The scheduled Workshop Session of the Tift County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Grady Thompson on Tuesday, September 6, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners’ Meeting Room of the Administrative Building. Members of the Commission present including Chairman Thompson were Vice Chairman Robert Setters and Commissioners Buck Rigdon, Melissa Chevers, Donnie Hester and Mike Jones, and Sherry Miley.

Public Comments:

Ronald Nixon spoke with the Board briefly and gave each Commissioner a pen. He stated that some issues of concern still have not completely been dealt with however he has been discussing these with Commissioner Hester and hopes that we will get some things resolved soon.

Appointments: None

Informational Items for Discussion Only: The County Manager discussed with the Board the redistricting process stating that it has been discussed in two previous meetings and that the need is also there to redistrict the School Board because they mirror each other. Southern Georgia Regional commission has drawn up the maps and we need to make sure that everybody gets a chance to review those maps. They use model software with a database that has census data in it to come up with the maps so the district lines are determined by population numbers rather than just geography. The County Attorney elaborated on the process stating that probably 85 to 90 percent of the counties are in the process of redistricting and said that the County and the School Board lines are the same and we will involve them in the process however the weight of the decision making lies with the Board of Commissioners. We have to get our decision down to one map that we can submit to the State. We need to have the first of November in mind as a goal for reaching a consensus on which map the County wants to submit. Given this date with a map selection it would allow the County time to prepare all the paperwork that must go along with the map and get it submitted to the state as the beginning of January. The next step is plan a community information meeting so that folks can review the maps and ask any questions they may have and will be helpful for SGRC to explain a little bit about how they get those numbers from the census data and how they manipulate the maps to make the numbers in each district meeting the requirements. Staff will continue discussions with the School Board and SGRC to set up a date for the Informational Meeting for the public.

Public Hearings:

A. TC-ZA-11-02: Petition by Paul & Peggy Akins; Carlton Fleming & GTMHP: and Bruce Warrant, Agent for a change in Zoning from RP (Residential/Professional) Zoning district to GA (General Business) Zoning District to locate a Recreational Vehicle Campground on 6.65 acres on parcel T016-01 at 1210 Whiddon Mill Road and 2.00 acres on parcel T016-003B: Todd Miller with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission was present and gave the particulars of the request as well as the staff recommendation. This comes to the Board with a recommendation of approval from both Planning and Zoning and from staff. Staff has reviewed this petition and determined that it is in compliance with the Standards for Exercise of Zoning Powers and recommends this petition for rezoning be approved subject to the following conditions: 1) A six (6) foot high wooden fence or wall with a fifteen (15) foot wide landscape buffer outside the wall or fence shall be installed on the western and southern property lines prior to development and construction of the campground; 2) no development or construction shall occur on the 2 acre parcel that impedes floodwaters.

Commissioner Jones had some discussion concerning the structures that would impede the floodwaters. It was stated that any structures placed on the property would be subject to the Corp of Engineers, FEMA and etc. and all reconstruction development and they will have to adhere to any and all guidelines. There were also questions about water and sewer. It was stated that this had not been worked out yet but it is available and they will have to put in a lift station. The County Attorney advised that there is State law that takes care of this and they are required to connect to water and sewer.

Items to be discussed for Regular Session on September 12, 2011:

B. Appointment/Re-appointment to the Behavioral Health Board: The County Clerk advised that she had not had anyone come in to complete a Board Application for this seat. The discussion from the Commissioners was to probably remove this item from the Agenda until they have time to talk with their colleagues to find someone interested in this field.

C. Award Bid for paving for Wood Duck Way, Drake Lane & a portion of Jacob Hall Road: Jason Jordan advised the Board that this project had been publicly advertised and sealed bids were opened at the designated time. Four bids were received: Littlefield Construction $128,641.80; Everett Dykes Construction $136,607.25; Scruggs Company $145,024.49 and Reeves Construction $161,617.36. Staff is recommends the Board award this project to the low bidder.
D. Award bid for Repair and Maintenance of 25 Bridges & Culverts: Jason Jordan advised that this project was properly advertised however we only received one bid from Southern Concrete in the amount of $649,200. This is for the repair of 24 bridges and culverts. After these are repaired that will leave us with 12 structures that the Tift County Road Department can and will repair and 4 structures that need to be replace. Two of these have been submitted to the Georgia Department of Transportation for the 2012 LMIG Funding Program. The goal of staff is to have a bridge inspection report that is free of deficiencies. Staff recommends awarding the bid for the advertised 24 structures to Southern Concrete.

E. Amendment to the Technical Standards Manual: Jason Jordan advised that staff is seeking approval of a Text Amendment to the Technical Standards Manual referencing stormwater. Section 6.1, page 22, Section 6.7, page 23 has had language added that will make the stormwater design standards and specifications more understandable to developers and their engineers. Section 6.24.3, page 33 has been deleted that staff felt was redundant. These changes to the Technical Standards Manual will not change the intent of the Original Manual it will just clarify the language to make it clear.

F. Report on Unused Buildings listed on Insurance Policy: Jason Jordan prepared a booklet of several properties owned by Tift County that the Board should consider surplus. The booklet contained pictures of each structure and code violations in most that does not meet the standards. He stated that it is important for us to make sure our properties are up to the codes and standards that we expect our citizens to meet. The County Manager stated that if we are going to police our citizens and hold them up to a certain level then we need to hold ourselves to that same level. The second part of this is from a fiduciary standpoint, the houses are being insured and they are not even habitable or functional in anyway. We hope the county will continue to grow and we can’t be landlocked by properties we can’t use, the land is crucial to the future growth. Some of the properties were purchase in the past to make way for parking and growth of the Courthouse and Administration Facilities and right now we cannot move forward with the plan that the citizens voted for on a SPLOST Referendum for a parking lot. Staff will prepare further detail on a few properties at the time to bring back before the Board to make the decision for the structure to be torn down or put out from bid for it to be removed from the property. Staff is looking for direction from the Board to start the process.

Jason added that one other property that was not included in the listing provided but would like to add to the list is the gym at Chula Volunteer Fire Department. This building is in bad shape, it has a big hole in the roof as well as one in the floor. It is located on the property where the new volunteer Fire Department will be built and he also understands from the City that this is the location where our new water tank is supposed to be placed.

G. Transfer of two ambulances not in use by the Tift County EMS: Jason Jordan advised the Board that EMS has been contacted by the City of Omega requesting that when an ambulance is surplusd they would like to have it donated to them and it will be used at their Fire Department as a First Response Unit. They also have been approached by Moultrie Tech requesting the same and that ambulance will used as a teaching aid in at the Tifton Campus. Commissioner Setters stated that the City of Omega talked to him after they built their new Fire Department and they requested an ambulance be housed there. They would have to come up with the funds to have an ambulance housed to be operated there so this discussion came about and they agreed to have their volunteer fireman trained to be first responders so they can handle this. He stated that this community really wants this. Commissioner Jones asked if this will be just inside the City Limits of Omega or would they go out into the County and would the County have any liability. The County Attorney spoke to this question stating that they would have to be properly trained and certified and they cannot transport and he generally does not see any liability for the County. We could possibly address this with a Mutual Aid Agreement and staff will check into this more. Commissioner Jones would like to see this for the City of Ty Ty also when other ambulances are to be surplusd. The Tift County EMS lettering will be removed from the vehicle and will be equipped with First Responder Unit lettering.

County Manager Items:

- Gave a hand out of the recent CDBG Grants that the County was awarded
- Advised that soon we will have recognition of upgrades of Recreational Facilities, specifically Copeland and Puckett Parks. He will send out dates for those recognition ceremonies.

Commissioners Comments:

Commissioner Miley read a letter she received from a citizen in her district commending Richard Burr and the Tift County Road Department for some recent work done on Paulk Road and general road maintenance from Bob Gressette. Commissioner Miley requested that this be made a part to Mr. Burr, Tift County Public Works Director’s personnel file.

Executive Session: None

Chairman Thompson adjourned the meeting.

Chairman Grady Thompson, District 7
Vice Chairman Robert Setters, District 3
Commissioner Donnie Hester, District 1
Commissioner Melissa Chevers, District 2