

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Eric K. Maxwell, Chairman  
Randy Ognio, Vice Chairman  
Steve Brown  
Charles W. Oddo  
Charles D. Rousseau



## FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Steve Rapson, County Administrator  
Dennis A. Davenport, County Attorney  
Tameca P. White, County Clerk  
Marlena Edwards, Deputy County Clerk

140 Stonewall Avenue West  
Public Meeting Room  
Fayetteville, GA 30214

## MINUTES

April 24, 2018

4:00 p.m.

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Welcome to the meeting of your Fayette County Board of Commissioners. Your participation in County government is appreciated. All regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

### Call to Order

Chairman Eric Maxwell called the April 24, 2018 Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 4:09 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present.

### Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Charles Oddo

Commissioner Charles Oddo offered the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Acceptance of Agenda

Chairman Maxwell moved to allow public comments for item #1 Proclamation recognizing April 2018 as "Confederate history and Heritage month" and April 26, 2018 as "confederate Memorial Day." Commissioner Charles Rousseau seconded.

Commissioner Oddo asked for clarification on the proposed order of the agenda.

Chairman Maxwell amended the motion to allow public comments for item #1 Proclamation recognizing April 2018 as "Confederate history and Heritage month" and April 26, 2018 as "confederate Memorial Day." after the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Rousseau amended the second.

Commissioner Oddo stated that he was fine with having the Board take a seat at the dais, have public comments on item #1 and then continue with the agenda. He stated that this was the first time the Board had allowed public comments under proclamation/recognition, so the Board could do as it choose.

Chairman Maxwell amended the motion to allow public comments for item #1 Proclamation recognizing April 2018 as "Confederate history and Heritage month" and April 26, 2018 as "confederate Memorial Day." after the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Rousseau amended the second. The motion passed 5-0.

### PROCLAMATION/RECOGNITION:

#### 1. Proclamation recognizing April 2018 as "Confederate History and Heritage Month" and April 26, 2018 as "Confederate Memorial Day."

This item was discussed immediately after the Consent Agenda.

Chairman Maxwell stated that no commissioner put the Confederate History proclamation on the agenda. He stated that it was a request from a citizen group. He stated that the Board did not typically vote on a proclamation and he did not recall ever allowing

discussion of a proclamation from the public. He gave brief comments regarding the procedure when making comments from the podium. He stated that it was 4:30 p.m. and at 6:00 p.m. the Board would take a recess.

Commissioner Brown stated that there may be some in the audience who had not read the proclamation. He read the proclamation to the audience.

**Darryl Hicks** stated that it was his belief that there was no one in the community that wanted a divided community, however there were things that do divide. He stated that one of the benefits that he often talked about in the community was the ability to work together. He stated that when a process was in place that allowed any proclamation to be brought before the Board, the challenge would be how to measure which should be brought before the Board and which ones should not. He used as an example the proclamation for Sergeant Eric Hunter as a proclamation that everyone could absolutely appreciate and then other proclamations that should be a red flag to the Board. He stated that the Board had a responsibility to throw up the red flag. He stated that it was important to communicate and that citizens felt like there was not an opportunity to have open dialogue about this proclamation. He asked that the proclamation process be "looked at" and allow for a conversation between people who would help the community. He stated that he hoped that this situation could be used as a chance to grow and heal.

**Lillian Winbush-Smith** stated that she was a real estate broker and that she was strongly opposed to the proclamation to recognize the Confederate holiday. She stated that the proclamation was divisive and hurtful.

**Benjamin Terry** stated that he was a sixth generation native Georgian. He stated that he studied American History with a concentration in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Southern United States History. He continued that this proclamation was a continuous of the rebranding of the war. He stated that the key words in the proclamation are a lie and he would urge the Board not to sign it.

**Reverend Jeffery Benoit** asked that all those who have served or have family members who have served in the military to please stand. He stated that it was treason to honor the Confederate by proclamation. He stated that to vote on it would make the Board treasonist. He stated that Fayette was in the process of being rebranded and if the Board approved the proclamation, businesses would find another place to do business. He stated that the "footprint" of the Confederacy could not be changed; it was a footprint of hate.

**Scott Gilbert** founder of the Georgia Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and past Fayette resident. He thanked those who have served in the military. He stated that the Sons of Confederate Veterans wrote the proclamation. He expressed that it was not the intention of anyone that wrote the proclamation to do anything to hurt the community or to offend anyone. He stated that there were symbols in the chamber and in the parking lot and the documents that gave him the freedom to attend this meeting, that cannot and would not pass the "politically correct" test that some people would impose.

**Sean Bennett** stated that for the last eighteen years he educated students in Fayette County. He referenced the recent event in Newnan, in Griffin and in Macon. He stated that he moved to Fayette County for a better life and to get his kids out of South Georgia because he did not want to raise racist. He stated that the Board had a choice to do the right thing. He continued that the proclamation was wrong in "50 different ways". It claimed that the civil war was fought for freedom and liberty and ignored the fact that slavery was the number one reason why the south went to war. He stated that if the Board choose this proclamation, then the Board was justifying slavery. He implored the Board to do the right thing.

**Representative Derrick Jackson**, District 64 and citizen of Fayette County for 14 years. He stated that he opposed Fayette County with this proclamation, he opposed City of Fayetteville with their proclamation and he opposed the Town of Tyrone with their proclamation. He continued that he found it disappointing and insulting that the Board would try to convince the audience that the Board had no control over the agenda. He stated that the service of Confederate soldiers was treason and should not be

conveyed as synonymous with patriotism. He asked the Board not to insult the intelligence of the people. He stated that the Board was elected by people, governed by the people and can be voted out by the people.

**State Senator Valencia Seay**, Senate District 34, stated that she had been the senator for 16 years, two years prior to that she was in the House of Representative where she was one of two votes that brought down the Confederate flag. She stated that she said that with pride. She stated that “we” should be “we” and not divisive. She stated that we do want to remember history, but not repeat it or insult the public. She stated that she did not want anyone to forget slavery, but she did not want Fayette County to ever celebrate it.

**Eric Woods** stated that one word stood out to him in the proclamation and that word was “patriotic”. He then quoted the oath of those who serve in the military. He stated that there was one category of soldiers who did not swear an oath and allegiance to the flag and that was the Confederate soldier. He stated that the Confederate soldier was a domestic terrorist. He continued that the confederacy was about white supremacy and slavery, therefore he respectfully implored the Board not to authorize, grant or bestow any type Confederate History proclamation in the names of the diversified and loyal citizens of Fayette County. He continued comments in opposition of the proclamation. He concluded that the Board had an opportunity to unite the county even further and to continue to progress economically, socially, and politically in Georgia. He asked the Board to do what was right because the proclamation did not represent all of Fayette County.

**Elaine Beraza** stated that her relatives were Confederate soldiers, not because they owned slaves, but because they were too poor. She stated that she was not proud of their service. She stated that she re-read the Constitution of the Confederate States. She read Section 9 Article 4. “No bill or law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed.” She stated that the abomination of slavery divided the nation, deprived people of rights and led to a bloody civil war. She stated that it left a stain on Georgia and the nation and if the Board honored the stain it would spread. She named causes in April worthy of a proclamation; Month of a Military Child, National Mental Health Month, National Child Abuse Month and National Donate Life Awareness Month. She asked the Board to do what was right.

**Joe Beasley** stated that he grew up in Fayette County. He stated that when he heard this proclamation was on the agenda, he hoped the Board would do the right thing and not honor it. He asked the Board to work to make Fayette a more perfect union.

**Representative Debra Bazemore**, District 63, stated that her heart was heavy. She stated that she had heard from her constituents on this issue, asking the Board not to move forward. She stated that when people point out a wrong, the Board had to do what was right and not turn a blind eye to the people. She stated that this proclamation was not for everyone, but a few. She stated that this proclamation would cause more divisiveness. She stated that the Board had heard from the people and now was being held accountable for what they heard.

**Fayette Citizen**. He stated that this proclamation was about hate and that this community was about love. He stated that this Confederacy proclamation was wrong.

**Robert Taylor** stated that he was retired police officer from the City of Riverdale and investigator. He stated that he was the president of Urban Outreach Association-Griffin, Inc. in Griffin. He stated that he, the vice president and treasurer spoke against the proclamation at the City of Griffin meeting. He stated that as children of God, this was not about the skin, but about sin...the sin of slavery. He stated that the “enemy” [satan] would lead you to believe this was about skin because if it was, the “enemy” would be able to separate us and if “he” did that “he” would win.

**Yvonne Smith** stated that even if the Board did not know about this on the agenda, when the Board saw this item on the agenda, they could have said, “No. We don’t want any part of that.” She stated that she was 83 years old and that she can tell the Board about slavery. She stated that the confederacy was about holding blacks back. She shared her experiences growing up. She

stated that the Board did not have to let this come before them, they could have turned it down. She stated that she was not giving up on her community. She wanted to make livable conditions for everyone. She stated that proclamations were given to people who have done something good. She stated that this was not something that the community was going to let creep in. She stated that the Board did not have to put the proclamation on the agenda and she would appreciate it if the Board got rid of it.

**Jovan Purifoy** stated that she saw on Facebook that Fayette County would be recognizing April as Confederate History Month. She stated that she assumed, because it was on social media, that it was false so she did her research. She stated that when she saw that it was actually on the agenda, she could not let it be passed. She stated that even if the Board did not have the power to put it on the agenda, the Board did have the power not to approve it. She shared some of her findings regarding the civil war. She continued for the Board not to push the narrative for slavery and the oppression of other humans. She stated that whether others admit it or not, the confederate flag, that this organization flies under, was divisive.

The Board recessed at 6:02 p.m. The Board reconvened at 6:20 p.m.

Commissioner Oddo stated that he had a heartfelt conversation with the petitioner who was saddened at the way this turned out. It was not his intention for this to happen. He stated that respectively the petitioner was withdrawing the request for the proclamation. Commissioner Oddo stated that he wanted to let everyone know that the petitioners were Fayette residents and that was why they did not want this to happen. He stated that he spent hours working on a proclamation and they were very close, but it did not happen. He stated that they would be happy to sit down and come up with something that was beneficial to everybody.

Chairman Maxwell stated that the program would continue because he did not want to cut anyone off that had something to say. He stated that he was pleased with the resolve and that there was more work for the Board to do about the process and getting a proclamation on the agenda.

**Billy Bearden** stated that he was not a resident of Fayette County. He stated that he was from Carroll County. He stated that he was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in Georgia. He stated that he was made aware of this fiasco on the internet. He stated that he felt he should show support of the proclamation because since 2003, he had sought out, requested and received over 100 proclamations from three different states. He stated that in the past the Board passed this proclamation and nothing happened. He stated that the proclamation was not to celebrate anything, but to acknowledge a time in history that happened. He stated that no one in the room was suffering from something that happened 155 years ago. He stated that it was shameful that the petitioner had been bullied to pull the proclamation. He stated that as a Son of Confederate Veteran, he honored the soldier and that was all it was about.

**Chris** stated that he was a resident of Fayette County. He stated that he had a lot of relative that fought for the confederacy, but that it was something that he was disguised, embarrassed and angry about. He stated that he could not change what his ancestors did a long time ago, but that we could change today. He stated that this county was attracting a lot of movie industries and if Fayette County was to get an image as one that upheld the confederacy, the jobs would leave in a second. He stated that he put the challenge on the Board to create a racial reconciliation process.

**Erika Barmann** stated that she was the daughter of a one-time undocumented immigrant. She stated that he fled from Nazi-Germany and her grandfather was the equivalent of a sergeant in the German Army as well as a choir director and at no time did she need to remember her history by wearing a Nazi uniform or honor her mother and father by having a Nazi flag and at no time did she honor a Nazi history month because there are museums, history books, and there were remembrances of the victims. She stated that this was not the way to represent heritage. She stated that the proclamation should not be brought back and that

the Board should instead recognize the racial tensions that exist in the county as united Fayette. She stated that there were two people speaking in favor of the proclamation and the representation speaking against.

**Edward Ahmed-Mitchell** stated that he was a civil rights attorney based in Atlanta, but that he lived in Fayette County. He stated that he grew up in the county. He stated that he was happy to see the petition withdrawn, but that a part of him was disappointed because he wanted to see the Board vote. He stated that he knew the Board well and he hoped that they would not have continued with the proclamation. He asked the Board that before adjourning the meeting, that they would go on record and say rather they would have supported the proclamation. He stated that every day he had to cross Stonewall Avenue that was named after Stonewall Jackson and that one day he hoped that would change. He stated that one-day Jeff Davis would have a different name, that Stonewall Avenue would have a different name and that this and other things, would be stirred up and changed. He stated that he respected the Board and appreciated the opportunity to speak.

**Marcia Hendershot** stated that she wanted to thank the petitioner for withdrawing the proclamation. She stated that it was a significant event and that she was sensitive to the need of the people in the room. She stated that perhaps when the Daughters of the American Revolution first proposed Confederate Memorial Day, perhaps it was just to honor the dead. She stated that things had taken a change. She thanked the Board for modifying the agenda so that the audience could speak. She stated that based on information that Commissioner Brown posted on Facebook, proclamations are not up for a vote. Commissioner Brown stated that was correct. Mrs. Hendershot stated that it would be nice to say that the Board "just read it", but the fact that the Board was saying the words and signing the proclamation...it said something and was an endorsement. She stated that she would suggest that the agenda process include, "Should this agenda item even be on the agenda?" She stated that she thought that agenda items were vetted as to not allow frivolous items on the agenda.

Chairman Maxwell explained the process for setting the agenda. He stated that no one had ever contacted him until this week when Wayne Kendall sent an email. He stated that it was the largest item since he had been a commissioner; 150 emails on the topic. The Board received feedback.

Mrs. Hendershot stated that she hoped that if she wanted a proclamation to have April 2018 declared "Anti babies in restaurant month", that the Board would review the proclamation and weed out something as ridiculous as that. She stated that she was so grateful for this day. She stated that Commissioner Brown stated on Facebook that he saw free speech as very important and that people from both sides should be heard. She stated that there were limits to that. She gave the example of the rules that were mentioned by Chairman Maxwell prior to hearing comments from the audience regarding this issue. She stated that agendas could be modified.

Chairman Maxwell stated that was why he made the motion to allow public comments.

**Reverend James Vance** stated that he was grateful to God that the right decision was made and that this item had been pulled out. He asked all veterans and their families to stand. He stated that he was a Vietnam veteran and he moved to Fayette because he was informed that Fayette County was a diverse county and welcoming of veterans and that the county was moving forward. He stated that there was no place where "losers" were allowed to erect monuments and be celebrated. He stated that he was offended by Nazi flags on American soil. He stated that it did not make sense that the Board would be considering any kind of adoration for treason.

**Leonard Presberg** stated that he resided in unincorporated Fayette County. He stated that he spent a lot of time talking to people in the county. He stated that he was flabbergasted by the concept that someone would say that they did not know this would be controversial. He stated that given the recent events in Griffin, Newnan, events since the recent election and Charlottesville... to say that the Board was surprised by families and neighbors standing to say that they were offended by this proclamation meant that the Board needed to get out in Fayette County a lot more. He stated that the idea that proclamations

“just show up and get signed”, it was joked about, but was not a joking matter. He stated that he was glad that the proclamation had been receded. He stated that he hoped the Board would revisit the process and reach out to the community and that the proclamations that came from the Board would be more reflective of the whole community.

**Terry Williamson**, president of the Fayette County branch of the NAACP. He stated that it was touching to see and listen to the outpouring of emotions from the citizens. He stated that he only heard of this proclamation in 2017 and there was no outrage or uproar. He continued that it still hurt to hear it being read. He stated that he heard the words that were shared by the representatives of the Sons of the Confederate back then and they disavowed the hate groups that stole their symbol and that they wanted nothing to do with them. He stated that a few weeks ago, the former president of the Fayette County Chamber asked him if he would attend a communication session with a couple of representatives from the Sons of the Confederate Veterans. The commander started out with how he could go back five or six generations and trace his ancestry in the county and he and the other African American that was in attendance could not go back that far. He stated that as much as they would like to know where they came from they could not go back that far because their ancestors were brought here in bondage. He stated that whenever an African American saw a reference or symbol that haunts back to the confederacy, it was a reminder of bondage and chains and a time when African Americans were thought to be less than humans. He stated that he agreed that there needed to be a wholistic story being told when it came to confederate history. He stated that when we have a proclamation that was one-sided, that was a problem. He stated that Fayette County had the opportunity to set an example and to build reconciliation between race. He stated that some people referenced that the City of Fayetteville and Town of Tyrone had already passed Confederate History proclamations and some wanted him to condemn them for doing so. He stated that he could not do that because that city/town did not have the push back. He stated after today, he was willing to bet that there would be a change of attitude from those respective cities/towns. He stated that he would be a part of the change.

**Reverend Jared Sawyer Jr.**, founder of “You Power Purpose, Inc.”. He stated that it was disgraceful to him, what was taken place; not the gathering of the people, but the gathering of everyone considering the notion of this particular proclamation. He stated that he lived in DeKalb County. He stated that he was from Georgia and that he appreciated his ancestral roots and that he had southern pride, but that he did not support the confederacy. He stated that it was disgraceful for anyone to support it and to embrace pride in the confederacy. He stated that to embrace pride in the confederacy was to embrace a time when African Americans were at their worse. He gave an account of the great grandson of Robert E. Lee and how he announced his regrets about what happened and that everyone can take down the statues and memorials of Robert E. Lee. He stated that if the family could be sufficed with not commemorating the confederacy, then why was the Board entertaining the thought of commemorating and celebrating the confederacy in 2018 in any fashion. He stated that he also would have liked for the Board, as representatives of the county, stand and say that they did not support the proclamation. He stated that if the Board had no say over the agenda that was a problem.

**Delvonnie Burgess** stated that the word “confederacy” had a very dark stain on the country. She shared a story of her uncle, from three generations, who was attacked by a lynch mob on the way home. She stated that she was pleased to know the petitioner withdrew the proclamation, however if the Board had signed the proclamation, she stated that it would have been “shame on you.”

**Jennifer Chenette** stated that with the level of hate in the world today, it may have always been around, but it was at least “polite” and now with the recent election the valve on hate had been opened up in this country. She stated that after 50 years since the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. where are we as a nation. She stated that she believed the repair began at home, at the local level and in our community. She stated that she did not want Fayette County to be known for this proclamation and there was a long list of things that could be honored in Fayette County. She listed some of these things. She stated that she was impressed with those who have spoken today.

**John Jones** resident of Fayette County. He thanked the Board for opening up this forum. He stated that we should never forget black people live in a country where they were never intended to be free, educated, treated equal or allowed to vote. He stated that he advocated for an apology. He stated that every decent of African slaves was an unintentional American. He stated that he had to overcome a lot of doubt to become an airline pilot. The doubt that came from those who oppressed his parents and fore parents that was passed to him, but he was glad that he overcame it. He stated that this was a great day in Fayette County.

**Bonnie Williamson** stated that she moved to Fayetteville with the intention of buying sweat pants, laying back and having a very easy life. She stated that she was glad this came about and that it was brought to everyone's attention. She stated that if the petitioner had not receded the proclamation, she would have expected the Board to sign the proclamation with the understanding that it would have been the very last time. She stated that she put this on all Fayette County citizens because she watched this proclamation come through year after year and no one said anything about this proclamation. She stated that it was up to the citizens to make changes. She stated that when the community let things on the agenda pass, they were saying it was okay to sign. She stated that she was tired of seeing Fayette County in the news for negative things and that it was time to start getting it right.

**Larry Younginer** stated that he was a 30-year resident of Fayette County. He stated that there was a terrorist shooter in Nashville and there was a hero there too and without the hero it would have been a lot worse. He stated that there was a hero present. He stated that he received an email from Wayne Kendall. He stated that there were roughly 200 people present before the meeting to protest the proclamation. He stated that most of them came in to the meeting. He stated that two people spoke in favor of the proclamation and one of them was not from Fayette County. He stated that meant that the Board was about 99% wrong on presenting this proclamation. He stated that if the Board was missing the boat on 99% of the contingents, then what kind of leaders were they. He stated that the 200 should have never had to be at the meeting for this because it should not have made the agenda.

**Nicholas Hansen** stated that he moved to Fayette County in the first grade. He stated that up to this point he had been very proud of being a citizen of Fayette County. He stated that one of his co-workers told him about the proclamation and so he looked in to it. He stated that when he looked at the document he said this was how Satan worked. He stated that this was evil at work. He asked the Board to try to use discernment. He stated that the congregation where he served wanted a congregation that truly represents Fayette County...Fayetteville and that they did not have one because people are put off at the fact that the square was configured in a way that we are constantly reminded of the negatives that have happened in this area. He extended a personal invitation to everyone to come worship at the "church on the square". He challenged everyone to do what they could do.

**Ken Bryant** asked why the meeting was on Tuesday instead of the regular Thursday. Chairman Maxwell explained that some members of the Board were scheduled to attend the annual Commission training in Savannah, Georgia and that the meeting was moved at the beginning of the year to accommodate that. Mr. Bryant asked if the Board intended to state how they would have voted. Chairman Maxwell stated that there was not a motion on the floor, therefore it would be up to each individual Commissioner to decide if they wanted to answer that question. Mr. Bryant stated that he applauded Commissioner Rousseau for being courageous and helping to inform the citizens. He stated that he also applauded Commissioner Oddo for having conversations with the Sons of the Confederate.

**Dollie Pollard** stated that the idea of a quality of life quotient brought her here from Fayette County. She stated that what attracted her to Fayette County, despite its history, was the idea of diversity and that people will come out and speak. She stated that some people have said that this proclamation should never been considered. She stated that the fact that it did come and that the Board had witnessed the response, put the Board on notice as leaders and representatives of the citizenry, that the Board had a big job to communicate and bring things to the constituents before they are considered.

The discussion was brought back to the Board. There was no motion on the floor.

Commissioner Brown stated that he suggested early on to make this an agenda item to allow comments. He stated that Fayette County was the only government that allowed speakers to speak for as long as they like on any topic. He stated that he agreed with Mr. Williamson. He stated that the street names could be changed anytime someone voted to change the street names. Chairman Maxwell informed that the streets are within the City of Fayetteville's jurisdiction. Commissioner Brown stated that it could be done and that it was just a matter of a vote. He stated that when he went to journalism school they drilled the first amendment into him and he was glad that they did. He stated that he had been one of the strongest components of first amendment rights for all people and he made no apologies for holding that position. He stated that he saw what happened in Griffin and the man should have been carried out of the meeting immediately. He continued that it was inexcusable behavior. He stated that there was difference in issuing thoughts and opinions that a room of people may not agree with and insulting people and vulgar name calling. The second part would get someone escorted out. He stated that veterans were mentioned a lot. He stated that veterans were used to discuss what was right and what was wrong. He stated that many would remember that some of those who came back from Vietnam were mistreated and chided. He continued that when he was a boy there would not have been an Vietnam veteran recognition. He stated that he and the Board gave an oath to uphold the United States Constitution and as part of that was the first amendment freedom of speech. He stated that it did matter to him who was speaking or what was being said as long as they didn't slander or incite violence. He stated that the first amendment was what preserved the remaining freedoms of the Bill of Rights. He stated that he was the only white person in his family and that he and his wife did not always agree. He stated that his kids got him interested in the NAACP. He stated that he recalled a magistrate judge that was using the "N" word while on the bench and they filed a complaint with the judicial qualification committee. He stated that he was the only elected official that took a stand. He stated that he was not saying that to brag, but in total disappointment that he was the only one who was willing to say something. He stated that he would hope that the NRA and hunters would say that it was not right for an officer to shoot a licensed armed African American man. He stated that until society was willing to give up a little and drop the ego, then we would never reach that point. He stated that the sides are so divisive. He stated that the City of Newnan had no choice but to allow that gathering. He stated that once the square was open for events, they could not withhold from anyone else. He stated that Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other, it is the principle of free thought – not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought that we hate." He stated that he liked that he used the word "hate" because what Oliver Wendell Holmes realized was that every individual's freedom depended on the ability to tolerate someone else's speech. He stated that it was ok to be offended. He stated that hate speech victimized people, but it only victimized people that allowed themselves to be victimized. He wanted to know who would be the person to be the arbitrator of what was hate speech. He stated that hatred was perfectly rational and that it was a just response to extreme assault on one's core values. He stated that Donald Trump was an example. He stated that some people saw this proclamation as "racist hate speech" and he did not see any "racist hate speech" in the proclamation. He stated that some may want to infer that between the lines, but he did not see it. He stated that the thing that bothered him was the microaggression and that we are raising ultra-fragile adults that hear something they may not want to hear. He expressed other concerns regarding free speech. He stated that all speech should be protected; Sons of the Confederate Veterans or Black Lives Matter. He stated that the Board could not arbitrarily say what proclamations it would not take. He stated that he asked for changes on both the NAACP proclamation and the Sons of Confederate. He stated that it was better to accept the proclamations rather than to say not to do any proclamations. He stated that the Board was not picking and choosing the "winners and losers" in the freedom and the thought battle. He pleaded for everyone to stop the trigger warnings, the safe spaces, the "I'm offended so stop everything" and start to debate. He stated that the sad part about Ferguson was that only 29% was white and the vast majority was African American and could have turned that police force over any time they wanted to. He stated that they did not get involved and that police brutality had been documented year after year, after year. He stated that 29% should not dictate what should happen. He pleaded not to restrict speech. He stated that he would have signed the proclamation because he believed in freedom of speech.

Vice Chairman Ognio stated that he agreed that we should know history so that it did not repeat itself. He stated that there was some misinformation in the public and that we could do a better job in teaching our kids what really happened so not to repeat it. He continued that the civil war had been so distorted and there were all kinds of information and getting to the facts was hard to



do sometimes. He stated that people have said that the Confederate soldiers were treasonist, but the fact was that they were not part of the Union at that time; the states had succeeded. He continued that there was a lot of information and people needed to get the facts. He stated that he had done some digging to try to clarify some things for himself. He stated that Robert E. Lee was a God-fearing man and a lot of people did not know that. He stated that he liked that Mr. Williamson was willing to sit down and have discussions and maybe there could be a proclamation that everyone was happy with. He stated that he did sign the proclamation. He stated that he did not see it as promoting slavery, but he saw it as how far we have come. He stated that his grandfather came to the United States from Italy and he was told to go to New Jersey to eat because that was where the Italians were. He stated that his grandfather would say, he did not come to be Italian, he came here to be an American.

Commissioner Oddo stated that he was one that harped on communications. He stated that he wished the proclamation had come about differently because of his relationship with some of the people in the room that went back to the district voting lawsuit. He stated that the conversation was started with a phone call that led to a discussion with the Board, which led to mediation and then a compromise. He stated that the Board was able to handle it quietly and to the satisfaction of most people and he still believed that was the way it should be. He stated that he worked hard to try to come up with a resolution to this proclamation. He stated that he lived in Fayette County 47 years and that there were issues, but he had seen the welcoming and seen people getting along. He stated that he made notes and there were 34 speakers and he tried to summarize what each speaker was saying and he was going to use it to help guide him. He thanked everyone for expressing themselves and for being civil.

Commissioner Rousseau commended everyone that took the time to weigh-in on this issue and being the voice of the people of the county. He stated that he was agreeable with his colleague on the subject matter that we should be careful and not proceed with "knee-jerk" reaction about picking and choosing when to tackle uncomfortable issues. He stated that it was not the responsibility that the Board signed up for. He stated that he used to tell his staff that leadership required leaders to be uncomfortable. He stated that when responsible for a multitude of people, everyone was not going to agree with the decision. He stated that he wanted to be careful about the process and when citizens or the Board put things on the agenda. He stated that he agreed with some of the things stated in regard to the civil war being synonymous with race. He stated how to move forward with that would determine how the county was as a community. He stated that one of the speakers spoke of a reconciliation council and he supported that and he would help assist and lend his voice. He stated that he had not passed down any invitation from an individual or group when asked to be present, unless there was a scheduling conflict. He stated that free speech was a touchy subject, but only when we did not agree. He stated that as a leader, elected by the citizenry of Fayette County, once the agenda was adopted the Board had a responsibility to hear it out. He stated that based on the information that came to the Board, they weigh the merits of a particular item, on its merit, and then let their conscious be the guide when voting. He stated that silence was sometimes endorsement. He stated that there was no more to say, but a lot to do. He stated that he would not have signed the proclamation because the language put government in a position as if to endorse a position.

Chairman Maxwell stated that before he entered the room he wrote down four motions because he wanted to have an alternative plan. He stated that the first motion passed to open up the discussion. He stated that typically with a proclamation there was no discussion. He stated that his next motion was to remove the item from the agenda and if it had not passed, the next motion was to postpone the proclamation to a later date to get more dialogue. He stated that he was present and he listened to everyone speak. He stated that the other motion was for the Board to discuss how to address all proclamations in the future. He stated that there will be some discussion to come up with a better process. He stated that he heard those that spoke. He stated that this county was going through a transition. He stated that sitting on the Board was not an easy job. He encouraged others to run for office. He stated that there was a different perspective when sitting at the dais. He stated that the Board just wanted to make the right decision. He stated that he had probably made up in his mind before listening to the group for two hours that he would sign the proclamation, but after listening to everybody, it was a different perspective that he had ever heard or thought. He stated that he was not a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and did not have any family members who were. He stated that he had lived in the community for 46 years and it was a great community. He stated that after law school he had a choice and he

chose Fayette County. He stated that the discussion was a healthy discourse. He stated that he was disappointed if people were upset that the Board talked about it. He stated that there had to be conversations.

The Board recessed at 8:30 p.m. and reconvened at 8:47 p.m.

**2. Proclamation recognizing May 2018 as Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month.**

Commissioner Oddo presented the proclamation on behalf of the Board, to a group representing motorcyclist in Fayette County. Mr. Edward Andross gave comments and thanked the Board.

**3. Presentation to proclaim May 5, 2018 as Sergeant Eric Hunter Day in Fayette County.**

Vice Chairman Randy Ognio presented a plaque to Sergeant Eric Hunter on behalf of the Board. Ms. Kay Fulp thanked the Board and announced a fundraiser for the Gary Sinise Foundation to raise money for the home being built for Sergeant Hunter and his family. The event was scheduled to take place on May 5, 2018 at Fun Spot aka Dixie Land. Sergeant Hunter stated that he was excited about becoming a part of the Fayette County community.

**4. Proclamation recognizing May 7, 2018 as "Water Professionals Appreciation Day."**

Commissioner Steve Brown presented a proclamation on behalf of the Board to Water System Director Lee Pope and staff. Mr. Pope gave comments and acknowledged the staff that work hard, around the clock to make sure the community had clean drinking water.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Commissioner Brown amended motion to approve the Consent Agenda, to include an updated "Fayette County Comprehensive Plan Amendment Capital Improvement Element Project FY2019-FY2020". Commissioner Oddo amended the second. The motion passed 5-0.

- 5. Approval of staff's recommendation to include "Addendum 2" of added events to the Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Fayetteville and Fayette County for use of county owned property.**
- 6. Approval to amend Contract #1418-S with AdaptToSolve, Inc. for the purchase and installation of an additional security camera at the Fayette County Public Library in the amount of \$1,490, using available funding from the Library's LED Lighting project and to close project 7565J, Library LED Lighting.**
- 7. Approval of Resolution 2018-09 to adopt the Fayette County 2017 Annual Report on Fire Services Impact Fees (FY2017), including Comprehensive Plan amendments for updates to the Capital Improvements Element and Short-Term Work Program (FY2018-FY2022).**
- 8. Approval of the April 12, 2018 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The Board recessed at 8:30 p.m. and reconvened at 8:47 p.m.

**9. Consideration of Ordinance 2018-01 to add Section 26-63. -Street authorization in Chapter 26 of Article III, Motorized Carts.**

Planning and Zoning Director Pete Frisina stated that this was a paragraph that was adopted regarding a protocol when looking at a street outside of a subdivision was being used for golf cart use. He stated that he thought it was left out when the code amendments were done in 2014, but in 2008 staff had not presented a proper ordinance so it did not get into the code. He stated that staff wanted to get the paragraph back in the code.

Commissioner Brown stated that in Peachtree City, if it was a residential street in a standard residential subdivision that a golf cart could be driven on those streets.

Mr. Frisina stated that normally when someone wanted to use the internal streets of the subdivision, staff did not do the study and it was just brought before the Board and approved. He stated that it was easier to do it on a case-by-case study.

Commissioner Brown asked if this passed, would the Planning Commission take on review all the subdivisions aligned with a path system to make sure it was included. Mr. Frisina stated that he believed that all that are on the path had already received permission. He stated that it was not part of the Planning Commission and that it came to the Board to make the recommendation.

Commissioner Oddo moved to approve Ordinance 2018-01 to add Section 26-63. -Street authorization in Chapter 26 of Article III, Motorized Carts. Vice Chairman Ognio seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**10. Consideration of the Water Committee's recommendation and approval of Ordinance 2018-08 to provide for the official formation of the Fayette County Water Committee.**

County Administrator Steve Rapson stated that this was the establishment of the Water Committee following the format used to create other committees. He stated that this committee was proposed to have seven members; the county administrator or his designee, the director of the water system, director of planning and zoning, chairman of the board of commissioners or his designee and three Fayette County resident who are also water system customers. He stated that if approved, two of the residents would have to be appointed.

Commissioner Brown stated that adding the three citizen member would allow the Board to appoint someone from each water reservoir to represent that lake. He stated that it was not a requirement, but it would allow for it.

Commissioner Oddo moved to approve Ordinance 2018-08 to provide for the official formation of the Fayette County Water Committee. Vice Chairman Ognio seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Majorie Olsen stated that she had raised her hand because she wanted to know where the Board stood on the proclamation. She thanked the Board for answering that.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS:**

**Water Committee Selection Committee:**

Commissioner Brown moved to appoint Commissioner Rousseau and himself as the Selection Committee for the Water Committee. Vice Chairman Ognio seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**Renaming streets**

Mr. Rapson stated that he contacted his counterpart at the City of Fayetteville during the meeting to encourage the dialogue about renaming the streets. He stated that he would keep the Board updated.

In accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, accommodations are available for those who are hearing impaired and/or in need of a wheelchair. The Board of Commissioners Agenda and supporting material for each item is available on-line through the County's website at [www.fayettecountyga.gov](http://www.fayettecountyga.gov). This meeting will be telecast on Comcast Cable Channel 23 and on the internet at [www.livestream.com](http://www.livestream.com).

**ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:**

**Notice of Executive Session:** Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough stated that there was one item involving pending litigation and the review of the Executive Session minutes for April 12, 2018.

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:**

**Commissioner Rousseau:**

Thanked the County Administrator for sharing with those who sent emails that the meeting had been changed and that the time had been changed.

He thanked the Board for the level of responsiveness to the community.

He stated that there would be Community Budget Workshops held on May 3 and May 8 at 6:00 p.m.

New Hope Baptist Church on May 3

Brooks Town Hall on May 8

**Commissioner Brown:**

Commissioner Brown stated that the Water Committee meeting would be held Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m.

He stated that the Water Guardians event would be held on May 28, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. at Lake Horton.

**Commissioner Oddo:**

Thanked everyone for attending and for paying attention to what happened in the county.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Notice of Executive Session:** Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough stated that there was one item involving pending litigation and the review of the Executive Session minutes for April 12, 2018.

**One Item of Pending Litigation and review of the April 12, 2018 Executive Session Minutes:** Commissioner Brown moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Rousseau seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Board recessed into Executive Session at 9:01 p.m. and returned to Official Session at 9:27 p.m.

**Return to Official Session and Approval to Sign the Executive Session Affidavit:** Vice Chairman Ognio moved to return to Official Session and for the Chairman to sign the Executive Session Affidavit. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**Approval of the April 12, 2018 Executive Session Minutes:** Vice Chairman Ognio moved to approve the April 12, 2018 Executive Session Minutes. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Vice Chairman Ognio moved to adjourn the April 24, 2018 Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The April 24, 2018 Board of Commissioners meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

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Tameca P. White, County Clerk

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Eric K. Maxwell, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of May 2018. Referenced attachments are available upon request at the County Clerk's Office.

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Tameca P. White, County Clerk