been taken out, and so the only way we get to keep the \$67,000 is if you should say you want \$23,000 of whatever money is left to be used for that. Chairman Hair said, okay, Milton [Newton], will you address that. Thank you, Mrs. Whitaker. That's about as brief as you've ever been. Mrs. Whitaker said, well [inaudible]. Chairman Hair said, only because I reminded you to be brief.

Mr. Newton said, Mr. Chairman, a little background. It was in the cut that the County Manager made. We advised him of the problem with the grant and he said that he had no problem —, I think I'm not putting words in his mouth, he had no problem if we used the money for that purpose, but took it from somewhere else in the budget, and that's why we have the 20% reduction in the local budget. That's what's causing us so much problems because we have to take —, in order to get the \$112,000 to fund that program, we have to take the \$23,000 —. Chairman Hair asked, so you're taking \$23,000 match as part of your cut? Mr. Newton said, yes. Chairman Hair said, so you're going to lose \$67,000? Mr. Newton said, unless we take it out of the local budget, which makes a reduction of 20% in the local program. Chairman Hair said, so we're going to lose \$67,000 because you can't find \$23,000? Commissioner DeLoach said, no, he did that. Commissioner Murray said, no, he said he's found it, I think. Chairman Hair asked, you found the \$23,000? Commissioner DeLoach said, he took it out of —. Mr. Newton said, we really haven't found it though, that's my problem. Chairman Hair said, you have not found it. Mr. Newton said, we can find the money, we have the money if we take 20% —. Chairman Hair asked, is that something you can handle in your budget so that we don't lose this grant?

Commissioner DeLoach said, let me make a motion that we make sure we cover Adopt-A-Stream. Chairman Hair said, I think that's a good idea. Mrs. Whitaker said, thank you very much. Chairman Hair said, you make a motion. Commissioner

DeLoach said, so moved. Commissioner Thomas said, second. Chairman Hair said, all right, we have a motion and a second that Adopt-A-Stream would be covered, the grant —, \$23,000, so that we will qualify for the \$67,000. All those —, Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, I think that's fine and I'll support the motion, but I didn't think we were telling you items to cut out of your budget. I thought we were just cutting dollars out of this budget and y'all use those funds wherever you thought they were necessary to use. Mr. Newton said, well, the information we received was line item, but it was —, when we explained the problem, we were told we could take the money somewhere else. Chairman Hair said, that's correct. Commissioner Murray asked, did we as a Commission do a line item? Mr. Abolt said, no. Chairman Hair said, no. Commissioner Murray said, I didn't think so.

Chairman Hair said, okay, we have a motion and a second on the floor. All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner Rivers was not present when this vote was taken.] Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

Chairman Hair said, one final thing I need to do is I need to read into the budget that has been passed, I need to read for the record. I'm just going to read the major funds into the record. This was a request that Commissioner Jackel made, and I think it's a good request. The budget that has been approved for 1998, the General Fund M&O, the revenues and appropriations are \$88,529,080 [sic], the Special Service District is \$16,453,430, the Chatham Area Transit Authority is \$8,838,900 [sic], and that brings the total budget to \$320,471,110 [sic], and I would remind Mr. Sechler and our friends from the press that this \$321 million budget is \$18 million lower than last year. Last year's budget was \$339 million, this budget that was passed today is \$321 million, which is a substantial reduction, and I would hope my fellow people in my fellow governments would recognize that. How many governments have actually lowered their budgets from '97 to '98? We lowered ours by \$18 million. Commissioner DeLoach said, this is a duck budget though, remember that. This is the duck budget.

[NOTE: Taking into consideration adjustments made to the budget at this meeting, the following are the correct amounts approved for the 1998 budget: General Fund M&O, \$88,803,580; Special Service District, \$16,453,430; Chatham Area Transit Authority, \$8,643,230. The total 1998 budget is \$320,557,840.]

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

1. Commissioner Odell moved to adopt the 1998 budget proposal presented in Option 8, with modifications to follow. Commissioners Rivers and Thomas seconded the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Odell, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Murray and DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of seven to two.
2. Commissioner Murray moved to put total funding for EMS back in the budget for 1998 with funds to be taken out of funds budgeted for SAGIS, that if funds are available this year, to replace the funds in the SAGIS account, and that an independent study be conducted as to the feasibility of maintaining EMS and that a recommendation be brought back to the Commission during the first part of this year for their deliberation and determination in establishing the 1999 budget. Commissioner Odell seconded the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Murray, Odell, DeLoach and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Price voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of eight to one.
3. Commissioner Odell moved to take \$250,000 from funds budgeted for MPC and put that in the amount budgeted for the Library. Commissioners Saussy seconded the motion. Commissioner Saussy and Odell voted in favor of the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Rivers, Jackel, Murray, Price, DeLoach and Thomas voted in opposition. The motion failed by a vote of seven to two.
4. Commissioner DeLoach moved that any funds left in the MPC budget go to cover the match for the Adopt-A-Stream Project. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion and it carried unanimously [NOTE: Commissioner Rivers was not present when this vote was taken.]

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2. REQUEST FROM MR. STUART B. MEISENZAHN, OWNER, FOR A FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE VARIANCE FOR 9 WINDWALK LANE, LOT 2148, THE LANDINGS. STAFF RECOMMENDS DENIAL. [DISTRICT 4.]

Mr. Abolt said, Mr. Chairman, I'll ask the County Engineer to make the initial presentation. Mr. Al Bungard said, this is one of those cases where we have a set of conditions that you've handled before. We have the usual question that Commissioner Murray asks is how many cases have we had like this. We've had seven since 1992 where, in accordance with the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, we have to make a denial recommendation; however, the Board has the prerogative of, as I've addressed. I can review the info sheet if you would like me to, but it's —, you have the authority to grant the variance so that the builder and owner can continue to do what he would like to do in the area.

Commissioner Murray said, we met with the Engineering Department, Russ [Abolt], with the attorney and also with the individual and his architect to go over this, and what had happened, back in —, and we've got the letters in the agenda book, on April 15th of '96 a letter was sent stating that this was located in flood zone AE. So the individual purchased the property based on that because all the other homes on that same street, if I'm not mistaken, were the same. So he went ahead and

bought the property, and then when he went to get permitting to go ahead and start, on January 8th they got another letter stating that it was not —, it was flood zone VE, which makes quite a bit of difference. Now the way the individual has already redesigned the house, the home would be built high enough to be above the flood level anyway. It was have the knock-out walls in it. If I'm not mistaken and if I say something different, correct me. Mr. Bungard said, yes sir. Commissioner Murray said, but Engineering has no choice except to recommend denial on it and not on those other seven we've approved over the last, I guess, eight or nine years. We do have the authority to override that and to grant that variance. The individual has no problem with it other than the other homes in that same area are on the AE zone rather than the VE zone. The long term insurance premium is where he would really have a problem with it, and I would just like to make a recommendation right now, a motion, that we grant that variance on the zoning. Commissioner Price said, second.

Chairman Hair said, I have a motion and a second. Any further discussion?

Commissioner Jackel asked, what would be the difference in cost, do we have any idea? Commissioner Murray said, the difference in cost was [inaudible], he's going to have a difference in cost —, the homes will cost more, a bit more to build, to build that way, and he already had it redesigned and that's the way it will be built where it's above the flood level and will have the knock-out walls. I thought Mr. deLevis —, yes, he's here. He could probably answer some of those questions for you also.

Mr. Abolt said, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of the record, and as Commissioner Murray alluded to, you've done this only seven times before, for building a document for FEMA, the deliberation you've been through, I would encourage you to have the applicant give testimony that can be in the record.

Chairman Hair asked, would you like to come forward and give a brief testimony? Commissioner DeLoach said, he emphasized brief. Chairman Hair said, very brief testimony. Commissioner Saussy said, he knows how to do that.

Mr. Paul deLevis asked, what is your question, sir? Commissioner Jackel said, you want approval to have a variance and one of the questions said was that if you're not granted a variance it will increase your insurance cost. I think your insurance company would make their own determination whether we grant a variance or not, so I'm not understanding why it would increase your insurance. Mr. deLevis said, well, presently the lot in question on all the County flood zone maps, as Mr. Bungard will testify, as well as the insurance flood map, show this lot clearly in an AE-15 zone, not a VE zone. So, we've had in mind the difference in an AE policy and a VE insurance policy is quite substantial over a period of time. Now, if the insurance companies look at the map, the FEMA flood maps, then the likelihood that they would put this in a AE-15 looking strictly at the map would be their determination.

Commissioner Jackel said, what we do has nothing to do with their determination. Mr. deLevis said, no sir. Commissioner Jackel said, they're going to make their own determination. Mr. deLevis said, yes sir. Commissioner Jackel said, we can call it black and they can say it's white. Mr. deLevis said, yes sir. Commissioner Jackel said, okay, so that's not in the equation. So if the insurance is not a factor and they're going to make their own determination, why should we grant the variance? Mr. deLevis said, we were requested [sic] that this was the process. Commissioner Jackel asked, do you understand what I'm saying? Mr. deLevis said, I understand what you're saying. Commissioner Jackel asked, why should we then grant the —, if part of the reason was it was going to make a difference in insurance and now we know that it's not going to make any difference, why should we grant the variance? Mr. deLevis said, well, Commissioner Jackel, we don't know that for a fact. I mean, I'm not an insurance agent so I can't —. Commissioner Jackel said, well, I've had enough experience with you to tell you they make their own determination. Mr. deLevis said, yes sir. Commissioner Jackel said, I mean, Frank [Murray] can say I'm in excellent health, but they're going to want to see the medical reports —. Commissioner Murray said, I'd never say that about you, Martin [Jackel]. I really don't know. [Unintelligible comments were made when several Commissioners began speaking at one time.] Commissioner Jackel said, he would also say he doesn't know, but they would make their own determination before they issue a policy, so that leads us back to the question that if the insurance is —, if we don't know what's going to happen there, why should we grant this variance?

Commissioner Murray said, well, I think one of the reasons is if we put it down on paper that we're going to consider it as a flood zone VE, then it's going to be obvious, and we do have the authority to —. Commissioner Rivers asked, why did we do that? Why did we change it to a VE? Mr. Bungard said, the other factor in here is the —, how it has to be built. Under the one zone it's a wave action zone and it has to do with the elevations. If it's no land between that and the wave action, there have to be breakaway walls. The other thing you're approving here is allowing to build it with a certain finish floor but without breakaway walls. Whether there's a differential in the cost of construction, I don't know. I haven't investigated that, but that's really what you're approving here then: he can build a house without breakaway walls that are required if we say it must be a VE zone. Commissioner Murray said, yes, but he's already said that they're going to put the break-out walls in. I mean, he's already going to do that. Is that correct?

Mr. deLevis said, the owner has agreed that they would do that. The flood plain of the home is well above any VE requirement or AE requirement, so the flood plain —. Commissioner Jackel said, it's just that it's the first one. Mr. deLevis said, excuse me. Commissioner Jackel said, it's just the first one that would receive the brunt —. Mr. deLevis said, well, that's a judgment call with all the topography information we have provided. This strictly is a judgment call, as those letters state. One said out of the Engineer's office it was and one said it wasn't. It is a judgment call, and everyone else on that street has AE certification, not VE certification.

Commissioner Jackel said, Al [Bungard], I'm not —, I'm still a little bit confused now. What we're —, we're talking about granting a variance or we're deciding which classification it should be? Mr. Bungard said, no, because there I would disagree. It's not a judgment call. I agree that the maps show that there's a line based on elevations of 14 to 15, where we expect the high water elevation to be. Those lines provided by FEMA are approximate. Okay, we were provided additional information, for whatever reason, to do a redetermination with topography. Okay, we looked at the topography, or Mr. Grevemberg did, and said that based on the elevations of land between that house and the water that can come over the marsh, there's

enough to have the wave action, and that's the FEMA criteria. We're getting into the technical stuff here, and that is an engineering decision. Given that information, you know, that's our call. I maintain that's not judgmental. It is a site specific determination. There happens to be a gap between the golf course and the marsh land there that would allow the wave to come through in that direction.

Chairman Hair asked, Mr. Hart, can you clarify this? Mr. Hart said, yes, basically what you've got is you've got a situation where FEMA set forth a set of regulations and did flood maps based on their best estimate at that time. Over a period of time those flood maps are revised. Okay, in this particular case I don't know whether there was a revision or not, but if you recall five or six or seven years ago there was a major revision to the flood maps and changes in the regulations that required exterior things like air conditioning units to be mounted at finished floor elevations, okay. The County the standpoint under the federal law, they are mandated to follow FEMA regulations. If they do not follow the FEMA regulations and do not do a good job documenting why they're granting variances, then FEMA can declare the County to be ineligible for flood insurance. If that happens, banks can't loan money under any federal insured plan, and that was sort of the clamp down provision the federal government put in to make sure people comply with this. In this particular case, this gentleman has a house that when you go out there —, just as Mr. Bungard has said, and survey it, there's an open space in between that. The finished floor elevation is at 14 feet, which meets the regs, but since there is no barriers between the wave action, they now require that the underneath structure no longer be habitable, i. e. electrical appliances and things such as that in it, in other words a finished basement, for example, and that there be blow-out breakaway walls so that if there were a flood it would break that out and not destroy the rest of the house. Obviously, in most cases, that would cost more money to build. At the Islands —, at The Landings and certain parts of Wilmington Island, most of the new construction has to be done with breakaway walls. There is a provision in the law that allows y'all, as Commissioners, upon specific findings and undue hardship and as set forth in Mr. Bungard's information there, to allow a variance of that. The definition of undue hardship does not necessarily equate to the single factor of economics arising in construction. Most of the things that you look at in those situations of the application of the particular ordinance to that particular lot, creates an undue hardship by the design factor or the house can't be built or there's no access to the property, but it is within y'all's discretion if you choose to find the specific finding of undue hardship. Now from the County Manager's standpoint, if FEMA does come in and look at our granting of variances, they're going to look to see whether we're granting variances for true undue hardship or because people come up and ask for them, but that's totally within your discretion at this point. Yes, sir.

Chairman Hair said, okay, Commissioner Rivers is next, then Commissioner Odell and then I'd like to --.

Commissioner Rivers said, I just want to get a clarification on why was it changed from an AE to a VE, and I understand that this was after he had bought the property and the designation was not there, the designation was AE. Mr. Bungard said, I'll try to answer. Mr. Grevemberg's here, but at some point there was a request for a determination, and as I said before, we first look at those FEMA maps, and they're approximate. They're kind of nice, real straight lines along the coast, and it was in there, but for some reason unknown to me we have additional information when asked to relook it, and when Mr. Grevemberg did that, some other gentlemen did it before my time, you know, came —, looked at the —. Commissioner Price asked, who asked? Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Rivers has the floor. Commissioner Price said, I'm sorry. Commissioner Rivers said, I'll allow that question because I was going to ask that question too. Commissioner Price said, I'm sorry. Just a simple question. Vince [Grevemberg], can you tell us who made that request to change it? Mr. Grevemberg asked, the second request? There were two requests from the architect to look at that lot and see what flood zone it was in. The second time it came in I had additional information on the elevation of the property that led me to the conclusion that it was really in a VE zone. The first time we did the determination we did not have that information. Commissioner Price asked, but where did it come from? Where did the request to take another look at it come from? Mr. Grevemberg said, it came from Mr. deLevis. Commissioner Price said, I'm sorry. Mr. Grevemberg said, it came from Paul deLevis, the architect. Commissioner Price said, okay, but you said that —, I understood Joe's [Rivers] question to mean that it had happened before, his request, that there was a request to change it at one point before that. Mr. Grevemberg said, the only difference between the two times —. Commissioner Price asked, is that what I understood you to say? Commissioner Rivers said, well, when the guy bought the property it was in a AE zone, okay. Commissioner Price said, okay. Commissioner Rivers said, according to the flood maps, and that he bought it based on that. Am I correct? Commissioner Price said, that's correct. Commissioner Rivers said, and then the architect came back with a request for a determination of whether it was actually AE, or did you —, what made you request that?

Mr. deLevis said, about every six months we purge our files and bring everything up to date. Basically, our clerical staff did not see the original letter, flood letter, we request on all building, and requested another one, as well as about 20 other ones in that letter that went to Mr. Grevemberg. There was about —, I don't know exactly how many, but there were many, many, many ones, so we normally go through, if we don't have a flood letter because it's fallen through the cracks, we will request a flood letter if we can't find one in the file. So there was no reason to relook at it, but —, because we didn't go site specific. Usually, in the past, what we will do if there is a request from the County Engineer's department, or they will give us a flood letter for our request. If we have a question that's site specific, we will send back to the Engineer's Department, a full topography of that property and ask for a re-request, but it will be site specific. It won't be in a whole request of, you know, 10 or 15 or 20 requests. So that's what happened with the second request. It was a clerical situation that they just asked for it again, and we now have an AE and VE. We have designed to the worst case scenario.

Commissioner Odell said, just a couple of questions. Al [Bungard], we recommend denial, is that true? Mr. Bungard said, yes because there are three criteria that normally are used to determine for issuing variances: good and sufficient cause, determination that failure to grant would result in exceptional hardship, and then the variations in flood heights and finished floor height, public safety, that sort of thing. Commissioner Odell said, I guess what my concern is that they're uncertain as to the impact as far as your insurance premium that this would have, and FEMA frowns upon variance. It's not —, and you are going to do the breakaway walls anyway, according to the project, so my concern is it doesn't potentially financially benefit you all and the impact to us is that it might put us in a position where we might be [inaudible], so I'm not seeing the benefit in our overruling the staff's request that your request be denied. Do you follow what I'm saying? The staff recommends denial and you're going to do the regulations anyway for the building. Why would we grant the variance if we can't determine the cost impact to you, but we know that we may have a substantial cost as it relates to our being in good compliance with FEMA.

Mr. deLevis said, the only way the cost impact would be felt, there is some additional construction cost to the breakaway construction, which the owner has in his possession, and could build to the standard, okay, and is inclined to just to have that, but until an insurance company squarely puts that in an AE or VE zone, then the long term impact —, now if an insurance company would deem it in an AE or follow the flood map, then fine. If they follow the criterion set by the FEMA, the non-contour which was established, then there's some long term implications, not only for this particular piece of property, but a lot of other existing properties. So we don't know the long —, the only way we know the long term impact is if an insurance company sets it in a VE zone. Commissioner Jackel said, we've got nothing to do with that.

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner DeLoach and then Commissioner Price. Commissioner DeLoach said, that's okay. Chairman Hair asked, you're okay? Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Price.

Commissioner Price asked, what would have happened if, while it was zoned AE, had he applied for this without any further work or —, am I understanding this correct that it was —, when the property was purchased it was AE? Commissioner Murray said, that's why he purchased the property. Commissioner Price said, right, and then when he got to staff, the question was raised —, I mean, I don't —, I still have a hard time understanding which came first. Commissioner Rivers said, he got one letter and then he got another. Commissioner Price asked, and what would have happened had he gone ahead and applied for the zoning for it while it was still AE? You guys would have reviewed it anyway? Mr. Bungard said, no. Commissioner Price said, did he cause the problem —? Mr. Bungard said, we don't initiate reviews upon except upon request. Commissioner Price asked, could he have just gone forward without the question being asked and applied for it and gotten it? Chairman Hair said, yes. Mr. Bungard said, if they had not asked, we would not have reviewed it again. Commissioner Price said, well —. Chairman Hair said, it would have been approved. Mr. Bungard said, yes sir. Commissioner Price said, then is undue hardship then the fact that there is a difference of opinion between the County Engineer's staff and that it was already AE? Mr. Bungard said, that was not my understanding. Commissioner Price said, okay. Mr. Bungard said, I was told that if we stick with the sector of the nation that raised insurance rates, one issue; secondly, they did not intend to build a breakaway because of increased construction costs. Those were the two issues.

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Saussy then Commissioner Murray and then I would like to make a comment. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Saussy.

Commissioner Saussy said, all right, let me make sure I can understand this thing too. I mean, the AE was there to begin with, and that's FEMA's rating or is that ours? Mr. Bungard said, that's a general FEMA —. Commissioner Saussy said, okay, FEMA, and that's what they're going by right now, not what we say, right? Mr. Bungard said, they will come to us —, if there's a question, they will look at the topography like we do. Commissioner Saussy said, well, they may or may not quit. Mr. Bungard said, they may not.

Commissioner Murray said, yes, the reason that we're going through this process right now was after that meeting and during that meeting it was determined this would be the best way to go with it. The individual's written a letter, I don't know if y'all have read it, to the Commission on it. Before he bought the lot he asked for that. It was given then, the determination was it was an AE at the time. That's why he invested his money to purchase that lot. From what I understand from Mr. deLevis, and maybe it wasn't discussed in the meeting, but they do plan on putting in the pull-out walls, and it will be built above the flood elevation. Had it come back originally with a VE zoning, chances are he probably wouldn't have invested in that lot and would have found another lot to buy. As far as this affecting us on the FEMA, I doubt very seriously it is because we've done this only seven times in the past. Each time the staff has recommended against that. That's the job they have to do. They're doing their job right now, and I'm not questioning their job, but it's been determined both ways. It's on the map showing as AE. When the request went in again, evidently by accident because the girl that was doing this for Mr. deLevis did not see the original letter, and that's why she requested another reading on it, and then it came back as VE, which, you know, based on what Engineering saw, that's what they determined it to be. I just feel like it should get —, we should grant the variance to AE and leave it, and I'll make a motion to that effect —. Commissioner Saussy said, second. Commissioner Murray said, and if I —, Mr. Attorney, if you think we need to word it differently, if you will tell me how it needs to be worded. Mr. Hart said, you're going to have to make a specific finding that you deem it based on the fact that this is an undue hardship. Commissioner Murray said, I think it's an undue hardship that the man bought a lot based on one zoning and invested the funds —, I don't know what he paid for that lot, but I know it wasn't cheap, and then now we tell him he's got to do these other things. He's going to do those things anyway, but he would —. Commissioner Jackel said, I don't understand. Commissioner Murray said, I mean, he could just not build and try to sell the lot. If he wouldn't sell the lot, now that it's VE, then he wouldn't be able to get what he paid for that lot, I wouldn't think.

Chairman Hair said, all right, we have a motion and a second, and we have Commissioner DeLoach, but I would like to make one quick comment if I could, Commissioner DeLoach. I lean toward approving this variance for one simply reason. It seems to me that if the property owner bought it under a particular zoning at the time, legally, and then later the County staff changed that, I don't see that the property owner should have to bear the burden for that. Now I realize the County staff changed it only after a letter. I understand that, but he bought it in good faith, okay, with a particular zoning and then later the zoning was changed, and I don't think that's fair. And so, therefore, I would lean toward supporting this variance. Commissioner DeLoach and then Commissioner Jackel.

Commissioner DeLoach said, what I think we're doing here though is I think the County is taking on the responsibility of the architect. Now, granted, I'm sorry that it happened, but at this time if there's a question on the value of that lot, or if there's a question on the value of the building or additional cost, the person who has to bear the brunt of that should be the architect basically because he made the error. Now if we pass this thing, we're giving a variance to save an architect some money if this homeowner decides that he's responsible. If we don't —, if we go along with the denial, the only thing that's going to happen is the homeowner is going ahead and build just like he's already said, and he's going to go to the architect and say, based on your bonding I am looking for some return on the lot that originally was worth this value and now it's worth this value, and that's where I think the thing's going, and I think we're taking on the responsibility of the architect here because it was an error on his part. Innocent, I'm not questioning that, but in fact it was an error and it reduced the value of that man's

property based on an error on his part, and I think his insurance or him or whoever should pick up that difference, not the County.

Commissioner Jackel said, well, as I see this thing, he's going to comply with the VE requirements whether we approve it or not approve it, and then the way it can cost him more money is going to be a determination by the insurance company, and we can't —, no matter what we do, they'll make an independent determination. So, I don't see why we should grant a variance when the only thing that's going to be affected, he's going to build it the same way no matter what we do. It's what the insurance company's going to do, and we've got no control over that, nor does anyone else other than the insurance company.

Chairman Hair said, Mrs. Whitaker. Please be brief.

Mrs. Hilda Whitaker said, for the record, I want to remind you all about the —, most of you, about the gentleman on Dean Forest Road that had to take —, built a garage and had to take it down because he was in the flood plain. I promised him that I would remember. The second thing is, under the minimum requirements of the Comprehensive Plan, there is environmental planning that we are not appropriately doing, and we will not be a qualified government because we won't be able to get a check in that box in April of 1998. Thank you.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mrs. Whitaker. All right, we have a motion and a second. Is there any —, I think we've about discussed it to death. I think most of us know how we're going to vote —. Commissioner Murray, make one final comment.

Commissioner Murray said, let me just ask a question. If we deny this and they take these letters, two letters they've got, or the one letter, the first one he received when he purchased the land saying AE, what happens? Mr. Bungard said, I don't think I can answer that. Mr. Grevemberg asked, you mean if they take that letter to the insurance company? Commissioner Murray said, this is the letter he got when he bought the property. That's why he purchased the property, so I don't see this is the fault of the architect or the engineers involved, and I'm certainly not trying to fault the Engineering Department. Mr. Grevemberg said, well, if I understand your question, if they were to take that to the insurance company, I believe they would get graded as being in an AE zone.

Chairman Hair said, okay, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor of the motion vote yes, all those opposed vote no. Commissioner DeLoach said, the motion is deny? Commissioner Rivers said, to deny. Chairman Hair said, the motion is to —, is the motion to deny? The motion is to grant the —, yes, the motion is to grant. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Murray, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Rivers, Jackel, Odell and DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of five to four. Chairman Hair said, it's a tie vote. No, it's not a tie vote. Okay, the motion passes. Thank you.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Murray moved to approve the request from Mr. Stuart B. Meisenzahl, owner, for a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance variance for 9 Windwalk Lane, Lot 2148, The Landings, based on a hardship that the property was designated as "AE" when it was purchased and had it come back as "VE" he would not have purchased it. Commissioner Saussy seconded the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Murray, Price and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Rivers, Jackel, Odell and DeLoach voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of five to four.

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3. REQUEST BOARD APPROVAL TO WAIVE THE 90-DAY HIRING FREEZE AND AUTHORIZE HUMAN RESOURCES TO ADVERTISE POSITIONS THAT THE DEPARTMENT DEEMS MORE COST EFFICIENT TO FILL.

- ? **CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT - CLERICAL ASSISTANT II (ONE POSITION)**
- ? **JAIL - CLERICAL ASSISTANT III (ONE POSITION)**

Chairman Hair said, the Chair will entertain a motion. Commissioner Jackel said, so moved. Chairman Hair said, I have a motion. Do I have a second? Commissioner Price said, second. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor —, discussion. Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, you know, later on in this meeting we have budget deliberations coming up again, and the first part of this year, when this year started, this is on the agenda strictly for us to look at as a cost saving factor. Every time one has come up one has not been turned down this whole year, so we have not saved any resources by granting these. We've never even questioned any of them that have come up to my knowledge, and —. Chairman Hair said, I think a lot of them have been questioned. We have not denied any. I know a number of them have been questioned, but they have not denied the request. Commissioner Murray said, but it's in there to help us with the budget. It's only a 90-day hiring freeze and I really don't understand why we just rubber stamp each one that comes up, and I'm sorry, but I'm voting against it for those reasons.

Chairman Hair said, all those in favor vote yes —, Commissioner Price.

Commissioner Price said, I don't think we're necessarily rubber stamping. Commissioner Murray said, excuse me, we're pushing the green light, excuse me. Commissioner Price said, pushing the green light. This is the process that we established. It doesn't mean, and help me out if I'm wrong here, Russ [Abolt], it doesn't mean that we are varying from what we originally intended to do because we have to make sure that if this is done that it's done in a more cost efficient way than it would be otherwise. The way I read this is that if we don't go ahead and do it now, it's going to cost us more in the long run. Commissioner Murray asked, well, why do we even have to go through the process to have them on the agenda? Chairman

Hair said, because I'll tell you —. Commissioner Murray said, we haven't denied any of them. Chairman Hair said, well, we haven't denied them, Commissioner Murray, but we have —, I remember on repeated occasions we've had department heads stand in that well and explain the justification for it, and once we got justification we voted for them. I disagree that we are rubber stamping them. We certainly have not disapproved any, but we certainly have questioned a number of them and we've had a number of department heads justify them. Commissioner Murray said, until we address it a little differently than we're addressing it, I will continue to vote no on every one of them.

Chairman Hair said, okay. All those in favor vote yes, all those opposed vote no. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Odell, Price, DeLoach and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Murray voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of eight to one. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Jackel moved to approve the request to waive the 90-day hiring freeze and authorize Human Resources to advertise the following positions: Clerk of Superior Court - Clerical Assistant II (one position), and Jail - Clerical Assistant III (one position). Commissioner Price seconded the motion. Chairman Hair and Commissioners Saussy, Rivers, Jackel, Odell, Price, DeLoach and Thomas voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Murray voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of eight to one.

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XI. ACTION CALENDAR

(The Board can entertain one motion to adopt the below-listed calendar. Such motion would mean adoption of staff's recommendation. Any Board Member may choose to pull an item from the calendar and it would be considered separately.)

Chairman Hair said, that takes us to the Action Calendar, and Commissioner Price wants to pull 7-J. Anybody else want to pull any items? Commissioner Jackel said, yes —. Chairman Hair said, I'm surprised. Commissioner Jackel said, I want J —. Chairman Hair said, we've already got J pulled. Commissioner Jackel said, I —. Chairman Hair said, I. Commissioner Jackel said, and —, that's it. Chairman Hair said, J and I. Anybody else want to pull anything? All right, the Chair will entertain a motion to approve the balance of the Action Calendar. Commissioner Price said, so moved. Commissioner Thomas said, so moved. Commissioner Price said, second. Chairman Hair said, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.] Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

NOTE: See Item XI-7 for discussion on Items 7-I and 7-J.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Thomas moved that the Action Calendar be approved in its entirety with the exception of Items 7-I and 7J. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

[NOTE: ACTION OF THE BOARD IS SHOWN ON EACH ITEM AS THOUGH AN INDIVIDUAL MOTION WAS MADE THEREON.]

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1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON DECEMBER 19, 1998, AS MAILED.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on December 19, 1998, as mailed. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

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2. REQUEST FROM EAGLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP OF SAVANNAH, INC., DEVELOPER, TO RECORD THE SUBDIVISION PLAT, ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL GUARANTEE AND RECOMBINE THE STREETLIGHTING ASSESSMENT DISTRICT FOR BETZ CREEK, PHASE 4. [DISTRICT 4.]

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the request from Eagle Development Group of Savannah, Inc., developer, to record the subdivision plat, accept the financial guarantee and recombine the Streetlighting Assessment District for Betz Creek, Phase 4. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken]

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3. REQUEST FROM EAGLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP OF SAVANNAH, INC., DEVELOPER, TO RECORD THE SUBDIVISION PLAT, ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL GUARANTEE AND RECOMBINE THE STREETLIGHTING ASSESSMENT DISTRICT FOR LAUREL GREEN SUBDIVISION, PHASE 3. [DISTRICT 7.]

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the request from Eagle Development Group of Savannah, Inc., developer, to record the subdivision plat, accept the financial guarantee and recombine the Streetlighting Assessment District for Laurel Green Subdivision, Phase 3. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

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4. REQUEST BOARD CONFIRM CHATHAM COUNTY AS LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPONSOR ON BEHALF OF A GRANT UNDER THE GEORGIA COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR CLEAN COAST, INC.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the request to confirm Chatham County as local government sponsor on behalf of a grant under the Georgia Coastal Management Program for Clean Coast, Inc. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

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5. REQUEST FOR NEW BEER AND WINE RETAIL LICENSE FOR 1998. PETITIONER: MCKENZIE P. ROBERTS, AGENT FOR BOARDMAN PETROLEUM, INC., D/B/A SMILE GAS #85, LOCATED AT 5920 OGEECHEE ROAD. [DISTRICT 6.]

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the request of petitioner McKenzie P. Roberts, agent for Boardman Petroleum, Inc., d/b/a Smile Gas #85, located at 5920 Ogeechee Road for a new beer and wine retail license for 1998. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

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6. REQUEST BOARD APPROVE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PROVIDE GRANT FUNDS TO OATLAND ISLAND EDUCATION CENTER TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-WIDE TRAINING PROGRAM TO REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE YARD AND GARDEN WASTES.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve an agreement between the County and the Board of Education to provide grant funds to Oatland Island Education Center to develop a community-wide training program to reduce, reuse and recycle yard and garden wastes. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

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7. REQUEST BOARD APPROVAL TO AWARD BIDS AS FOLLOWS:

ITEM	DEPT.	SOURCE	AMOUNT	FUNDING
A. Confirmation Change Order No. 2 for the excavation and fill of the marine bulkhead	Trade Center	R. B. Baker Construction	\$543,569	SPLOST (1993-1998) - Trade Center
B. Confirmation of emergency purchase of computer equipment and software migration services	Library	GE CITS	\$66,400	General Fund/M & O - Library
		AscomTimeplex	6,444	
		Dell Marketing	5,066	
		Entré	450	
		Sirsi	<u>17,400</u>	
			Total \$95,760	
C. Confirmation of emergency purchase of undercarriage repair parts for a CAT dozer	Fleet Operations	Carlton Company	\$11,503.52	Solid Waste Management Fund - Equipment Parts
D. Agreement to raise transmission power lines which cross DMCA 2A on Hutchinson Island	Engineering	SEPCO	\$776,542	General Fund/M & O - Harbor Maintenance (100% reimbursable by GDOT)

E. Confirmation of emergency purchase of personal computers and printers	Cooperative Extension Service	Entré Computers	\$9,207	General Fund/M & O - Cooperative Extension Service
F. Confirmation of emergency purchase of office furniture	Public Works	VIP Office Products, Hinesville	\$3,047.80	SSD - Public Works
G. Change Order No. 7 to contract for engineering services to design an off-shore "bird island" and for modifications of services for dike design of DCMA 2A & 12B	Engineering	GeoSyntec Consultants	\$75,320	General Fund/M & O Harbor Maintenance (100% reimbursable by GDOT)
H. Change Order No. 8 to contract for engineering services to revise the plans for Pooler Parkway Phase II into two separate projects, provide additional documentation for environmental assessment and other engineering/-environmental services	Engineering	EMC Engineering Services, Inc.	\$82,485	SPLOST (1993-1998) - Pooler Parkway Phase II
I. Confirmation of a study to identify economically viable alternatives for expanding Jail capacity, expediting the flow of detainees through and out of the Jail and alternatives for confinement of low-risk offenders	Jail	Nelson Meek and Associates (Carter Goble subsidiary)	Not to exceed \$10,000	General Fund/M & O - Jail
J. "No-cost" contract to install and operate an automated banking machine in the lobby of the Judicial Courthouse	Central Services	Wachovia Bank, N.A.	No cost to County	N/A
K. Contract to survey, engineer, design and provide construction monitoring of a 50-car additional parking lot for the RYDC. This is part of the <i>quid pro quo</i> with the State for conveying 1.67 acres of land to the County for construction of Juvenile Court.	SPLOST	Thomas and Hutton Engineering	\$6,100	SPLOST (1993-1998) - Juvenile Court

Items 7-A through 7-K, except 7-I and 7-J

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve Items 7-A through 7-K, except Items 7-I and 7-J. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

Item 7-I

Commissioner Jackel said, I want to reduce the capacity of the jail, not increase it. I've said it before, I'll say it again: We're paying some \$52/\$54 dollars a day for each prisoner that we have in the jail times 365 days a year, and it is driving us to the poor house, and we have to have a way of putting some sort of limit on it. I know it's not going to be easy to do, and I know there are a lot of problems associated with it. I just wish there were some way we can —, and I know a lot of it is beyond the Sheriff's control. The State won't pick up their prisoners, people that are revoked for technical violations of their parole or probation are sitting in there, and they're costing us money and the State doesn't pay for that. Increasing the amount worries me. I want to lower it.

Sheriff St. Lawrence said, I just —, well, just simply since we've moved into that facility our jail population has increased 10% to 15% a year, and all we're trying to do is plan ahead. We want to get something on the drawing board in the event we need it four or five years down the road. If you don't want us to do that, then fine, but we can't continue to increase 10% to 15%

population with the existing facility we have. If we can figure out a way to reduce it, I'd be glad to do that, but you hire more policemen, or every time you hire an officer, he makes more arrests. With Garden City's expansion, they're going to make more arrests. I mean, that's just the nature of the beast. I don't know what to do about it except accommodate them when they come in.

Commissioner Jackel said, when we originally agreed to build this jail, we talked about a 1,000-bed facility, and then Commissioner Silas said, well, he's figured out a way to do it and we could increase the beds to over 1,200, and so that was done. And then when we had the thing built, we were running 600-700 prisoners in there, people were saying, well, we built too big a prison, we've got too many empty beds and now we're slap full. There's no doubt in my mind that if we built another jail and increased our capacity to 2,000 or 2,500 or 3,000, we would still have that filled. We cannot let this drive us. We have to figure out how many prisoners we can house, how many we can afford to house, and say this is what we're going to do. We can't let just extraneous forces guide what we're doing, and that appears to me what we are doing.

Sheriff St. Lawrence said, the problem I have, Commissioner, is I can't —, I cannot stand at the door of the booking area and tell a police officer I'm not going to take the prisoners. Commissioner Jackel said, I understand that, but there are things we can do. When we made an agreement with the cities that we would take their prisoners and charge them anything, some of them never had a prisoner and now they've got two or three. We need to revisit policies like that. We need to work harder with the State when we're at the caps that they pick up the prisoners. I understand you're holding some 200 State prisoners right now that they could take out of our way. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, I think as of Monday morning we were holding a little better than 100 State prisoners awaiting transfer. Commissioner Jackel said, 100. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, but we have got a process we have to go through on —. Commissioner Jackel said, oh, I understand. I'm not blaming you, I'm stating these as facts. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, what we're trying to do here is get something on the drawing board four or five years down the road. The people that Mr. Lynch recommended do this and the people have the original plans for the original facility. We're just trying to get something on the drawing board. Nobody's saying that we're going to need it or we ain't going to need it, but I'm like you. We build a 2,000-bed jail, we may very well fill it up. Commissioner Price said, we'd fill it up. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, the officers are going to find somebody to arrest and bring them to us. I don't know what to do except to take them when they bring them.

Commissioner Jackel said, well, can we run possibly concurrent studies then, one how to increase the capacity and one at the same time to see what we could do to lower it? Mr. Lynch said, sir, part of the study does indeed —, is going to address that. It's going to look at how can you through-put them and get them out faster. It also takes a look at what can you do on the ones that you must take if they are low security risk to more economically accommodate them and what are the alternates to it. So I think you have seized quite accurately upon one aspect of it, which I think is legitimate, which is, if you need to, how can you expand capacity, but please recognize that right along with that in this is, one, how can you move the population faster, (b) what can you do to accommodate what you've got to take and lower costs and, three, what can you do to try to control that jail population. So all of those aspects are going to be looked at. Commissioner Jackel said, if we can do that, that would be wonderful and I'm all for that.

Chairman Hair said, okay, we have Commissioner Odell and then Commissioner Murray and Commissioner Rivers.

Commissioner Odell said, I'm going to support the proposal. I think you have absolutely no control after a judge sentencing someone or revoking probation or someone [inaudible] of being a suspect in a burglary case in Garden City. They don't have the holding space, they have to bring them on to you. I think you're obligated to take them. I never envisioned our having a limited space as far as jail. I think those people need to be in jail and we should accommodate them, and I think if you leave the courts no alternative as to such things like complying with probation, then it ties the hands of the court if the courts are unable to incarcerate them. That is the greatest deterrent and that is incarceration. I understand what Martin [Jackel] is saying, and that is that we continue to grow, and that's not a [inaudible] step. That is a whole group of other people. What we do need to do is we do need to look at the trends as far as input and make a determination five years down the road what size facility might we need and, concurrently, to look at our relationship with the State. If we can increase the reimbursement and the municipalities might need to chip in a little bit more than what they're doing. I support the study.

Sheriff St. Lawrence said, we're also looking at in there, Commissioner Odell, about having a public courtroom the public has access to where we wouldn't have to transport these people downtown. That will all be part of the study, but, you know, I don't know of anything to do. I'm planning ahead trying to get something on the drawing board whether we ever do it or not. You've got to get it on the drawing board to even consider it.

Commissioner Murray said, yes, I also support the study and I, you know, it's certainly not anyone's fault in here that I know of that the jail population continues to grow. As long as our population grows, as long as crime continues to grow, as long as the people are caught and going through the court system, they're going to be in jail. I was, I guess, fortunate or unfortunate enough yesterday to sit through Traffic Court for awhile and watch the process that took place in there. Go watch it some time if you haven't been in there to see what takes place. There were people that strictly because they did not want to hire an attorney were sentenced for X-amount of days, and the judges really don't have any choice on something like that. Do we let them out on the streets or do we make them pay the fines and do the things they need to be doing? And I think you see the trend from the Federal government and our State government also now on parole. No parole at all, you serve your total time. Some are putting it 85% of the time you have to serve as mandatory before you're eligible for parole, so I think you're going to see that population grow instead of shrink. And the reason that jail was built that we have today is because we had a Federal Court Order on the other jail. We had no place to put prisoners, and that's why we built that jail, and it was built originally knowing that we were going to have an option to put some other pods on. It was built with that type design so we could increase it as the need arose, and certainly if we can find ways to keep people from having to go to jail, fine, but if they're committing a crime, that's where they need to be.

Chairman Hair said, you were in Traffic Court as an observer, right? Commissioner Murray said, yes, I was. I was there with someone else. Thank you. Chairman Hair said, I just wanted that to go in the record.

Sheriff St. Lawrence said, I've got just one more comment. Commissioner Odell said that he was quite sure I had to take them. I can tell you what happened in Gwinnett County just a little better than a year ago when the District Attorney tried as hard as he could to get Jim Carsten indicted, the Sheriff up there, for refusing to take a prisoner, and I'm not going to get put in that position.

Commissioner Rivers asked, how long is that study, how long does that study take? Mr. Lynch said, in my discussion with Nelson Meeks, sir, he's anticipating that probably about eight weeks. Now, it's quite possible that if something really promising comes down the road, we're going to want to explore it further. Preliminary study is defined about eight weeks. Commissioner Rivers said, okay, what's the main thrust? Mr. Lynch said, main thrust I'd say, sir, and you've got to look at multiples. Number one, if you've got to expand your capacity —. Commissioner Rivers said, let's pause there. I don't think we have the capability right now of expanding or talking about expansion. I don't think that —, if we had to come up today and let's —, worst case scenario, if we were farming prisoners out like we did before and it was costing us more money, then we would come to an alternative of building something else. Mr. Lynch said, pardon me, sir. Let me, if I could, we use the word economically viable. What we're talking about really is such possibilities as looking at additional bunks in same physical capacity, what's your impact, what's your cost. We are not looking in this context at going out and building an additional pod tomorrow or next year, but we're looking at [inaudible] that if he's to meet a surge, can he do at minimum cost and with minimum adverse operational impacts.

Chairman Hair asked, Commissioner Rivers, do you have any more questions? Commissioner Rivers said, let me have those other parameters that you're talking about. Mr. Lynch said, all right, sir. The second one is how can you move your population through the jail system quicker than is happening today, and this really addresses in sort of a polite term how do you motivate the State to get its folks that they ought to be picked up, out, and frankly to build us a data base that is no prepared by us on what the impact of delays by the State are. That is another one. A third one, is what are some of the alternatives that may exist that again are economically viable to having people confined in the Detention Center, and here we're talking about everything from electronic monitoring, stuff like that. Again, get an outside slant on that. We aren't the ones who make that decision. That's get clearly made in your sentencing processes and things like that. I think I've left one out, Commissioner, but there are multiple approaches to it. It's not just capacity. It's trying to take a look at the broad area. Commissioner Jackel said, inventory control.

Commissioner DeLoach said, two things. I think Martin's [Jackel] point on this thing, with the State looking at, you know, everything starting up in Atlanta and everybody's talking about everything they're going to do as far as keeping everybody in prison and do away with parole and all this —. Commissioner Murray said, it's election year. Commissioner DeLoach said, the concern is that either if we add another 200 beds to the facility, with the State looking to hold everybody in parole, that all they'll do is start dragging their feet on pulling those folks out of the jail as far as our jail is concerned and use those jails because it's cheaper for them to keep them in our jail than it is in their own facilities. So what they'll end up doing, you add a bed in there, and you'll end up with a State prisoner in there. So we're not interested in housing State prisoners. We're interested in getting those out of there, and I think that's Martin's [Jackel] concern on all this thing is that you can add every layer you can add, if the State is going to go to this no parole and require us to hold those prisoners, then we're going to end up stacking them like cord wood out there, and we're not really that interested in doing that in Chatham County. We would rather them take their prisoners and do what they want to with them. I was wondering, Sheriff, you had talked earlier one time before concerning the municipalities. Originally, they used to have to pay us to house the prisoners. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, that's correct, until the Commissioners and municipalities got together and made the —. Commissioner DeLoach said, right, on that fifth penny and all that stuff. How much more has it cost you this year to house the additional prisoners from the municipalities as compared to last year before —, as compared to last year when they had to pay for their own? Sheriff St. Lawrence said, I gave you those six months numbers. Commissioner DeLoach said, right, I'm trying —, I can't remember and that's the reason —. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, unless Gary [Blake] remembers off the top of his head those six month numbers, Gary [Blake], we did for the Commission. Do you recall what it was? I think it —, it worked out to 70 more beds per day than what they were getting, but I can't remember the dollar amount. We are very actively trying to do something through the Legislature. The Georgia Sheriffs Association with the help of the County Commissioners Association of Georgia, trying to do something about this State prisoner problem, but you've got to work the other side of it too. We've never come out from under the court order. Now we can overcrowd and overcrowd and overcrowd until we're back over there before the Federal judge and he's telling us we've got to do something about it. We were quite successful the latter part of last year trying to reduce our deficit somewhat in order to keep our head above the water, but, you know, I have to take them. Like I said, I don't have a choice in that.

Commissioner DeLoach said, let me ask —, Gary [Blake], did you want to guess on what kind of numbers we're looking at as far as —. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, it was 70 beds a day, is what we figured, but I can't remember the dollar amount. Commissioner DeLoach said, yes. Mr. Blake said, Commissioner DeLoach, I'm not sure I know the dollar amount either. The 70 beds a day is what we figured, so —. Commissioner DeLoach said, 60 times —, \$60,000 for six months. Mr. Blake said, the dollar on that would be —, let's see, about \$45 a day per person times, what's that, 70 beds. Commissioner DeLoach said, say \$3,000 a day times 30 days is —. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, well, it actually costs us \$36 a day. If you divide our budget by the average population of inmates it's \$36-something a day, but if you add the cost for the amortization of the bonds and everything else, you get up to \$52/\$53 dollars, I think, right now. Commissioner DeLoach said, let's take \$45, just take an average. You're talking \$400,000 this year additional cost? Commissioner Jackel said, no, that's six months. Commissioner DeLoach said, six months. Commissioner Jackel said, so you're almost to \$100,000. Sheriff St. Lawrence said, I know I had those figures. I can send them to you, but I don't have them with me. Commissioner DeLoach said, I think that's an important issue we need to address based on this budget.

Sheriff St. Lawrence said, what's happening on that is that when they got them before and they had to pay the fee, very frankly, if I'd been the Sheriff in Garden City or Pooler, I'd have been concerned about getting them arraigned and turn hem over to the County so I wouldn't have to pay the per diem fee. Well, now that it's not that big a rush on to get that done, and that's where judicial costs come from.

Commissioner DeLoach said, I make a motion we go ahead and accept this. Commissioner Price said, second. Chairman Hair said, I have a motion and a second. Any further discussion. All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

Item 7-J

Commissioner Price said, George [Lynch]. Mr. Lynch said, yes sir. Commissioner Price asked, how are you doing? Mr. Lynch said, hi, sir. Commissioner Price said, question. Did we give all other banks in Chatham County the option of bidding on this? Mr. Lynch said, yes sir. Commissioner Price said, okay. Mr. Lynch said, SunTrust was one that comes to mind. We had, as I recall, a total of four came in. The selection was made largely on the basis of —, now I'm talking about selection to provide cash management, banking services to finance, and that was —. Commissioner Price asked, because we already deposit our County dollars in Wachovia and because of the —? Mr. Lynch said, yes. You all approved, I think, in November the selection of —, no, it was back in September —. Commissioner Price said, right. Mr. Lynch said, of Wachovia. Now Wachovia has come in and said, hey, we would also be happy to give you free of charge the cash machine in the Judicial Courthouse. Commissioner Price said, plus three other banks have done that. Mr. Lynch said, we did not go out, sir, and specifically inquire if they wanted to give it to us. Commissioner Price said, okay. Does Wachovia have any other government deposits in the County? Mr. Lynch said, I'm going to address that both to the Wachovia representative, who happens to be sitting in the back of the room.

Chairman Hair said, state your name for the record please, sir. Mr. Watson said, yes, it's Skip Watson, Vice President, Wachovia. We do have the Board of Education account. Commissioner Price said, okay. Do you —, back when I was on the Board of Education years ago, and I think it's still the case, and when they were Trust Company, SunTrust before you, the employees of the Board of Education had a free checking account. Why? Mr. Watson said, this is kind of a compliment to that. We call it group banking because it's free and discounted services for —. Commissioner Price asked, do County employees have that same —? Mr. Watson said, yes. We've been attending all the orientation sessions and, I think, the benefits sessions. Commissioner Price said, so County employees, just like the school system employees, if they open an account at Wachovia can get free checking accounts. Mr. Watson said, yes sir. Commissioner Price said, okay. I guess what I —. Commissioner DeLoach asked, you got a sharehold there? Commissioner Price said, no, I don't. [Unintelligible comments when several Commissioners began speaking at one time.] Commissioner Price said, the reason I asked that is for one main reason. Number one is that we be fair and competitive with all banks, but number two is that, as you know, if you don't bank with Wachovia, there's a fee to use the ATM, okay. So this looks great and it looks like it can work out, but it is to Wachovia's benefit to a great extent to be able to do that and to have that, but unless you're a customer of Wachovia, and I don't know why County employees wouldn't take advantage of a free checking account, then why would you do it otherwise? I had some people asking me this week whether or not we went out to the other banks and offered this as well. That's the reason I pulled it off the agenda to ask about it. It sounds like from what you're telling me, it sounds like a win/win for our employees. Mr. Watson said, it is to provide them a convenient service there at the courthouse. There are about 400 employees, I think —. Commissioner Price said, right. Mr. Watson said, in that whole complex.

Commissioner Price said, right. Okay, well, I move for approval. Chairman Hair said, all right, we've got —. Commissioner Jackel said, wait, wait, wait. Chairman Hair said, let's get it on the floor. Commissioner DeLoach said, I'll second that. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Jackel.

Commissioner Jackel said, I read this over and I was a little stunned. I thought you paid a fee when you put your machines in places. Mr. Watson said, we do in commercial places like stores —. Commissioner Jackel said, we need money. I don't understand why we're giving this away free when you pay Kroger's and you pay other people. I was just shocked. Mr. Watson said, well, this —, we have —. Commissioner Jackel said, we want the same money you pay Kroger's or whoever it is you pay. Commissioner DeLoach said, Piggly Wiggly. Mr. Watson said, this is called a workplace ATM. This is not strictly for —, because of the location of the courthouse there, but it is for the benefit of the employees. We have three others —. Commissioner Jackel said, and you. Mr. Watson said, and us. Oh, yes. Commissioner Jackel said, okay, okay. That's why we're going to charge you. Mr. Watson said, we have three other workplace —. Commissioner Jackel said, now how much do we need to charge you. Mr. Watson said, well, we get —, we pay no fees for the other three, except for the Home Depot Distribution Center is one of these that we just put in, and we pay them \$25 a month for theirs. Commissioner Jackel asked, is that all you pay them? You don't pay any fees to them for you having a machine on their premises? Mr. Watson said, that's right. That's right. And the two at Savannah Foods at the Refinery and at the Tremont location we pay nothing. Commissioner Jackel said, well, I just don't see how —. Commissioner Rivers said, they're going to give us [inaudible].

Chairman Hair asked, are you finished, Commissioner Jackel? Commissioner Jackel said, if they're not paying any one else, but I thought there were fees —, I know we get money for the drink machines that we have. Chairman Hair said, we have a motion and a second to approve. All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

1. Commissioner Thomas moved to approve Items 7-A through 7-K, except Items 7-I and 7-J. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]
2. Commissioner DeLoach moved to approve Item 7-I. Commissioner Price seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
3. Commissioner Price moved to approve Item 7-J. Commissioner DeLoach seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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XII. FIRST READINGS

Proposed changes to ordinances must be read or presented in written form at two meetings held not less than one week apart. A vote on the following listed matters will occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
Comments, discussion and debate from members of the public will be received only at the meeting at which a vote is to be taken on one of the following listed items.

- 1. **TO ADOPT "AN AMENDMENT TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF CHATHAM COUNTY TO MODIFY CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GEORGIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ACT AND ANY AMENDMENTS THERETO; REPEALING PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES;" AND TO APPROVE THE ACCOMPANYING "DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY" AND "DECLARATION OF EFFECTIVE ORDINANCES DURING EMERGENCY" FORMS. Hold on first reading until response is received from each of the municipalities.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

First reading held until response is received from each of the municipalities.

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- 2. **TO ADOPT "AN AMENDMENT TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF CHATHAM COUNTY TO PROHIBIT PRICE OVERCHARGING DURING EMERGENCIES; REPEALING PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES." Hold on first reading until response is received from each of the municipalities.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

First reading held until response is received from each of the municipalities.

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- 3. **TO ADOPT AN AMENDMENT TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF CHATHAM COUNTY TO ALLOW FOR TEMPORARY MOBILE/MANUFACTURED/INDUSTRIALIZED HOMES, TRAVEL TRAILERS, RECREATIONAL VEHICLES, AND MOBILE/MANUFACTURED/INDUSTRIALIZED HOME PARKS IN ANY ZONING DISTRICT DURING EMERGENCIES; REPEALING PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Hold on first reading until response is received from each of the municipalities.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

First reading held until response is received from each of the municipalities.

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- 4. **TO ADOPT AN AMENDMENT TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF CHATHAM COUNTY TO ALLOW FOR EMERGENCY BUSINESS LICENSES; REPEALING PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Hold on first reading until response is received from each of the municipalities.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

First reading held until response is received from each of the municipalities.

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- 5. **TO ADOPT AN AMENDMENT TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF CHATHAM COUNTY TO ALLOW FOR EMERGENCY BUILDING PERMITS; REPEALING PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Hold on first reading until response is received from each of the municipalities.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

First reading held until response is received from each of the municipalities.

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- 6. **TO ADOPT AN AMENDMENT TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF CHATHAM COUNTY TO PROVIDE A CURFEW AND CLOSED OR RESTRICTED AREAS DURING EMERGENCIES; REPEALING PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Hold on first reading until response is received from each of the municipalities.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

First reading held until response is received from each of the municipalities.

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- 7. **PETITIONERS, HILDA WHITAKER, FRANK L. BOURNE, JR., JAMES SHEPPARD, RONALD KOLMAN, MARTIN J. HEIMES AND MARIANNE M. HEIMES, ARE REQUESTING THAT THE TEXT OF THE CHATHAM COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS BE AMENDED BY REPEALING THE CURRENT ORDINANCE AND ENACTING A NEW ONE IN ITS PLACE. GIVEN THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS UNDERTAKING, THE MPC RECOMMENDED THAT THE REQUEST BE APPROVED AND THAT THE COUNTY FUND THE ACTIVITY AS A LINE ITEM IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS' BUDGETS. MPC FILE NO. 97-11982-C
NO DISTRICT/TEXT AMENDMENT/UNINCORPORATED AREA**

Commissioner Murray asked, can I just make a request? It's not discussion. Chairman Hair said, not discussion. If it's a request, we're not going to take debate. Commissioner Murray said, I would request that Item 7, there's some legal questions that need to be answered on that, I think, and I would like for them to be able to ask the County Attorney, not right now, but --. Chairman Hair asked, could you direct your legal question in writing to the Attorney and have them for the next meeting. Chairman Hair said, before the next meeting. Chairman Hair said, have to have them for the next meeting.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Read into record as first reading.

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- 8. **PETITIONER, ROBERT W. LEE, OWNER, IS REQUESTING THAT A 34.84 ACRE PORTION OF A 52.45 ACRE TRACT LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF FORT ARGYLE ROAD BE REZONED FROM R-A (RESIDENTIAL-AGRICULTURE) TO A PD-R-SM (PLANNED DEVELOPMENT-RECLAMATION-SURFACE MINING) ZONING CLASSIFICATION IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A BORROW PIT ON THE SITE. THE MPC RECOMMENDED THAT THE PETITIONER'S REQUEST AND THE GENERAL SITE PLAN WHICH SHOWS ULTIMATE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AS A FISH POND AND THREE SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LOTS BE APPROVED. MPC FILE NO. 97-11984-C
[DISTRICT 7.]**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Read into record as first reading.

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XIII. SECOND READINGS

1. AN AMENDMENT TO THE CHATHAM COUNTY PURCHASING ORDINANCE, SECTION XIII, BOARD APPROVAL OF PURCHASES TO RAISE THE THRESHOLD LEVEL OF PURCHASES REQUIRING BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL FROM \$2,500 TO \$10,000.

Commissioner Price said, so moved. Chairman Hair said, we have a motion, do we have a second? Commissioner Thomas said, second. Chairman Hair said, and that's a second. Before we vote on this, I want to make a comment. We discussed this at the agenda review yesterday, the Vice Chairman, the County Manager and I, and I personally don't have any problem with this, with one caveat. I think it will speed up the process, but I do think that if we approve this it should be with the caveat that those purchases between \$2,500 and \$10,000 still will be listed each Board meeting in the book so that we can review them, even though we don't approve them. So they would be listed as information items. We still would see all of these items, but they would be information items, but it would speed up the process in terms of approval and we still would approve over \$10,000. With that caveat I support this. Without that caveat, I don't support this, and I expressed that yesterday and the Vice Chairman agreed with me that that should be included, and the County Manager agrees that should be a caveat to this. Commissioner Rivers said, well, we'll move that then as an amendment. Chairman Hair said, okay, I have a motion. Commissioner Price said, second. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes. Thank you very much.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Price moved to amend the Chatham County Purchasing Ordinance, Section XIII, Board Approval of Purchases to raise the threshold level of purchases requiring Board of Commissioners approval from \$2,500 to \$10,000, with the caveat that any purchases between \$2,500 and \$10,000 be listed in the agenda as information items. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. [NOTE: Commissioner DeLoach was not present when this vote was taken.]

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XIV. INFORMATION CALENDAR

None.

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RECOGNITION OF DONALD JONES

Chairman Hair said, one final thing. I would like to recognize Donald Jones, who is here for his last meeting. He's going to put on a pair of Mickey Mouse ears and go to Orlando and down in the Disney World area. He and his wife have accepted jobs at a new TV station down there. So, Donald [Jones], we're going to miss you. We wish you well.

Commissioner Price said, Donald [Jones], we had something for you, but the County Manager put a nix on it. Chairman Hair said, yes, he cut it out of the budget, that's what it was. We had a present for you, but it didn't make it through the budget process. Mr. Jones said, that's okay, that would be considered payola and I'm still under my contract. Chairman Hair said, well, in that case, I'm glad we didn't give it to you. Mr. Jones said, I can always come up and say something. I've got a brief speech here. Chairman Hair said, that's quite alright. The Chair fails to recognize Mr. Jones. This job doesn't have many prerogatives, but that's one it does have.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Thomas moved that the Board go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible litigation and personnel. Commissioner DeLoach seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hair declared the meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

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APPROVED: THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 1998

DR. BILLY B. HAIR, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

SYBIL E. TILLMAN, CLERK