

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**EMERGENCY SPECIAL CALLED TELECONFERENCE**  
March 20, 2020

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Mary Bray, and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley

Staff Present: County Administrator Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas

Staff Absent: Finance Director Bill Gregory, Attorney Nathan Lee

Others present by telephone: City of Greenville Mayor Charlene Glover, City of Luthersville Mayor Don Cuttie, Town of Lone Oak Mayor Phillip Dow, Town of Gay Mayor Ruth Nash, Town of Gay Clerk Sharon Richmond, City of Woodbury Mayor Steve Ledbetter, and City of Manchester Manager Doug Westberry

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION** – None

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** None

**II. ADOPT AGENDA**

There was not a formal Agenda for the Emergency Teleconference Meeting. Chairman Bryan Threadgill requested the meeting to establish an emergency protocol for the COVID-19 virus which has affected many people worldwide.

**III NEW BUSINESS**

1.

Chairman Threadgill spoke with the Medical Director of Region 4 Georgia Department of Public Health and was given the statistics of how rapidly the virus is spreading. As of 12:00 pm today, there are 420 positive cases and 13 deaths in the State of Georgia. There are many tests results that are still outstanding.

Chairman Threadgill wanted to declare a State of Emergency and wants the Cities and Board of Commissioners to be involved in protecting the citizens of Meriwether County. The Board of Education has closed for two weeks and children will be home doing schoolwork. Chairman Threadgill wanted to implement, under the State of Emergency, that all Meriwether County Public School age children be home during the normal school time and break time. Presently, Meriwether County does not have any cases of COVID-19. Chairman Threadgill would also like to discuss having pick-up and drive thru at restaurants, 50% capacity, liquor stores and convenient stores, ending sales at 9:00 pm, and nightclubs. No more than 10 people can be in a room and must stay 6' apart. This will stretch law enforcement and it is hoped that people in the county will do and abide by this. There would also be a 9:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. curfew except for those who go to work and to convenient stores for fuel.

Chairman Threadgill stated the numbers have escalated for those testing positive for the COVID-19 virus. If citizens are going to depend on hospitals located in other areas, those facilities may become full. The local hospital doesn't have an ICU or ventilators.

Administrator Gay read from the Meriwether County Code of Ordinances 8.4 which gives the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners authority to call for a State of Emergency. The curfew is addressed in section 8.9 of the Ordinance.

Chairman Threadgill stated it was up to the Elected Officials to make decisions to protect the citizens of the County and wanted school age children to adhere to the normal school hours and breaks while at home to prevent transfer of the virus.

Commissioner Bray asked if there would be an exception for the meal program that will be provided by the School System and volunteers beginning next week.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to declare Meriwether County and the Unincorporated areas a State of Emergency. All were in favor.

There was discussion of the curfew hours for school age children and for the Meriwether County citizens. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to set a curfew for all citizens from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Discussion followed. The motion would need to include the exclusion of people who were going to and from work and emergencies. Vice Chairman McCoy amended the motion to include setting a County curfew from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. each day except for those going to and from work and emergencies. Mary Bray seconded the motion, all were in favor. Cities will make their own decisions. Mayor Cuttie reported on decisions that had already been made at the City of Luthersville. Mayor Ledbetter stated the City of Woodbury was in support of the decision of Meriwether County.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to implement daytime curfew for those who attend Meriwether County Public Schools and were sent home by the Meriwether County Board of Education. They must stay home and abide by normal school hours, unless they are accompanied by a parent or adult over 18 years of age, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to implement the recommendations by President Trump and Governor Kemp to enforce no public gathering of 10 or more people and to remain 6' apart. All were in favor.

Commissioner Bray discussed informing the grocery stores and convenient stores. Chairman Threadgill stated the convenient stores could remain open and we would leave restaurant operations to the discretion of the restaurants as handed down from Federal and State. Commissioner Bray asked if we were doing anything to help people with rent and water service. Mayor Cuttie stated Luthersville will not cut off water. Chairman Threadgill stated the County does not have water. Commissioner Bray asked about evictions. Administrator Gay stated the courts will have to consider evictions but did not think this was considered an essential service at this time. Chairman Threadgill stated if we recommend quarantine there will be other discussion that will have to be looked at as it comes to us.

Administrator Gay spoke with the Tax Commissioners office and they are extending the Mobile Home Tax until from April 1, 2020 to May 1, 2020. Fees for using electronic services have been waived. The State was contacted regarding citizens filing homestead exemption and we will work with those who are within a day or so late. We have suspended the recreation and senior program, limited access to the E-911 Building, locked doors to most County buildings and asked the public to conduct business by telephone or email, provided information to the Public including symptoms, and contact information, limited Volunteer Firefighters to respond to fire calls and not every EMS call unless needed, sent home those who are sick and require clearance before they can return to work. County Offices will continue to operate using email, online, and telephone. Contact numbers will be posted for the public to use to continue service and delivery. The County will provide non-published contact information to City Officials and County Officials in case we need to reach out during this time.

There was discussion of what to do if someone has the virus, social distancing, gathering gloves, masks and how the County is waiting to receive an order of these supplies from the State. We have cleaning solution and we are limiting exposure to the public. Public Works is operating, and we have implemented protective measures. We have sent an employee home and continue to talk about the "what ifs" and working from home. Everything is changing as we speak. Administrator Gay would like to have a short conference weekly to share issues and provide feedback with County and all Cities.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley asked the County to provide gloves for the volunteers who will be handing out package school food for the children attending Meriwether County Public Schools. Volunteers who are helping to hand out the food are encouraged to wear masks. Parents and children who walk up to pick up their food will need to keep a safe distance.

Administrator Gay stated the Cities would need to implement their own guidelines. They could use the guidelines of the County or make their own as needed.

Several Cities reported what they had been doing. Administrator Gay stated the County has also cancelled all Board meetings including the Commissioners meetings and Authority Boards. The County is looking to suspend new zoning applications and will work on building permits. We will send out a memo to Department Heads and have them police their employees. The message to employees is that we are taking precautions to help keep them safe. Administrator Gay gave an update on the court system and stated the Sheriff's Office, Fire/EMS, E-911 are business as usual.

A poll was taken during this meeting to see if the Cities agreed with the County. All agreed except The City of Manchester and City of Warm Springs since they were not on the call during the poll. Mr. Westberry had left the call earlier due to business. Mayor Ledbetter was concerned of losing officers due to quarantine. Chairman Threadgill stated the Governor had called in 2,000 National Guard Troops and we could reach out for help if needed. Administrator Gay will reach out to Mayor Lee of Warm Springs and update him regarding this meeting. The next teleconference will be at 1:00 p.m. on March 24, 2020. Chairman Threadgill stated we could call a Special Called Meeting as needed. Chairman Threadgill stated we would reach out to the City of Warm Springs and the City of Manchester to see if they are on Board. The County is not trying to overstep but is trying to protect the community.

**IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**VI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES**

None

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to adjourn the teleconference at 3:05 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*  
Attest: *Beverly Thomas, county clerk*  
Date: *April 8, 2020*