

PRESENT: Chairman Rev. E. C. Tillman
Vice Chairman Robert H "Bob" Boyne
Commissioner William E. Dismer
Commissioner Jack Hardman
Commissioner Karen Moore
Commissioner W. Harold Pate
Commissioner Joe Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator Charles T. Stewart
County Attorney Gary Moore

Opening Ceremony.

Chairman Tillman opened the meeting by calling on Commissioner Boyne for the invocation, followed by pledge of allegiance to the flag. He then recognized the presence of State Representatives Willou C. Smith and Ron Fennel.

Beach Nourishment Project.

Commissioner Tillman explained that the Board of Commissioners was pursuing the 933 Beach Nourishment Project because loss of Glynn County's beaches could result in the following negative impacts for the community.

- 1) 3119 of the 13,000 local tourism jobs could be lost,
- 2) Beachfront property valued in excess of \$200 million could be lost,
- 3) Beachfront tax base which generates \$934,000.00 per year should be protected,
- 4) Beachfront Hotel/Motel Taxes generate \$250,000.00 per year,
- 5) Beachfront properties generate \$170,000.00 per year in Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax,
- 6) Erosion of beachfront at public parks would result in loss of public access to the beaches, and
- 7) The beach nourishment project would improve the habitat for shore birds and endangered species.

Chairman Tillman said reissuance of the beach nourishment bonds would lock in a preferable long-term rate as opposed to the floating rate attached to the current bonds, resulting in protection of the County's rating for future bond issues.

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A motion was made by Commissioner Hardman and seconded by Commissioner Moore that Glynn County move ahead with reissuance of the Beach Nourishment Bonds.

Commissioner Dismer questioned the length of the bonds and the method of payment. County Administrator Charles Stewart responded that the life of the bonds was 20 years at 6.34% interest. Administrator Stewart explained that he and members of the Commission met the previous day in Atlanta with Department of Transportation Commissioner Wayne Shackelford and officials of the State Tollway

Authority and Federal Highway Administration, and assurances were received at that time that funding would be available either from a parking fee or other ideas proposed by Federal Highway Administration. Commissioner Dismer asked what cost would be involved in reissuing the bonds. Administrator Stewart replied that a total of \$87,000 had been expended with regard to underwriting this bond issue; however, no additional cost would be incurred whether reissuance took place or not. Because of the fact that issuance of bonds by the Hospital Authority caused the County's first issue on beach nourishment to lose its bank qualified status, he said the Hospital Authority reimbursed \$35,000 of the reissuance cost to the County. Commissioner Dismer said he felt the Commission had acted improperly in approving a bond issue without knowing the funding source.

Ed Wall, representing bond underwriter Lex Jolley & Company, explained that Glynn County had contracted with the Brunswick and Glynn County Development Authority to issue revenue bonds for this project. He said the security and source of payment was for the County to include in its budgetary operations each year sums sufficient to pay the debt service, and they could choose to get those sums from any source including Sales Tax, Hotel/Motel Tax or Ad Valorem Taxes. Mr. Wall said the County could use whatever revenue source they chose, and it was up to the citizens to believe ad valorem taxes would not be used. He also stated that the County could not have received the preferential 6.34% interest rate on the bonds had they not had the ultimate full faith and credit of the County.

Chairman Tillman opened the floor for discussion. Several citizens voiced opposition to the overall project and reissuance of the bonds. One woman suggested that sales tax monies pinpointed for road improvements on St. Simons Island and renovation of the Casino Complex be used to pay off the bonds, and that no further action be taken until a firm funding source was found and there was assurance that the project would go through. Another citizen suggested that interest rates might continue to decline. One gentleman asked Commissioners Boyne and Hardman if any portion of their private insurance businesses came from any of the people who stood to gain from the beach nourishment project, and both gave a negative response. Another speaker said he opposed placement of dredged sand on the beaches, and he felt that individual property owners could put in their own revetments.

Since no funding source for the bonds had been identified, Heidi Whitt asked if this fact placed the obligation on the citizens of the County. Commissioner Boyne responded that the full faith and borrowing power of the community was predicated on ad valorem taxes, although the Commission had pledged never to use ad valorem taxes for the beaches.

Ed Stevenson asked the Commission to support a referendum which would allow the citizens to express themselves on this project. Betsy Ellzey said she opposed this project because ad valorem taxes might be used for funding, and sand pumped onto the beaches in Ocean City had been washed away by a storm overnight. Jim Robertson said only 40% of local business related to tourism, and he felt the interests of the remaining 60% should be considered. He stated that the beach was accreting and nourishment was not needed.

Bob Drury opposed the project and said the beach was not falling into the ocean. Mr. Drury said even if the St. Simons beach was eroding, Jekyll Island had 12 miles of beach, so employment in Glynn County would not be impacted. He questioned the status of funding sources and contracts regarding this project. County Attorney Gary Moore advised that Local Contract Agreement to do the project had been signed by the Department of Transportation and Corps of Engineers; and Glynn County had signed an image agreement with DOT.

Commissioner Moore said when a contract for this project was signed in a ceremony in the Court House with all the press present, there was no opposition to this project.

Parris Stocks, speaking as a member of the press representing Harbor Sound, and as a private citizen, questioned information included in Chairman Tillman's statement concerning tourism related jobs impacted by the beaches, as well as information regarding continuing beach nourishment projects contained in a draft capital improvement program. Ed Stelle, Director of the Glynn County Metropolitan Planning Department, explained that projections concerning jobs were based on studies compiled by the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center. Administrator Stewart said the capital improvement program referred to by Ms. Stocks was a draft of a planning document being worked on by County Staff, and it had not been endorsed by the County Commission. He noted, however, that the County had ongoing with the Corps of Engineers a feasibility study for beach nourishment beyond the 933 Project during the out years.

Carol Highsmith said she felt it was in the best interest of the people of Glynn County for this project to continue, based on the underlying motive of growth. She suggested that the Commission go through with this project, and then put together a public forum to discuss growth. She specifically asked the Commission to proceed with reissuance of the bonds, transfer of right-of-entry to the Corps of Engineers, and immediate initiation of the project so it would not interfere during turtle mating season.

Jim Jordan said many people in Glynn County believed in this project, and he urged the Commission to move ahead with it.

Herb Campbell, of Herb Campbell Erosion Control, said some type of holding structure was needed to hold the sand on the St. Simons beaches, and the system would repair itself.

Commissioner Hardman's motion to move ahead with reissuance of the Beach Nourishment Bonds was adopted by majority vote with one dissent by Commissioner Dismer.

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A motion was made by Commissioner Pate and seconded by Commissioner Boyne authorizing the Chairman to execute right-of-entry documents for the 933 Beach Nourishment Project and request that the Brunswick and Glynn County Development Authority deliver same to the Corps of Engineers, with the condition that prior to the dredge contract being let the Corps contact the County to insure that a guaranteed funding source other than ad valorem tax was in place.

In response to query from Elise Permar, County Attorney Gary Moore stated that the easements that were essential were in hand, and the project had been designed around these easements. Ed Stelle, Director of the Glynn County Metropolitan Planning Department, added that easements of 393 of the total of 425 property owners within the project area had been obtained.

Motion adopted by majority vote of six Commissioners, and Commissioner Dismer dissenting.

Meeting Adjourned.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hardman and seconded by Commissioner Smith to adjourn the meeting.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,
GLYNN COUNTY, GEORGIA

Rev. E. C. Tillman
Chairman

ATTEST:

Martha D. Tyre,
Deputy Clerk