

JANUARY 3, 2017  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
CITY OF ALBANY, GEORGIA  
GOVT. CENTER – ROOM 100

PRESENT Mayor Dorothy Hubbard  
Mayor Pro Tem BJ Fletcher  
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Bobby Coleman and Roger Marietta  
City Manager: Sharon D. Subadan  
City Attorney: Nathan Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m., and advised that this is an emergency special called meeting. She asked the Clerk to explain how notices were sent. The Clerk advised that all Commissioners were called (as a reminder) this morning/early afternoon and that an email was also sent to them along with the special called meeting notice (copy on file). She stated that the meeting was called to discuss the special circumstances arising out of recent storm damage and public safety issues, adding that the media was also emailed copies of the notice.

Mayor Hubbard thanked City/County staff for working together over the last 24 hours to ensure the safety of citizens and stated that of all the damages reported, there were no fatalities from the storm. She explained that the reason for the called meeting is to let the public and staff know that elected officials are aware of widespread property damage and to discuss the next step. She advised that Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) has been notified and is here to assist. She then turned the meeting over to Ms. Subadan to share additional information.

Ms. Subadan discussed the priorities of clearing roads and restoring power and stated that there are approximately 8,000 businesses/residents without power, adding that the restoration work is a challenge. However, efforts are being coordinated with Georgia Power and it is anticipated that all power will be restored by or before the end of the week. With all the downed trees, numerous streets are blocked, as well as numerous other issues with which to contend. She advised that the County Commission declared a local state of emergency and that currently GEMA is providing limited assistance. She mentioned the assessments based on aerial coverage and encouraged the public to be patient and to limit unnecessary travel. She stated that Mayor Hubbard is being asked to declare a curfew from 7:00 p.m. until 7:00 am beginning today, adding that permitting fees will be waived for those with storm damaged properties. She then asked Albany Fire Chief Ron Rowe to give an update.

Chief Rowe discussed the storm, tornado watches/warnings and said there were 200 incident responses with trees/wires down, which will create more calls/responses. EMS, APD, DCP and other agencies have, and will continue, to respond. He advised that there were four fire structures that were weather related.

Commissioner Marietta asked if there were problems getting to fires due to road conditions. Chief Rowe explained that there were alternate routes, with Public Works clearing major arteries.

Commissioner Coleman stated that one of the fires was in his ward and asked about tree removal with Chief Rowe advising that Public Works handles the tree removal.

Commissioner Howard asked about weather warnings with Chief Rowe advising that warnings (thunderstorm/tornado) watches were issued. Commissioner Howard asked about the hardest hit areas. Chief Rowe mentioned Robert Cross area/Lockett Station Road, Merry Acres, 8<sup>th</sup> Ave to the river, E. Towne S/D, etc., areas extending into Worth County. Commissioner Howard asked if it has been determined to have been a tornado; Chief Rowe said he did not have that information at this time and could not confirm. He said a lot of trees are down and there is a lot of structure damage; they are working to find out exact numbers. Commissioner Howard asked what the public needs to know about power being restored soon. Chief Rowe explained that emergency situations are not resolved as quickly as the public wants; the main goal is the safety of citizens, clear roads and restore utilities.

Commissioner Marietta thanked staff, city/county agencies for working together, volunteers from Lee County, etc. Chief Rowe stated that the City of Albany has good relationships with various entities.

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Mayor Hubbard stated that the City of Thomasville also provided assistance and acknowledged Frank Lanier, GEMA Rep, who covers SWGA region. She also said that Tom Moore has been in touch with her.

Assistant City Manager Phil Roberson reported that the storm damage was very wide spread and that they looked at the needs which was public safety, the hospital (which switched to backup generators), clearing areas on Jefferson street for emergency traffic and clearing the bypass with one lane traffic in place until the poles are repaired. He mentioned extra resources from GEMA and the goal to have power restored by end of the week and advised that the worse damage was along the Avenues, Rawson Circle, and 3rd Avenue near Slappey. He also discussed challenges being faced, adding that the storm affected a lot of people and will take longer to make sure everything is safe with restoring power, etc. Other challenges were with trees falling, ruptured gas/water lines, etc. He also thanked staff for their assistance and hard work.

In reply to Commissioner Marietta regarding the report of heavy damage that he received from the Indian Creek area, Mr. Roberson agreed that there is a great amount of sporadic damage, which will take a little while to have it cleared. He asked citizens to steer clear of affected areas as extra traffic complicates repairs.

Commissioner Coleman asked how the public will be alerted about the curfew since power is out. Ms. Subadan said she will use resources, including social media, radio, TV, etc., and that only emergency personnel and those who work should be out after 7 pm. The storm created dangerous situations with power lines down, trees down and unsecured structures, so the media, word of mouth, etc., will be used and the curfew will be determined on a day-by-day basis. She said Mayor Hubbard is authorized to declare the curfew at this time.

Commissioner Marietta asked for clarification on the length of curfew with Mayor Hubbard explaining that this will be on a day-by-day basis and will be from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am. Commissioner Marietta said he will put information on Facebook and asked if the Code Red can be used to get info out as well. He also asked if GEMA will grant assistance. Ms. Subadan explained that as requests are sent to GEMA, the City will be contacted to find out specifics and then resources will become available. Damage assessment will be conducted and forwarded to the Governor to determine the type emergency for this area. Commissioner Marietta asked who is accumulating assessment information, Mayor Hubbard stated that Chief Rowe is handling and that Governor Deal was contacted by Dougherty County Chairman Cohilas; Senator Sims was also contacted. She explained that the process has to be followed and that the City has to use GEMA's process, which takes matters up the chain of command. She assured the Commission that Governor Deal is aware of our issues.

In reply to Commissioner Coleman, Chief Rowe explained that public safety is the priority; it is dangerous when night falls and curfews protect the public. APD Chief Michael Persley explained that the curfew will take into consideration those going to and from work with the goal of keeping those with unscrupulous intentions out of neighborhoods.

In reply to Commissioner Marietta regarding an age limit on the curfew, Chief Rowe said there is no age limit.

Commissioner Howard asked how the curfew message will be given to those in shelters, i.e., Rescue Mission and the Salvation Army. Chief Persley said they would make sure the message is received and will be handled on a case by case basis, adding that they will spread the word and give warnings first.

In reply to Mayor Hubbard, Mr. Lanier said he had no comments, but will answer questions.

In reply to Commissioner Coleman, Ms. Subadan stated that Thomasville volunteers arrived this morning to assist.

Mayor Hubbard again thanked staff for their diligent work, the Commissioners for adjusting their schedule to attend this meeting, and the media for spreading the information as noted.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

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MAYOR

ATTEST

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CITY CLERK