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DADE COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 3, 2007

1 MR. BRANDON: Okay. I want to call the
 2 meeting to order. Before we start, as we always do,
 3 I want to go to the Lord in prayer and have the
 4 Pledge of Allegiance. I would ask Former
 5 Commissioner John Deffenbaugh to do that for us,
 6 please.

7 (Thereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance
 8 and invocation were given.)

9 MR. BRANDON: This is the regularly
 10 scheduled meeting which takes place at the same time
 11 on the first Thursday of every month. Proper notice
 12 of this meeting was given in the legal organ of Dade
 13 County. It's been posted in the hallway of the
 14 Commission Administration Building. I'll call the
 15 roll and have it recorded by the clerk. Mr. Lowery?

16 MR. LOWERY: Here.

17 MR. BRANDON: Ms. Moore?

18 MS. MOORE: Here.

19 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Pittman?

20 MR. PITTMAN: Here.

21 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Young?

22 MR. YOUNG: Here.

23 MR. BRANDON: The chair is present. We
 24 have a forum and therefore a legal meeting.

25 The reading of the minutes of the April

1 2007 meeting will not be required since all
2 commissioners have been furnished copies in advance.
3 The minutes are public record and are available for
4 review in the county executive's office. The
5 minutes of the meetings are included in the consent
6 agenda. I'll at this point ask the clerk if he will
7 read the items on the consent agenda for those who
8 may not have been present in the work session.

9 MR. TOWNSEND: That would be the
10 approval of previous meeting minutes, budget
11 amendment for E-911 including the old revenue and
12 expense for enhanced 911 service, boundry survey for
13 animal control facility, survey requested to add the
14 green zone of the western side of the property,
15 local issuing authority, soil erosion control, Kela
16 Kimball contract, be contracted to write grant,
17 contract services with Network Incorporated from
18 Chattanooga, Tennessee, create ordinance for
19 driveway pipe installation to county road and
20 recommend payment to Hutcheson Medical Center for
21 inmate medical claims.

22 MR. BRANDON: Thank you, Don. To
23 approve these, we need a motion and a second. Do I
24 hear such? Does anyone make a motion we approve the
25 consent agenda?

1 MR. PITTMAN: I make a motion we
2 approve the consent agenda.

3 MS. MOORE: I second the motion.

4 MR. BRANDON: Second by Ms. Moore.
5 I'll call the roll. Mr. Young?

6 MR. YOUNG: Yes.

7 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Lowery?

8 MR. LOWERY: Abstain since it's got to
9 do with my employer.

10 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Pittman?

11 MR. PITTMAN: Yes.

12 MR. BRANDON: Ms. Moore?

13 MS. MOORE: Yes.

14 MR. BRANDON: Motion carries. Thank
15 you.

16 Moving along, we have quite a bit of
17 business that we carried over from the work session
18 that we didn't have time to complete there. So
19 moving right into the executive update, the only
20 thing I have on the executive update at this time is
21 one of the requirements in my job description is I
22 provide by 120 days into the year a report on the
23 county's financial status and I intended to have
24 that before this meeting, but I've been laying flat
25 on the floor for about the last three or four days

1 with a back problem and I didn't get it done. So
2 I'm going to have this done by Friday and I'll have
3 it in the newspaper by Monday. We'll be using
4 preliminary data since the auditing firm has not --
5 they've been working diligently, but we're not done
6 with that yet, so I'll be using preliminary numbers
7 off of last year that may change a little bit as the
8 end result when the audit is complete, but I feel
9 pretty confident that the numbers we have in there
10 are valid numbers since we've exorcised most of the
11 demons from the Solomon accounting system, I think
12 at this point, have we not? We're working on it.

13 Moving on to appearances. We have the
14 mayor of the City of Trenton. Does he have a
15 representative? Okay. None. You're not going to
16 be the mayor tonight, Pete?

17 MR. CERVELLI: I am not.

18 MR. BRANDON: Okay. Just checking.

19 Under fiscal matters, I'll go to the
20 clerk and ask him to give the financial report.

21 MR. TOWNSEND: We have as of May 1st,
22 the drug education fund a balance of \$119,005;
23 federal assistance fund, \$10,367; special sheriff's
24 fund, \$103,754; jail fund, \$12,772; juvenile
25 services fund, \$6,899, victim assistance fund,

1 \$2,102; payroll account, \$28,952; general fund,
2 \$853,641. Under S.P.L.O.S.T funds we have a total
3 principal and interest fund balance at this point of
4 \$1,040,774. Total capital bond fund balance is
5 currently \$919,984.

6 And also so that you know, under the
7 general fund, we have several expenses for the month
8 of April that kind of hit the financial --
9 government financial administration real hard.

10 Under group insurance, it was over for the month
11 7,000 -- well, it was over \$5,749, but the reason is
12 we paid two insurance bills, not one. We usually
13 just have one, but we had two, April and May came
14 in. So those were both paid, \$7,932. Board member
15 fees were also over 647 and there was several
16 alcohol beer board meetings and special board of
17 equalization meetings that had to be held, so those
18 were also paid causing that fund to go over.

19 Under professional fees, we had a large
20 contract come through, Solutions Technology as well
21 as some preaudit work done for our CPA, so that hit
22 that budget pretty hard this month. It won't
23 always -- the CPAs only bill us as they do the work,
24 so we won't have that every month like we did this
25 month. Technical services and under travel, that

1 was a large expense this year -- I'm sorry, this
 2 month of April because we had several attend the
 3 annual Association of County Commissioners meeting
 4 in Georgia this year. So those are some of the
 5 reasons why those went over.

6 Overall though, the budget, revenue
 7 wise, we took in \$736,837 and we only budgeted to
 8 bring in 613, but of course a lot of that is the
 9 fact that it's tax. We're still bringing in quite a
 10 bit of tax money.

11 MR. BRANDON: Where are you looking at
 12 that? I've got the budget variance report here. I
 13 don't see that amount.

14 MR. TOWNSEND: Okay. It's on page
 15 three of the one called project variance report on
 16 the first column, actuals.

17 MR. BRANDON: I've got a 13-page report
 18 here. I don't -- and a 54-page report. Which one
 19 is it on?

20 MR. TOWNSEND: It's the very -- one
 21 that says one of 13.

22 MR. BRANDON: All right. The total
 23 revenue on mine says 328,825 where we budgeted
 24 577,960.

25 MR. TOWNSEND: Okay. I don't have that

1 in front of me right here.

2 MR. BRANDON: His says the same thing
3 mine does.

4 MR. TOWNSEND: Okay. I don't have that
5 in front of me. I don't have that particular report
6 in front of me right here.

7 MR. BRANDON: Where does the county
8 stand year-to-date on expenses, the whole county?

9 MR. TOWNSEND: Year-to-date -- I don't
10 think I've got the right report in front of me at
11 this time, so I'll have to get back with you. Do
12 you have it in front of you?

13 MR. BRANDON: No. That's why I was
14 asking.

15 MR. TOWNSEND: I don't have it here in
16 front of me. I'd have to go run it off. I think
17 Priscilla is off this evening.

18 MR. BRANDON: Okay. We'll skip over
19 that then. Anything else on finance?

20 MR. TOWNSEND: No. That's all.

21 MR. BRANDON: At this point, I would
22 like to ask Ms. Moore if she wants to give the
23 abridged version of the finance report instead of
24 the -- if she would.

25 MS. MOORE: Okay. It's behind your tab

1 12 and it would be number 15 and it's got page one.
2 The finance committee met and the report and the
3 recommendations. Number one about the annual audit
4 began on April 12th and continues through this
5 month. In your binder there, you'll find a letter
6 of understanding for services between Henderson,
7 Hutcheson and McCullough and the finance committee
8 is recommending that this be approved by the full
9 board of commissioners. And then we had some
10 budgeted invoices, one to Cartograph and Williams
11 Fence Company. The annual service agreement with
12 Cartograph for \$3,900 and the four fields complex to
13 Williams Fence Company, \$8,526. And then the
14 personnel committee and finance committee
15 recommended budgeted items for final approval for
16 one new full-time employee, scale house operator and
17 then the contract labor for Network Incorporated
18 which we just discussed in the work session and
19 approved a new full-time employee as a field
20 appraiser and -- two actually as field appraisers
21 and we did talk about the soil and erosion control
22 grant in the work session and those were the things
23 that were discussed at the finance committee meeting
24 and the -- also personnel.

25 MR. BRANDON: Okay. Let me ask a

1 question about item number 2A up there. We're not
2 even using that program anymore since we don't have
3 the help desk. They were maintaining -- Cartograph
4 was maintaining the status of all the roadwork that
5 was being done and to my knowledge, since I've not
6 seen a report on that in three or four months, we're
7 probably not using it so we don't need to pay that
8 bill.

9 MS. MOORE: Okay.

10 MR. BRANDON: And on 2B, is there money
11 in the budget for that in that department?

12 MS. MOORE: The four fields complex for
13 Williams Fence Company, that would -- I think that
14 would come out of capital bond account.

15 MR. BRANDON: I don't think so.

16 MS. MOORE: Would it not?

17 MR. BRANDON: No.

18 MR. PITTMAN: It's actually work that
19 was recommended by their --

20 MR. BRANDON: Insurance company
21 recommended that.

22 MR. PITTMAN: I think Bruce -- is Bruce
23 still here, Bruce Castleberry? Have we got money in
24 the budget in parks and recs for fencing?

25 MR. CASTLEBERRY: Yeah. It would be

1 pretty close, but I think we can swing it.

2 MR. BRANDON: What category would it be
3 under, Bruce?

4 MR. CASTLEBERRY: Probably upkeep.

5 MR. BRANDON: Which one?

6 MR. CASTLEBERRY: Upkeep, improvements.

7 MS. MOORE: Well, it would be my
8 recommendation if there's money in the budget to pay
9 that.

10 MR. BRANDON: Well, we don't have any
11 choice. My question is going to be where are we
12 going to get the money to pay it since that
13 department, they're already slightly overbudget for
14 the year. They're doing a good job, but I mean, if
15 you're going to spend money that wasn't in the
16 budget, you need to figure out where you're going to
17 get the money from. So what's your recommendation
18 on where to get the money to pay the \$8,526?

19 MR. LOWERY: Mr. Castleberry, you
20 told -- didn't you say something about if we fulfill
21 these obligations with the insurance company, we
22 would be getting back a payment?

23 MR. CASTLEBERRY: It's a recommendation
24 to get back that five percent, five to seven percent
25 rebate from worker's comp.

1 MR. LOWERY: Roughly would that be --

2 MR. CASTLEBERRY: I don't have a clue
3 on that.

4 MR. BRANDON: Worker's comp is about
5 \$110,000 a year. So if you did it -- I think we've
6 always gotten it in the past. I think we
7 budgeted -- did y'all budget for that, to get that
8 refund? Did you budget to get a refund for local
9 government risk management services?

10 MR. TOWNSEND: I worked with Bruce on
11 that, so I have no idea.

12 MR. BRANDON: Okay. I don't have any
13 problem with this, but if you're going to agree to
14 spend that money, I don't see it anywhere in the
15 budget here because we're already right at the max
16 for the -- right on the -- actually just a few
17 dollars over.

18 MR. PITTMAN: What's the time limit
19 before we have to actually install the fencing?

20 MR. CASTLEBERRY: It will probably be
21 early fall, somewhere in there. We can go around
22 and check on the recommendations.

23 MR. PITTMAN: So we can actually
24 postpone this until later in the year and take a
25 look at it later in the year?

1 MR. LOWERY: We can, but what happens
2 if a kid falls between now and then after that
3 insurance has recommended that?

4 MR. CASTLEBERRY: That's true.

5 MR. BRANDON: I need a recommendation
6 from the finance committee.

7 MS. MOORE: My recommendation is that
8 because of the liability that we would have in the
9 county, that we need to get that done and the
10 finance committee can look into these reports that
11 we just got tonight and see, but we do need to pay
12 this bill if we have to amend the budget to do so.

13 MR. BRANDON: Okay. Again, where are
14 you going to take the money from?

15 MS. MOORE: I said the finance
16 committee would meet on that and decide that.

17 MR. BRANDON: Okay. Well, we can't
18 vote on this tonight.

19 MS. MOORE: Right, on that particular
20 one.

21 MR. BRANDON: Okay. So we will hold
22 this until the next meeting or the next special
23 called meeting. Does anyone have any questions or
24 comments about anything on the finance committee
25 report except for 2A and 2B?

1 MR. LOWERY: You said add that to the
2 special called meeting?

3 MR. BRANDON: Do I have a motion that
4 we pass the finance committee report without 2A and
5 2B?

6 MR. PITTMAN: I've got one question
7 about 3C and 3D if I'm looking at this correctly.
8 Never mind. It's two different positions.

9 MR. BRANDON: Do I have a motion we
10 approve the finance committee report?

11 MR. LOWERY: I make a motion that we
12 approve it.

13 MR. BRANDON: I have a motion. Do I
14 have a second?

15 MR. PITTMAN: I'll second that motion.

16 MR. BRANDON: I'll call the roll. Mr.
17 Young?

18 MR. YOUNG: Yes.

19 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Lowery?

20 MR. LOWERY: Yes.

21 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Pittman?

22 MR. PITTMAN: Yes.

23 MR. BRANDON: Ms. Moore?

24 MS. MOORE: Yes.

25 MR. BRANDON: The motion passes.

1 Moving along to legal matters. I'll
2 ask the attorney if we have any outstanding legal
3 matters.

4 MR. ROGERS: No. The new legal matters
5 were covered in the work session. I have none
6 beyond that except to bring to the chair's attention
7 we need to set a date for the special meeting, but
8 that's it.

9 MR. BRANDON: Well, we need to wait
10 until we hear from Mr. Oliver when he's going to
11 have that report ready, right?

12 MR. LOWERY: Can we set a tentative one
13 anyway?

14 MR. ROGERS: We can do it either way.
15 We can wait or we can set it tonight, but he had
16 indicated he would get to this at the first of the
17 week.

18 MR. BRANDON: Okay. Let me add that
19 down here to the -- who has a calendar on them?
20 Would someone like to make a recommendation for a
21 special called meeting date?

22 MR. LOWERY: What about two Thursdays
23 from now, May 17th?

24 MR. BRANDON: Does anyone have any
25 problems with May 17th for a special called

1 meeting to address those three issues we were
2 discussing in the work session?

3 MS. MOORE: What day is that on?

4 MR. BRANDON: Thursday.

5 MR. LOWERY: That's just a suggestion.

6 If anybody has a better time --

7 MR. BRANDON: Hearing no objections, we
8 will tentatively schedule a special called meeting
9 for May 17th at 6:00 p.m.

10 Where do we stand on Mr. Blevins and
11 Ms. Holmes lawsuit against the taxpayers of Dade
12 County?

13 MR. ROGERS: There's been no new
14 developments with that since last --

15 MR. BRANDON: They filed that with the
16 Superior Court Clerk, right?

17 MR. ROGERS: Yes.

18 MR. BRANDON: How does it get put on
19 the docket?

20 MR. ROGERS: Well, two or three
21 different ways. They can request it be placed on
22 the docket or we can do so or the Court.

23 MR. BRANDON: They're not in much of a
24 hurry then?

25 MR. ROGERS: No.

1 MR. BRANDON: Back in December we were
2 advised by the mayor that we would have a contract
3 for animal control services provided by the City.
4 Do you have that agreement?

5 MR. ROGERS: No.

6 MR. BRANDON: Would you please check
7 with them and see on that?

8 MR. ROGERS: Sure.

9 MR. BRANDON: There were several other
10 things that expired on December 31st as well you
11 might want to look at while we're talking about
12 that. The contract for services provided to the
13 jail and the senior citizens center expired as well
14 as animal control. So if you could check on that
15 and let us know, I would appreciate it.

16 Moving onto unfinished business.
17 Ms. Moore has an item under comprehensive planning
18 committees.

19 MS. MOORE: This is something -- and
20 I'll pass this down to y'all. This is something we
21 discussed last month and it's actually about
22 appointing a steering committee to create a process
23 for the development of Dade County's comprehensive
24 plan to assist with the organization of how to
25 identify the objectives and the visions and the

1 goals, to fill any immediate gaps or issues in the
2 planning of Dade County's future and furthermore,
3 this committee will be determined to draw Dade
4 County's comprehensive plan to reflect the State of
5 Georgia's comprehensive planning guidelines outlined
6 in the Official Code of Georgia. This plan should
7 be periodically reviewed and approved by the Georgia
8 Department of Community Affairs and I do appreciate
9 Mr. Deffenbaugh's article this week in the paper
10 talking about the goals that we need to be setting
11 for the future and that is something we've needed to
12 have been doing for a long time.

13 And so it was put on the back burner
14 until this meeting for each individual commissioner
15 to recommend two persons to fill these spots and on
16 the proposed membership, it was Peter Cervelli by
17 the mayor of Trenton, John Klepper by David Young,
18 Rebecca Page with Family Connections by David Young,
19 Bill Marshal and the school superintendent, Patty
20 Priest by Lamar Lowery, Richard Woffman and Greg
21 Rumsy from Covenant College by Sarah Moore, Evan
22 Stone and Debbie Tinker by Scottie Pittman. And
23 Ben, I don't have one from you.

24 MR. BRANDON: Yeah. I didn't know you
25 put the list together. I'll have it for you by

1 close of business tomorrow.

2 MS. MOORE: Okay. So I would recommend
3 that we do adopt this and begin work on this as soon
4 as possible.

5 MR. BRANDON: Without objection and as
6 a person who puts people on committees, I will
7 consider these people appointed and I will have my
8 two by close of business tomorrow.

9 MS. MOORE: Okay. Excuse me. This
10 group, some of them were going to come and meet in
11 the morning. Do you think that you could maybe work
12 on that maybe tonight and get with us in the
13 morning?

14 MR. BRANDON: Probably not. If I had
15 known you were --

16 MS. MOORE: That will be okay.

17 MR. BRANDON: I didn't know you were
18 doing this.

19 MS. MOORE: There will be another
20 scheduled meeting. Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. BRANDON: Any other unfinished
22 business?

23 Under new business, Item A on there, we
24 have some stuff to be carried over. I'm not to that
25 yet. We're still on the first item here. We've had

1 some difficulties in the commission office with
2 people not being exactly sure what they're supposed
3 to do and I would like to get some feedback from the
4 personnel committee on this.

5 When we hired a county clerk, one of
6 the reasons we gave for why we were going to pay him
7 more is he was going to serve as the accountant for
8 the County because in the past, we always had to
9 hire an accountant to come in to assure adequate
10 financial controls. I would ask Ms. McCullough, who
11 is our auditor, if she catches me in a misstatement
12 here to raise your hand, but we've been caught
13 several times in the past because we didn't have
14 enough adequate financial control because you can't
15 have one person doing all the jobs because the
16 person who issues the purchase orders can't be the
17 person who pays the invoices that result from them
18 and the person that pays the -- writes the checks
19 can't be the one that balances the checkbook. So we
20 always had to have someone in here to do a lot of
21 these things, do the bank reconciliations and so
22 forth. So when we hired a new clerk, we said that
23 he was going to be doing these things and right now
24 we're not -- we have chosen not to ask him to do
25 those and it's created some controversy in the

1 office and I need to find out why it is that we're
2 not going to ask him to do those things that we're
3 paying him more money to do.

4 MS. MOORE: Okay. You're looking at me
5 and I'm on the personnel committee.

6 MR. BRANDON: Well --

7 MS. MOORE: And also Lamar. Lamar, do
8 you want me to speak?

9 MR. LOWERY: Well, Ladell, have you got
10 any comments on that? How is it being handled?

11 MS. MOORE: Well, let me say something
12 before Ladell needs to speak. First of all, when
13 Mr. Townsend was hired, he was not hired as the
14 accountant. He was hired as the clerk to the Board
15 of County Commissioners and would serve as finance
16 chair as we did adopt later and that would be to
17 oversee things. In the years past, and this goes
18 before even our administration, we were written up
19 in every audit report because we didn't have a
20 general ledger in balance. The bank statements
21 weren't in balance and so everything was pointing
22 back to the Solomon. So now we've got the Solomon
23 up and running and everything seems to be working
24 great with it. And we do -- as far as I know, we
25 have no trouble within the office. We have someone

1 designated that writes the receipts. We have
2 someone designated that does the deposits. We have
3 someone designated that enters the data into the
4 accounting system and the problem came up on
5 entering journal entries and a lot of this has to do
6 with your bank statement coming in and when you have
7 service charges or interest, you need to do journal
8 entries. So Mr. Townsend does do the bank
9 reconciliations, so therefore we have all of those
10 in effect at this point.

11 There was a problem and the problem was
12 that you had sent all of us an E-mail stating that
13 Don had been insubordinate. Well, he can't be
14 insubordinate to an employee. He hadn't been
15 insubordinate to us and he was doing everything that
16 he should be doing and right now, for the first time
17 in I don't know how many years, we are going to have
18 a balanced bank statement. We're going to have a
19 general ledger that is in balance. We've got
20 everyone in place that's doing everything that they
21 need to be doing that's separated out and we had
22 asked our auditor to be here tonight just to verify
23 that for us that we were on the right track into
24 getting a better audit report.

25 MR. BRANDON: Well, I would have to

1 disagree that there's not a problem because I think
2 Scottie has had a conversation with one of the
3 office employees about this very issue.

4 MR. PITTMAN: I did have a conversation
5 with her and when I left talking with her, I talked
6 with you. So I had concerns. I actually went and
7 talked to Mr. Townsend. He sat me down and he
8 showed me exactly what he's done. I'm not an
9 accountant, but from what he showed me, he actually
10 balances the checkbook, which is what y'all are
11 calling reconciliation. He makes a list of errors
12 or inadequacies. He gives them to Priscilla. She
13 corrects those, which y'all are calling journal
14 entries. So in my opinion, they're separated.

15 Now, I know Priscilla had a difference
16 of opinion and you did, so I asked Ladell to be
17 here. If Ladell could give me her opinion. She's
18 actually our auditor. Do you feel like we're doing
19 this right or do you feel like we've got some
20 inadequacies we need to address?

21 MS. LADELL: Well, to have a good
22 segregation of duties, you should have a person who
23 takes care of the deposits separate from a person
24 who writes the checks and separate from the person
25 who signs the checks and separate from the person

1 who does the reconciliation. In a perfect world,
2 you would need six or eight people. You don't have
3 that many people in your office, but you do have
4 enough so that you can adequately segregate the
5 duties, especially since the Commission is
6 participating in the signing of the checks and the
7 approval of the bills for payment and everything.
8 So as long as Priscilla is not taking care of bank
9 deposits or signing the checks, there's no problem
10 for her to do the journal entries in the general
11 ledger.

12 MR. BRANDON: We've had to change
13 around some job duties in the last 60 to 90 days to
14 accomplish that, have we not?

15 MS. LADELL: Yes. I think as you have
16 changes in personnel or their duties get reassigned,
17 you have to make sure that you're adequately keeping
18 your segregation of duties for your internal
19 controls. I've discussed it, I think, with all of
20 you about we just need to make sure the person with
21 the signature stamp is not the one doing -- opening
22 the bank statement and doing the reconciliation and
23 also doing bank deposits. You don't want one person
24 doing everything for their safety as well as the
25 county's safety.

1 MR. BRANDON: So at this point who is
2 doing the bank reconciliation as far as you know?

3 MS. LADELL: Don is as far as I know.

4 MR. BRANDON: Who's doing the journal
5 entries?

6 MS. LADELL: Priscilla is as far as I
7 know.

8 MR. PITTMAN: Who actually makes the
9 deposits?

10 MS. LADELL: Jennifer is doing the
11 receipts and deposits.

12 MR. PITTMAN: This is definitely a
13 serious issue. We need to keep an eye on it.
14 Nobody is taking it lightly. It's a check and
15 balance.

16 MR. BRANDON: The problem I have with
17 this is that when we met in executive session to
18 discuss this when we were hiring Mr. Townsend, the
19 point was made quite forcefully that he was going to
20 be the financial officer and he would be the
21 accountant to save us from having --I have the
22 record of it, Ms. Moore, if you'd like to hear it.

23 MS. MOORE: Not the accountant.

24 MR. LOWERY: You have the record of the
25 executive session recorded, you have it in your

1 possession?

2 MR. BRANDON: I have documentation of
3 it.

4 MR. LOWERY: I don't think that's
5 legal.

6 MR. BRANDON: We need to start making
7 sure that we do what we say we're going to do when
8 we all get into a room and agree on this. That's
9 why I brought this up. So we need to watch this.

10 MR. PITTMAN: Do you have a
11 recommendation of another system that you would like
12 to put --

13 MR. BRANDON: I'm going to check with
14 Priscilla in the morning and see if she thinks it is
15 as y'all think it is because that was not my --

16 MR. PITTMAN: Priscilla talked to me.
17 I had no idea what she was calling reconciliation or
18 journal entries. I have no idea what each person
19 does.

20 MR. BRANDON: This was serious enough
21 that as you're probably aware last week, our young
22 lady Priscilla Warren was written up for
23 insubordination for refusing to do what she
24 considered to be Mr. Townsend's job and so there is
25 a problem.

1 MS. MOORE: That problem has been
2 corrected by the personnel committee.

3 MR. BRANDON: Well, it was corrected by
4 the personnel committee, but I don't think the
5 people that were involved in it are all that happy
6 or else they wouldn't have to be written up for
7 insubordination for not doing something they thought
8 was somebody else's job.

9 MS. MOORE: It's too bad that you're
10 bringing her name up in this, but the problem has
11 been corrected. She knows what her duties are and
12 she is following those and everyone in the office is
13 following what they need to do and we have a great
14 office staff.

15 MR. BRANDON: She's doing what she's
16 been told to do, not necessarily what she was hired
17 to do.

18 MR. PITTMAN: Ladell, can you come up
19 and address this just for the people out in the
20 audience? What we call reconciliation is what I
21 call balancing the checkbook. What we're calling
22 journal entries is writing down who the checks are
23 made to and the money, how much they're for. So
24 whoever writes down in the checkbook what the checks
25 are made for and the amount cannot be the person who

1 goes back and actually checks it off. I mean, it's
2 a little more complicated than that, but that's the
3 way I refer to it.

4 MS. LADELL: Okay. You want me to
5 repeat what we discussed earlier about the person?
6 Jennifer is the one who's doing the deposits and the
7 receipts and Priscilla processes the checks for
8 payment, but you all sign off on them and have
9 control of the check signing stamp now, as I
10 understand it, after we discussed that she shouldn't
11 be doing that as well as also processing the checks.
12 So now Priscilla is doing that and Don is
13 reconciling the bank statement. There's no reason
14 that Priscilla can't be the general ledger
15 bookkeeper.

16 Before she shouldn't really be making
17 journal entries when she had the check signing stamp
18 because that created a segregation of duties issue.
19 But if she does not have check signing with the
20 signature stamp authority, then it's okay for her to
21 process the journal entries and be the general
22 ledger bookkeeper. She's really learned a lot in
23 the last few months and I've worked with her on
24 teaching her how to do some of the bookkeeping
25 issues that she was uncertain about and I know she's

1 taking classes and she's a smart young lady, so I
2 have confidence in her ability to get where you want
3 her to be.

4 MR. PITTMAN: Ms. McCullough, if we
5 actually hire an accountant, which we had for a
6 couple of months, what part of the process would
7 they take control of, the journal entries or the
8 reconciliation? What part would a CPA.

9 MS. LADELL: If a CPA were hired, I
10 would expect them to take control of the processing
11 of the financial statements, the schedules that need
12 to be done on a monthly basis or sometimes weekly
13 basis. You want to always keep up with your
14 accounts receivable, your accounts payable, making
15 sure that what you meant to put in the books goes
16 into the account you meant for it to go to because
17 with all of the numbers, you might accidentally code
18 something that should be repairs and maintenance to
19 utilities and you want the accountant looking
20 through the books, analyzing accounts, making
21 sure --

22 MR. PITTMAN: Don showed me exactly
23 what he done. He writes the date that it was
24 supposed to be deposited or withdrawn, depending on
25 what action must be taken. He gives that sheet to

1 Priscilla. So after he writes down, he does --
2 Priscilla does it and that's check and balance.

3 MS. LADELL: Yeah. I think it's fine
4 for him to write out the entry and approve it and
5 Priscilla is the person who comes in and puts in the
6 entry. I think that's fine.

7 MR. BRANDON: One of the things that
8 struck me though was as recently as last week, the
9 consulting firm that we hired to train us and to
10 help us out with reports and things was doing the
11 bank reconciliation in Florida. They were going to
12 send us a bill. Jenny Den from Ambian Consulting.
13 If you'll look back at our bills from Ambian
14 Consulting, you'll find that we've spent probably
15 already this year, I don't know, what, Don, \$20,000
16 with them?

17 MR. TOWNSEND: No.

18 MR. BRANDON: We spent \$6,000 to have
19 her come up here four days to do some training.

20 MR. TOWNSEND: That is correct and we
21 had all of our constitutional officers together in
22 meetings. Some of them are here tonight that can
23 attest to that. They had several issues with the
24 reports that they were getting on a monthly basis,
25 that they did not like the reports. We had in our

1 possession software that had been paid for the year
2 before that we were not using, so we chose to access
3 that software that no one seemed to know anything
4 about. We were using a software called FRX and
5 there was a few people that really liked it, so
6 those people are the ones that mandated that that is
7 what we use, but yet we had paid several thousand
8 dollars for --

9 MR. BRANDON: Project Manager.

10 MR. TOWNSEND: -- Project Manager.

11 MR. BRANDON: As I recall in the last
12 audit, that was the one that Ms. McCullough
13 recommended that we throw out.

14 MR. TOWNSEND: I don't know. Did you
15 recommend Project Manager be --

16 MS. LADELL: I recommended that you
17 cease using the receivables module.

18 MR. TOWNSEND: The receivables, but not
19 Project Manager.

20 MS. LADELL: I wasn't fond of Project
21 Manager. It's fine as long as the person using it
22 also knows that whatever they do in Project Manager
23 affects the general ledger. That was my issue with
24 Project Manager. We were making sure it was correct
25 when the general ledger and the financial

1 statements, the person making the changes didn't
2 know the connection.

3 MR. PITTMAN: I know Don actually
4 showed me books back to June of last year. Each one
5 of these books and folders had his handwritten notes
6 for the reconciliation, so if Ambient Solutions is
7 charging us for it --

8 MR. TOWNSEND: Let me say this. Let me
9 say this. When another part of the project
10 controller was an automatic bank reconciliation
11 program that, again, was paid for last year that we
12 had in our possession on Solomon that was not being
13 utilized. So when Jenny Den was here, she offered
14 to train me on that, how to use that as a resource,
15 as a tool since we've already paid for it. The
16 county taxpayers had already paid it out of their
17 pocket for us to have that. We chose to go ahead
18 and use that. She has been showing me. Part of the
19 agreement is that they will set up all the bank --
20 the first bank reconciliation on all ten accounts
21 that we balance.

22 Yes, I went back starting in, of
23 course, January of this year balancing --
24 reconciling the books. I found out December's was
25 not completed. November's had not been completed.

1 Then I found that there was an auditor or someone
2 that had come -- not one of our auditors, but an
3 accountant that had been hired to come in and force
4 balanced several reconciliations from probably July
5 through September. I could not use any of those
6 beginning balances or ending balances. So I went
7 back all the way to where Ladell and them had left
8 off. I'm assuming that y'all had done some of those
9 late -- early last year and early 2005. I went back
10 to those dates. One account particularly was back
11 to April of 2006 and came forward and we are
12 currently up-to-date on bank reconciliations.

13 Yes, Ambient has set up all ten
14 accounts because that's part of the deal that they
15 offered to do and, of course, I needed the training
16 on it, so she helped us set up that initial bank
17 statement. That's what the report says. It says
18 the initial bank statement.

19 MR. LOWERY: If you'll look back
20 through the bank checks for the last two years that
21 you were in office, Ambient has been paid every
22 month thousands of dollars, tens of thousands of
23 dollars.

24 MR. BRANDON: Well, that was for
25 correcting the problems that we knew existed in the

1 reports that everybody complained about. We didn't
2 pay them to actually balance the checkbook or do
3 anything like that.

4 MR. LOWERY: Anyway, we're not in a
5 perfect world, but are we doing the best we can do
6 with the amount of people we have right now?

7 MS. LADELL: I think we're doing much
8 better, yes. I'm pleased with the progress you're
9 making.

10 MR. BRANDON: Thank you.

11 MR. LOWERY: Before we finish this, I'm
12 going to say something. Thank you. I want to tell
13 you, I appreciate our clerk. For once we're getting
14 accurate information that we can believe in, that we
15 can honestly believe in and know it's right.

16 Allan Bradford is sitting right there.
17 I'm going to tell something that he --

18 MR. PITTMAN: I think this has gone far
19 enough.

20 MR. LOWERY: I'm going to tell it. Me
21 and him went back in that office right there where
22 the elections were at. This is before Ben ever come
23 on board. Our past clerk went back there with us.
24 We begged for money that we needed to pave people's
25 roads. Their cars were being tore up. We asked our

1 past clerk, do we have any money? No, it's all
2 gone. We don't have any money. Is that right,
3 Allan?

4 MR. BRADFORD: That's correct.

5 MR. LOWERY: The week after Ben was
6 elected, we met right back here in this office.
7 Scottie and David was with me. We were told by Ben
8 that our former clerk had told him, I've kept
9 \$670,000 hid from Allan and Ted because I knew if I
10 let them know that we had it, they would have spent
11 it.

12 MR. BRADFORD: And that was a lie.

13 MR. PITTMAN: The money part wasn't no
14 lie.

15 MR. LOWERY: The money part was no lie.
16 It was hid.

17 MR. BRADFORD: The money was there.
18 I'm talking about the individual that said that.

19 MR. LOWERY: So that's -- if you want
20 to know why we've got another clerk, that's part of
21 it. We sat right there at this table. This was
22 after -- I guess this was sometime in 2006 and we
23 had two CDs show up on our record, but we only had
24 one recorded and I questioned our clerk that night
25 in this -- in a main commission meeting and said,

1 hey, I'm showing that you've cashed two CDs. Oh no,
2 that's a mistake, we haven't cashed two CDs. It
3 took Sarah going to the Bank of Dade on her own
4 initiative to find out, yes, it was true. Now, if
5 I'm going to have to answer to you taxpayers, which
6 I do, I'm going to have to have accurate information
7 and that's what I'm getting out of that man right
8 there. That's all I've got to say.

9 MR. BRANDON: The last question I have
10 on the issue of the clerk's duties is why does
11 Mr. Townsend get to take comp time off that no other
12 employee gets and why is he allowed to work flex
13 hours which no other employee is allowed to work?

14 MR. LOWERY: Because he needs it to do
15 his job better. Since he's coming in -- are you
16 talking about coming in on Wednesday early?

17 MR. BRANDON: Wednesday early and
18 taking comp time off when we don't offer comp time
19 off even to the sheriff's deputies.

20 MR. LOWERY: Well, I understand some
21 people are getting comp time on the road crews. Are
22 y'all not, Billy, and, electrical, Bruce, people are
23 coming in on overtime? Do they not get overtime?

24 MS. MOORE: Mr. Brandon, if you have an
25 argumentative situation here, I recommend that we go

1 into executive session concerning this.

2 MR. BRANDON: No. We don't seem to be
3 able to remember what happens in executive session
4 very long. That's why I want to talk about these
5 things in public.

6 MS. MOORE: The personnel committee is
7 recommending that everything is in order.

8 MR. BRANDON: I understand the
9 recommendation.

10 Okay. Moving right along.

11 MR. PITTMAN: I've got another issue I
12 would like to add to the county clerk job duties
13 before we move away from it. Since Don has been on
14 board, he's been supplying us with something that
15 we've always wanted and that's minutes of the
16 meeting. That's actually part of the county clerk's
17 job description on file. He's done a really good
18 job. I think it takes up quite a bit of his time
19 actually, but that is part of his job.

20 MR. BRANDON: You mean the minutes of
21 this meeting?

22 MR. PITTMAN: All meetings, any
23 meetings, special-called meetings, committee
24 meetings. He has -- I mean, you provided us with
25 every meeting I've been to. I mean, I would -- even

1 though Ms. Flatt does a wonderful job and her
2 minutes are verbatim, I feel like we're double
3 paying for the same process. So I think -- I'm
4 asking the personnel committee to look into that and
5 either relieve that off of Mr. Townsend, take that
6 away from him or look at cutting the position of the
7 court reporter out.

8 MR. BRANDON: Well, there's absolutely
9 no reason that he should be typing minutes of this
10 meeting because we have somebody doing that and if I
11 want to go back and look at what happened at a
12 meeting, I want a verbatim answer and not somebody's
13 opinion on what happened because that's what you
14 get.

15 MR. PITTMAN: Well, we have the
16 recording that's verbatim.

17 MR. BRANDON: But it's not indexed so
18 you can't search it. You have to watch the entire
19 two-hour meeting to get that instead of just going
20 to the word that you're looking for.

21 MR. PITTMAN: What kind of money do we
22 spend on --

23 MR. LOWERY: It's about 3,500.

24 MR. PITTMAN: Is that right, Erin,
25 about 3,500?

1 MS. FLATT: Probably.

2 MR. PITTMAN: Do you feel it's worth
3 \$3,500 to have a verbatim meeting?

4 MR. BRANDON: I would rather have the
5 verbatim minutes to the meeting so you can look up
6 something by the word -- by the index search instead
7 of having to watch a two-hour video to find what
8 you're looking for.

9 MR. LOWERY: Would that relieve you of
10 some work, too?

11 MR. TOWNSEND: You know, I don't mind
12 doing it both ways. I mean, it's not to waste time.
13 Believe me. It does take up a lot of time.
14 However, I just -- like recently our auditors were
15 looking for our minutes and not to put Ladell back
16 on the spot again, but we still -- I don't think you
17 ever got the consent agendas portion of all of last
18 year, the minutes. She's asked for them repeatedly,
19 but no one can produce them.

20 MR. BRANDON: That's because we don't
21 ask for a printout of the consent agenda.

22 MR. TOWNSEND: As you can see, most of
23 our work has been done in the consent agenda
24 tonight.

25 MR. BRANDON: What I'm saying is we

1 didn't start asking for printouts and we still
2 don't. We don't ask for a printout of the work
3 session. We have the video of that.

4 MS. MOORE: But we need to provide our
5 auditors with that.

6 MR. BRANDON: Well, it's available, I'm
7 sure, if you want to go back and look for it or if
8 you want to pay Erin to produce one, we could do
9 that. But anyway, we need to move along.

10 MR. PITTMAN: Well, I think we're
11 double paying for the same service and I'm going to
12 put it to the personnel committee. Either we ask
13 Don -- relieve him of that duty or relieve Erin.

14 MR. BRANDON: Okay. We'll ask them to
15 report back on that issue.

16 Moving on here, the last item under new
17 business that we didn't complete from the work
18 session is the county expense voucher policy.

19 MR. YOUNG: 911.

20 MR. BRANDON: I stand corrected. You
21 are right about that. We have -- the issue here is
22 that as with your landline phone, if you have a
23 phone in Dade County, you'll notice there's a bill
24 on there every month for an extra dollar per phone
25 line and that was to fund the 911 service and we

1 still get that and we use that money to offset
2 salaries for the 911 personnel. We're getting ready
3 to do an enhanced 911 service that if you have a
4 cell phone that if you dial 911, it will locate you
5 using coordinates based on three towers around the
6 county and it will be able to tell them where you're
7 calling from. It's a very valuable service that's
8 badly needed because right now when you call 911
9 from a cell phone, it comes in and if you're not
10 coherent enough to tell them where you are and where
11 you need help, you're in trouble because they can't
12 locate you based on that call.

13 There's an ordinance that we're going
14 to pass sometime in the next 30 days to add
15 another -- to add \$1.50 to every cellular phone bill
16 and it's standards verbiage. The only thing, the
17 question I had on it and I think Mr. Young might
18 have had the same question, not to the same extent
19 is my feeling is that we need to -- anytime we pass
20 a new tax like this, it needs to have a time out on
21 it. It needs to sunset at some point so that we
22 don't end up suddenly with something on your bill
23 that's going to be there forever and ever and ever.
24 It only needs to be there, in my opinion, for as
25 long as it takes to cover the infrastructure cost of

1 whatever it's supposed to pay for. In this case,
2 that would be something less than two years to cover
3 the hardware cost of that. Now -- and then you
4 would have to vote to reauthorize it. I have no
5 problem adding that on there the first year or even
6 two years, but at some point we need to start having
7 these things time out because, as I pointed out in
8 the work session, the federal government just last
9 year got rid of a communications tariff that had
10 been imposed on people's phone bills since the
11 Spanish American war. It was put on there to fund
12 the Spanish American war. I think we might have
13 paid for that thing several times over. So anytime
14 we add a new tax, I would prefer to see it put on
15 as -- have some kind of sunset provision so that it
16 doesn't carry on over forever and ever and ever.
17 But that was my concern with it. I will ask if
18 anybody else wants to comment on that before we vote
19 on it?

20 MR. LOWERY: My concern with it was we
21 have Alex Case as our 911 director and I think most
22 people really respect Alex and his opinion. He's
23 asked us to pass this ordinance as it is and asked
24 for a review in two years, which I think is good
25 enough.

1 MS. MOORE: I agree with that.

2 MR. LOWERY: The thing about it is
3 salaries for that -- landlines are going down,
4 cellular phones are going up. That's what Alex told
5 us tonight. That's pretty common knowledge. My
6 whole family has one. I've got one telephone and
7 three cell phones, so that's going up. It's putting
8 a lot more load on Alex Case and his employees,
9 employees that don't make a lot of money. We can
10 use this money to help them get raises and offset
11 their -- to help them.

12 Catoosa and Walker County are making
13 two and three and four dollars more an hour than
14 what our folks are making. So we're getting them
15 trained and they're leaving. We've got to get them
16 some money. You say let's kill it in two years and
17 we will look at it. That will be fine, but when you
18 kill it, then somebody is going to have to start
19 paying those salaries and you know where it's going
20 to come from. If that equipment breaks, you know
21 where it's going to come from. It's going to come
22 from property taxes. To me, it's a simple issue of
23 user fees or property taxes. Personally, I'm for
24 user fees. I'm going to ask that we pass it like it
25 is.

1 MR. BRANDON: If I had any sense that
2 we would actually offset or lower property taxes by
3 collecting this additional money, I would probably
4 agree, but it's been my experience so far that
5 anytime we lower something in one place, the money
6 automatically finds its way somewhere else to be
7 spent rather than be knocked off the total tax bite
8 that we take from folks. So that's why I'm saying
9 that if we have it sunset in two years where you
10 actually have to physically go and vote on it again,
11 there's no difference. It's just that you're going
12 to have to be up before the people telling them why
13 they're going to continue to pay a dollar and a half
14 on their phone bill forever and ever and ever. But
15 having said that --

16 MR. LOWERY: I'm going to say that's a
17 good point. It's a real good point and we did
18 exactly that this past year. That dollar that's
19 been going to your local -- your home phones and
20 your landlines, that dollar has been going to your
21 phone. We didn't raise taxes this year and that's
22 part of the reason we were able not to is because of
23 that revenue.

24 MR. YOUNG: I'm going to ask for this
25 amendment for this tax. Under the paragraph where

1 it says be it further resolved that the Commission
2 of Dade County, Georgia -- now it says may review
3 the implementation of 911 charge in two years.
4 Let's change may review to shall reauthorize. Won't
5 that in effect make the Commission in two years,
6 Robin, come and revote on this?

7 MR. LOWERY: What happens if it's
8 overlooked and we don't revote on it? Will it
9 automatically renew then?

10 MR. ROGERS: Well, I think if you say
11 shall reauthorize, you've got to do it. If you
12 don't do it --

13 MR. BRANDON: That's saying that you
14 have to vote yes though, isn't it? Why vote at all
15 if you're going to say you have to vote yes.

16 MR. ROGERS: Change the wording.

17 MR. YOUNG: Shall vote to reauthorize.

18 MR. ROGERS: Shall vote to reauthorize
19 or vote to consider.

20 MR. LOWERY: If we mess around and lose
21 it in two years, Alex, is there a possibility we
22 could never get it back?

23 MR. PITTMAN: Let's take a vote.

24 MR. BRANDON: I think the clerk will
25 make sure we don't miss the vote on that. Read the

1 language that you have.

2 MR. YOUNG: The Commission of Dade
3 County, Georgia, shall vote to reauthorize the
4 implementation of 911 charge in two years from the
5 effective date of the charge.

6 MR. ROGERS: The chairman's point is
7 well taken. When you say shall vote to reauthorize,
8 you're committing to vote in a certain way, I think.
9 I think the point is you want to vote to review the
10 implementation of the tax, which I think is your
11 point. You want them to reconsider.

12 MR. BRANDON: I want to make somebody
13 make a conscious decision that, yes, I want to
14 continue charging people a dollar and a half on
15 their cell phone bill every month instead of just
16 having in on there to automatically renew if we do
17 nothing or if we do something.

18 MR. ROGERS: I understand you have a
19 concern with shall review or --

20 MR. YOUNG: I'm trying to reword this
21 paragraph so in two years we'll take a vote and
22 either say, yes, we're doing it or let's lower it to
23 \$1.35. You said you've got three cell phones in
24 your household and one landline? So now you'll get
25 three charges for your one household if you were to

1 stop your landline.

2 MR. LOWERY: If you take that off of
3 everybody, your land taxes are going to go up.

4 MR. BRANDON: We get a dollar per month
5 per landline, which is about \$50,000 a year, so --

6 MR. YOUNG: I think we need to take a
7 look at it. That's what I'm saying. I think in two
8 years we need to vote on this again.

9 MR. BRANDON: So that's --

10 MS. MOORE: What's your motion?

11 MR. YOUNG: Do you have the wording to
12 change this, Robin?

13 MR. BRANDON: What if we were to wait
14 and have him come up with some wording and vote on
15 this next month instead of trying to do it now?

16 MR. ROGERS: The only problem, Mr.
17 Chairman, is the statute requires a 120-day period
18 from the time you adopt it to the time it begins
19 to -- until you're able to collect it. If we do
20 that, we would need to change the effective date on
21 here. I tried to set it October 1, the beginning of
22 the quarter, but that would be the issue.

23 MR. BRANDON: That's an artificial
24 deadline, isn't it?

25 MR. ROGERS: It is. I mean, you could

1 change it until the end of the year, if you prefer
2 to do that, or until a later month, but just to
3 bring that to your attention. You could put it off
4 until the June meeting, that you could not just do
5 the implementation.

6 MS. MOORE: Well, Ben, where it says
7 that be it further resolved that we may review the
8 implementation of the wireless enhanced 911. And to
9 me that's a good clause because you can come back
10 and review it, but you're not obligated to do it and
11 take a chance of losing it. Is that what I'm
12 reading into this?

13 MR. ROGERS: May is a permissive word.

14 MS. MOORE: That may be better than to
15 say shall do it.

16 MR. BRANDON: Okay. I think we've beat
17 this one to death. I need a motion from somebody.

18 MR. LOWERY: On a recommendation from
19 the E-911 board, Alex Case, I'll make a motion --

20 MR. BRANDON: I don't think the E-911
21 board recommended anything about timing out of the
22 fee.

23 MR. LOWERY: Okay. I'll take that
24 back. I make a motion that we accept this
25 resolution as printed.

1 MR. BRANDON: Okay. I have a motion.
2 Is there a second?

3 MR. PITTMAN: I'll second that motion.

4 MR. BRANDON: Okay. I have a motion
5 and a second. Mr. Young?

6 MR. YOUNG: No.

7 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Lowery?

8 MR. LOWERY: Yes.

9 MR. BRANDON: Mr. Pittman?

10 MR. PITTMAN: Yes.

11 MR. BRANDON: Ms. Moore?

12 MS. MOORE: Yes.

13 MR. BRANDON: And the chair votes no.
14 The motion passes.

15 Okay. Moving along to the county
16 expense voucher policy. We had this discussion a
17 couple of years ago where we said -- we set out some
18 guidelines for how we were going to account for
19 money that was used for traveling and we said that
20 if you come and get a per diem before you leave,
21 when you come back, you have to clear that per diem
22 with receipts and we have -- we're not doing that
23 all the time and I need to -- I want us to restate
24 the importance of doing this because -- across all
25 departments because we can control this and the

1 departments that report to the Commission, but the
2 people that are not doing this are people who are
3 not subject to the Commission's authority. I want
4 to get a sense from the other Commissioners on the
5 fact that this is important, that if you get money
6 from the county to travel, that you need to account
7 for it and where it was spent. Do we have any
8 discussion on that?

9 MR. LOWERY: If you would view the form
10 that we're using. Is it in this pack? I did look
11 at that form and it looks like to me it needs to be
12 touched up a little bit.

13 MR. BRANDON: Well, the procedure for
14 accounting for it is later. The intent when we did
15 this two years ago right about this time of the year
16 was that you can't just come and get money and not
17 account for it when you travel.

18 MR. LOWERY: It's not our department
19 that we're having trouble with.

20 MR. BRANDON: That's correct.

21 MR. LOWERY: It's constitutional
22 officers. Let me ask our attorney about this
23 because we're --

24 MR. ROGERS: There would be a problem
25 in trying to enforce this on a constitutional

1 officer if that money were in their budget. Now,
2 they do have to submit something, I would think,
3 whether it be a letter, memo, statement saying that
4 they were gone on a given day or something. They
5 can't just make a claim without any sort of
6 supporting documents, but I don't know that the
7 County Commission can require them to submit a
8 certain form of a claim or a certain receipt or
9 anything like that.

10 As I recall, a few years ago the County
11 Commission went from a system of allowing a per diem
12 amount, a set amount per diem to a system in which
13 you had a per diem amount as long as you provided or
14 submitted receipts --

15 MR. BRANDON: That's correct.

16 MR. ROGERS: -- to justify that. And
17 the constitutional officers -- as you know, the
18 County Commission is limited in what they can do
19 concerning the procedures and policies that they
20 require of the constitutional officers in their
21 department. So when this had come up in, I guess,
22 the personnel committee meeting, I'm not sure, I had
23 suggested that if our accountants are recommending
24 that we go with one system or another, that that
25 information would be taken to the constitutional

1 officers and see if an agreement could be reached
2 and informed about that. I'm not sure where that
3 was left after that. That is a legal concern that
4 the Commission can't require one of its personnel
5 policies --

6 MR. BRANDON: I understand. Can
7 anybody think of a reason why you wouldn't want to
8 turn in receipts?

9 MS. MOORE: We talked about this, I
10 guess, two years ago and it was decided that, of
11 course, those answering to the Commissioners, Board
12 of Commissioners, all county employees certainly had
13 to turn in receipts for mileage, lodging, whatever.
14 But constitutional officers have that money in their
15 budget and they each -- the way I'm seeing it, each
16 constitutional officer submits a letter to the
17 commission for their expenses stating what they need
18 for mileage, what they need for lodging and what
19 they need per diem and that is within their budget
20 and as long as they don't spend over that. And when
21 we discussed this then with the county attorney, we
22 were advised that we could not control.

23 However, it is probably to the -- I
24 think that it would be good for them to keep their
25 own separate files and their lodging and travel in

1 case the auditor, you know, wanted to look at that.
2 As a matter of fact, when I was superior court
3 clerk, I did keep a file, my own file. I was
4 told -- the reason I started I doing that, I was
5 told by one of the employees, former employees in
6 the Commission office that that wasn't necessary to
7 turn theirs into the Commission, so we didn't. So
8 we kept it in our own files and requested what was
9 allowed. What was allowed was the \$40 per day plus
10 your mileage that you're allowed by law and then
11 your lodging.

12 And so I would think that each -- my
13 opinion, if each constitutional officer makes sure
14 they keep up and we have some constitutional
15 officers here tonight. But it was clarified at that
16 time that if it's within their budget and they're
17 requesting it, then we couldn't --

18 MR. YOUNG: Well, I could see where the
19 inequity is when you have someone that's under the
20 Commission that's got to turn in receipts and give
21 back money if they didn't spend the \$40 a day and
22 then you've got somebody that works for a
23 constitutional officer getting \$40 a day and they
24 don't turn in anything.

25 MR. BRANDON: Especially if you're

1 traveling and you're being fed at a meeting like we
2 go to at the ACCG and you're going to pocket the \$40
3 and not have to spend it and it's not appropriate.
4 It's not good accounting.

5 MR. LOWERY: So can the constitutional
6 officers let their employees do that just because
7 it's in their budget, put \$40 -- do we have to pay
8 them \$40 a per diem? Do we have to do that or can
9 we just say we'll reimburse you for whatever you
10 spend on meals?

11 MR. ROGERS: No. The constitutional
12 officers set the personnel policies for their office
13 and so if it's -- if that money had been budgeted
14 and they have that money in their budget, they set
15 the policies for that. So I guess what I'm saying
16 is I don't think the Commission can do that.

17 MR. BRANDON: Well, since we can't do
18 anything about it, there's no use in wasting any
19 more time on it. Maybe we'll just start printing a
20 list every month of who didn't turn in their --

21 MR. YOUNG: Add it to their budget next
22 year.

23 MR. BRANDON: We'll just start printing
24 a list of people that don't turn in their receipts.
25 Maybe that will fix it.

1 MS. MOORE: But again, they're not
2 required to.

3 MR. BRANDON: I understand we can't
4 require them to, but the taxpayers might want to
5 know that.

6 MS. MOORE: As long as they don't go
7 over their budget.

8 MR. BRANDON: Okay. Moving along, I
9 think that's the end of our new business. At this
10 point, we have citizen participation. We have
11 Ms. Westbrook has asked to --

12 MS. MOORE: You have someone with the
13 City here, too.

14 MR. BRANDON: Pardon me?

15 MS. MOORE: You also have someone from
16 the City.

17 MR. BRANDON: I understand, but I have
18 Ms. Westbrook's name printed right here. Christine
19 Westbrook, come on up. That's why I called her
20 first.

21 MS. WESTBROOK: Thank you. I would
22 like to read a statement. My name is Christine
23 Westbrook. When I asked for a few minutes at this
24 meeting, I originally intended to elaborate on a
25 mission of a newly formed government watchdog

1 program and its intention to hold this Commission
2 accountable to the public.

3 An article was prepared to run in the
4 local paper that would explain this group's mission,
5 but I believe that due to the expanding coverage of
6 the Commission members' activities this week, it
7 wasn't published. Therefore, I would like to
8 reserve my comments on that activity for another
9 date.

10 I would like to take this time,
11 however, to voice my personal opinion and I'll start
12 by stating that neither my father nor I may have
13 been seen at the previous Commission meetings, but
14 that doesn't indicate an ignorance of the issues as
15 has been alleged lately in the paper. I have been
16 vocal about the issues affecting the people in this
17 county and I will continue to do so as long as I
18 believe there's something worth saying.

19 My family has been in this area for
20 over twenty years. My siblings, nieces and nephews
21 have attended school here. My brother and
22 sister-in-law both own businesses here. We live our
23 lives quietly. We go to church. We go to work. We
24 raise our children not in the public, but as
25 ordinary citizens. We make our contributions to

1 this county through our taxes and through our votes.

2 Since my military retirement and my
3 return to Dade County, I've watched this local
4 government, but it's only since the events of the
5 last few months that I've felt the need to speak
6 out. We have a right as voters and citizens to
7 voice our concerns about our public officials
8 without fear of being attacked or threatened.

9 As a private citizen, I am accountable
10 to my God, my family and myself. On the other hand,
11 you, the members of this local government, are
12 elected officials and as such are also accountable
13 to the public for your actions. I can honestly say
14 that I am ashamed of the accusations, the mud
15 slinging and the personal attacks that have become
16 the norm within this county. I've been accused of
17 recently jumping on Ben Brandon's side and that's
18 totally incorrect. Mr. Brandon should be held just
19 as accountable for his actions as are the
20 commissioners. I am, however, on the side of truth
21 and the truth is that this county elected
22 Mr. Brandon as its executive. The truth also is
23 that this county did not choose a government of
24 committees. We elected part-time commissioners to
25 represent our interests from each district to work

1 with the county executive, to respect his authority,
2 yet to hold him accountable as we voters should.

3 Your inability to accept Mr. Brandon's
4 position, his authority and his decisions and the
5 resulting actions has caused outrage in this county.
6 The truth also is that every issue facing this
7 commission seems to have two sides, but only one set
8 of facts. It's the interpretation of those facts
9 that cause the problem. Long-standing feuds,
10 personal disagreements and personal attacks have
11 been allowed for too long to blur the lines between
12 truth and hearsay. How will we citizens ever know
13 the truth about these issues unless we have elected
14 officials on this commission who will acknowledge
15 the facts and then put aside their personal
16 differences to work for the good of this county.

17 As an example, I have yet to hear or
18 read anywhere what the facts are, not the
19 allegations, but the facts concerning the decision
20 to change our form of government by changing
21 Mr. Brandon's duties and running the county by
22 committee. Until there's an attitude of mutual
23 respect between our commissioners and our county
24 executive, I and my family will continue to be
25 embarrassed by what is happening in our Dade County

1 government and will speak out in an attempt to learn
2 the truth.

3 Both Senator Jeff Mullis and
4 Representative Martin Scott have expressed agreement
5 that Ben Brandon should be allowed to do his job and
6 that commissioners are wasting our resources by not
7 allowing him to do so.

8 It was also stated that this form of
9 government we have now is not what was intended by
10 the legislation that was written, nor is it what the
11 voters of this county chose. What more does it take
12 when the citizens are angry, the governing
13 legislation is misinterpreted and misused for this
14 committee to see that serious changes need to be
15 made? As a very concerned citizen, I urge each of
16 you to find some common ground in order to work
17 together. If you cannot respect the individual,
18 then at least respect the office to which you were
19 elected and within that office, your obligation to
20 the people of this county to work for a better Dade.

21 Most of the residents of this county
22 have an investment here as I do. I live here. I
23 own property here. I spend my money here. My son
24 will grow up here and I vote here. I'm not
25 interested in ill will or confrontations or he said

1 she said from the past, but I look to this
2 commission for a better future for our children and
3 our county. I look to this commission to be a
4 representation of the people who put you in office.

5 If you cannot put your differences
6 aside and work together, then you have disappointed
7 the people who have placed their trust in you. If
8 you cannot meet that obligation and perform your
9 duties in an atmosphere of cooperation, then for the
10 good of the county and the citizens, I urge you to
11 step down.

12 MR. BRANDON: Thank you. Anyone else?
13 Mr. Barton Harris.

14 MR. HARRIS: To give you an update for
15 those of you that may not have been here last month,
16 I am the City of Trenton street commissioner and I
17 brought a proposed map of some street changes, also
18 the overpass over I-59 to tie our two schools
19 together and divert traffic from making exits and
20 entrances so often on to 136 and 11. Everyone
21 that's looked at it likes it. I had a meeting,
22 myself and Peter Cervelli and a couple of others
23 involved, with Georgia DOT this past Monday and also
24 Arcadis that's doing our street scape project. They
25 wanted to take that map and include it not with

1 street scape, but include it on mapping so -- kind
2 of get a little better idea, little better drawing
3 out of a computer than what I drew by hand. But
4 again, when that comes up, I would like all the help
5 that, you know, the commission and the people in the
6 county and city can do to help us.

7 I also did check on pricing for that
8 overpass over I-59. It's not as expensive as I
9 thought it was. It's not a goal that I don't think
10 the county, city, school board and maybe the federal
11 can help us with. The pricing I got on it from two
12 different companies was depending on the lanes,
13 number of lanes. I was looking for three. We may
14 be able to drop back to two and put the third lane
15 in off the overpass, but it's going to be between
16 1.4 and 1.7 million. I was thinking it would be
17 closer to three or three-and-a-half, but I did get
18 with two contractors that build bridges. I don't
19 think that's out of reach to try to alleviate a lot
20 of our traffic problems.

21 The second thing I need to speak about
22 tonight, I talked last month about the tipping fee
23 that the City pays. The City is not in the garbage
24 business. It's household garbage. It's just like
25 anybody carries out of the county or the city,

1 whoever picks it up and takes it to our transfer
2 station and I talked about this about a month ago in
3 our last regular called meeting and I'm asking
4 tonight for a motion to waive the tipping for the
5 city household garbage that's dropped there.

6 MR. BRANDON: It's not on the agenda,
7 Barton. We're not going to amend the agenda. If
8 you want to put it on the next one for next month,
9 we can talk about it then, but the agenda is already
10 set.

11 MR. HARRIS: The meeting is not
12 adjourned. Is there no reason you can't -- is there
13 anything that keeps you from --

14 MR. BRANDON: We haven't studied it.
15 We haven't looked at the impact on the county if we
16 waived those fees and there's no way I would vote on
17 that tonight.

18 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Well, let's get it
19 on the agenda for next month and whatever we need to
20 look at and call me if you need any more
21 information.

22 MR. BRANDON: All right. One thing
23 that I asked you last month, did you find out how
24 much y'all get in fees from Georgia Power?

25 MR. HARRIS: Ben, I want you to focus

1 on what I'm here for. I want you to focus on what
2 I'm here for tonight.

3 MR. BRANDON: I hear you.

4 MR. HARRIS: Tipping fees for the City.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. LOWERY: What Ben's trying to tell
7 you though is there's other things that offset the
8 City.

9 MR. BRANDON: That's right.

10 MR. LOWERY: Like those power --

11 MR. BRANDON: Franchise fees that y'all
12 get that we don't, people in the county pays that
13 the people in the city get the benefit of.

14 MR. HARRIS: My County taxes are \$1,500
15 and my City taxes is about 300. Do you want to swap
16 that?

17 MR. BRANDON: You choose to live in the
18 city. We don't.

19 MS. MOORE: Ben, I would recommend that
20 we come up with the next committee meeting.

21 MR. BRANDON: We absolutely will do
22 that and I'll ask the clerk to put that on the work
23 session for the next meeting.

24 MS. MOORE: Committee meeting, so that
25 we have it for the next meeting.

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MR. BRANDON: All right. Anyone else?
Seeing no further business before the Commission, we
stand adjourned. Thank you.

