

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
September 22, 2020

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred "Buster" McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Mary Bray, and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley  
Staff Present: County Administrator Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Michael Hill  
The meeting was held at the Administration Building and by Zoom.

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Threadgill at 6:00 p.m.  
**INVOCATION** – Commissioner Mary Bray  
**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**II. ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to amend then adopt the Agenda with the following additions under New Business: 8. Discussion of RFP for Lone Oak Ballfield, 9. Discussion of Government Documents, 10. Need for engineering on County Line Road. All were in favor.

Later, the Board amended the Agenda to remove 3. Ordinance #2020-05 Codification of the Meriwether County Ordinances. (See motion under New Business #3)

**III. MINUTES**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Minutes from the September 9, 2020 Regular Meeting at 9:00 am. All were in favor.

**IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS**

None

**V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

None

**VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS**

The Board of Commissioners recognized new staff members Alan Smith, Fire Chief, Danny Stephens, Assistant Fire Chief and George Richmond, Animal Shelter Director. Administrator Gay thanked each one of the new staff members for their hard work.

**VII. PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to go into a Public Hearing regarding the FY 2020-2021 Proposed Budget for Meriwether County. All were in favor.  
Finance Director, Bill Gregory, stated there was conversation at the last meeting regarding Recreation Special Projects and increasing the pay for Fire/EMS. Mr. Gregory increased the budget to include an extra \$1.50 per hour for EMT/ Fire Fighters and \$2.00 per hour more for Paramedic/Fire Fighters. Administrator Gay asked the Board to consider passing the FY 2020-2021 that begins October 1, 2020. There were no public comments.

Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to go out of Public Hearing. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to accept the FY 2020-2021 Budget as presented. All were in favor. (This was approved as Item #1 under New Business)

2. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy to go into a Public Hearing to discuss establishing Fees associated with the County Ordinances. All were in favor.

Administrator Gay asked the Board to review the consolidated fee schedule and it will be added to a future Agenda with proposed implementation of new fees starting January 1, 2021. Administrator Gay stated the Fees have not been updated since 2004. We removed the reference to fees in our Zoning Ordinance and placed it in a separate fee schedule to prevent having to change the Ordinance each time there is a fee change. Administrator Gay reviewed each line item on the consolidated fee schedule and provided the current fees and the suggested new fees. The suggested new fees were discussed as follows:

### **CONSOLIDATED FEE SCHEDULE**

\*Failure to acquire permits prior to beginning works shall result in a penalty of two times the original permit fee\*

#### **APPLICATIONS**

Rezoning Application - \$500 for, A1, RR, LDR, RD, R1

\$1000 for NHC, I, MFR, MHP,

\$1500 for PUD, CIPD, PID

Special use permit application - \$1000

Preliminary Plat Application - \$500 base plus \$25/acre up to 20 acres, \$500 base plus \$15/acre over 20 acres

Variance Application - \$500 for Residential, \$1000 for Commercial/Industrial

### **RESIDENTIAL 1-2 FAMILY HOMES**

#### **PLAN REVIEW**

\$150

#### **ADDITIONAL PLAN REVIEW**

If plan is rejected after review and requires additional reviews, fees shall be as follows: 2<sup>nd</sup> Review \$25, 3<sup>rd</sup> Review \$75, 4<sup>th</sup> Review \$100

#### **CALCULATING VALUATION:**

Based on ICC BVD with 80% multiplier. Gross heated Sq. ft. x Sq. ft. value, Unfinished Basement Sq. ft x Sq ft. value, Garage Area Sq. ft x Sq. ft. value

### **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL**

#### **PLAN REVIEW**

50% of permit fee – minimum \$150

#### **ADDITIONAL PLAN REVIEW**

If a plan is rejected and requires additional reviews, fees shall be as follows: 2<sup>nd</sup> Review, 20% of initial plan review fee, 3+ Reviews 50% of initial plan review fee

#### **CALCULATING VALUATION:**

Based on ICC BVD with 85% multiplier

### **BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE**

#### **Total Valuation**

\$1000 or less - minimum permit \$75

\$1001 to \$50,000 - \$75 for the first \$1000 plus \$6 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof, up to and including \$100,000

\$50,001 to \$100,000 - \$310 for the first \$50,000 plus \$5 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof, up to and including \$100,000

\$100,001 to \$500,000 - \$510 for the first \$100,000 plus \$4 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof, up to and including \$500,000

\$500,001 and above - \$1,710 for the first \$500,000 plus \$3 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof.

#### **Swimming Pool**

Residential - \$100 permit plus, \$150 plan review

Commercial - \$300 permit fee plus, \$200 plan review

**Reinspection Fees**

First Reinspection \$50, Second Reinspection (same item) \$100, Third Reinspection (same item) \$150,  
More than 3 (same item) \$200

**Plumbing Permit Fees**

Repair or Add to Existing \$100 for up to 3 fixtures, \$20 per fixture after first 3

**Gas Permit**

Fee for each gas service installation shall be as follows:

Up to 1 inch outlet, \$50

1 ¼ inch outlet \$55

1 ½ inch outlet \$65

2-inch outlet \$95

4-inch outlet \$175

**Electrical**

Fee for each metered unit or installation shall be as follows:

60 amp to 200 amp \$75

201 amps to 400 amps \$90

401 amps to 600 amps \$150

601 amps to 1000 amps \$190

Above 1000 amps Fee computed at \$600 per thousand amps or fraction thereof.

**Temporary Poles** (Limited to 200 amps) \$100

**Restoration Connect Fee (Disconnect/Reconnect)** \$75

**Heating and Air Fees:**

For the installation, repair, alteration, or addition of heating, ventilating, duct air conditioned or refrigeration systems, the fee for each unit shall be as follows.

Heating BTU Input	Fee	Cooling BTU	Ton	Fee
0-100,000	\$75	36,000	3	\$75
100,001-150,000	\$85	48,000	4	\$90
150,001-200,000	\$105	60,000	6	\$110
200,001-300,000	\$135	90,000	7.5	\$145
300,001-500,000	\$185	120,000	10	\$210
500,001-600,000	\$220	180,000	15	\$360
600,001-800,000	\$270	240,000	20	\$400
800,001-1,000,000	\$300	300,000	25	\$490
1,000,001-2,000,000	\$370	360,000	30	\$585
2,000,001-4,000,000	\$475	480,000	40	\$790
4,000,001-6,000,000	\$605	600,000	50	\$980
6,000,001-8,000,000	\$740	700,000	60	\$1160
8,000,001-10,000,000	\$870	900,000	75	\$1465

**Demolition Permit** \$150

**Manufactured Home Relocation**

Within County \$250

From Outside County \$250 plus applicant must provide inspection report at their cost.

**Land Disturbance Permit** Per disturbed acre \$40

**Cell towers (Tower structure only)** \$1,000 plus plan review fee of 50% of permit cost

**Antenna or additional components (each addition)** \$250 plus \$150 plan review

**Solar Farms** Based on ICC BVD with 85% multiplier plus plan review at 50% of permit fee minimum \$150

**MISC. PERMITS**

**Media Permit** Low Impact \$100, High Impact \$250 Production Activity per day \$100  
(Setup, Filming, Cleanup)

**Sign Permit** \$100

**Special Event Permit** \$250

**Use of County Property Per Day** \$100 plus \$25 Admin. Fee

**ALCOHOL LICENSE**

Retail consumption dealer of distilled spirits, malt beverage, and wine \$2000

Retail consumption dealer -- Malt Beverage only \$750

Retail consumption dealer -- Wine only \$750

Retail consumption dealer -- Malt Beverage and Wine \$1500

Retail package dealer -- Malt Beverage only \$750

Retail package dealer -- Wine only \$750

Retail package dealer -- Malt Beverage and Wine \$1500

Domestic or Farm Winery \$750

Farm Winery Tasting Room (each location) \$500

Farm Brewery \$750

Farm Brewery Tasting Room (each location) \$500

Partner's License \$50

Server's License \$25

Investigative Fee \$150

Public Notice Signs \$55

**BUSINESS LICENSE**

Occupation tax schedule -- The tax rate is determined by the number of employees for each business, trade, profession, or occupation as follows:

Employees

1 \$40

2 \$80

3-9 \$80 plus \$15 for each employee over 2.

10 or more \$185 plus \$15 for each employee over 10 to a maximum of \$600

Administration fee Applied to all Applications \$25

Commissioner Hines wanted to read and compare this with other Counties and stated we are trying to cover our cost. Commissioner Bray asked questions about how family homes differed from Commercial Contractors. There were no other questions or comments. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go into a Public Hearing for Ordinance 2020-05 Codification of the Meriwether County Ordinances. All were in favor. Administrator Gay stated the Ordinance Codification had been a long project. At the time this was completed and sent to Municode, the County had not finished the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances. We have since completed those two Ordinances and they have been sent to Municode and will become part of the County Ordinances. Attorney Hill stated we will adopt the full Ordinance in its entirety. There were no questions or comments. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the Meriwether County Codification. All were in favor.

### **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Shirley Hines to appoint Mark Trimble to the Planning Commission Board to represent District 4. All were in favor. The term will expire on January 5, 2025.

### **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the FY 2020-2021 Budget. All were in favor.

2. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to table setting the fees associated with the County Ordinances. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to remove Ordinance #2020-05 Codification of the Meriwether County Ordinances since it was voted on under #3 during the Public Hearing. All were in favor to remove.

4. Commissioner Bray spoke with Dr. Griffin from the Meriwether County Board of Education about a retired Greenville High School Football Coach who just moved back into the County and is interested in serving on the Meriwether County Recreation Advisory Board. Dr. Griffin stated he would bring this before the Board of Education at their next meeting on October 6, 2020. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to table the appointment to the Recreation Advisory Board to fill the unexpired term of the Board of Education appointment. All were in favor.

5. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to allow Lake Meriwether Advisory Board to use County owned Public Spaces and Facilities, on Lake Meriwether property located at 728 Lake Meriwether Road, Woodbury, GA for the purpose of sponsoring and recognizing First Responders of Meriwether County and their families on October 24, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. All were in favor. Lunch will be provided to all First Responders and kayaks will be available for use. No fees were charged, and paperwork will be completed at Building and Zoning.

6. Finance Director Gregory stated several months ago President Trump allowed the IRS to defer withholding taxes of the employee's share of their Social Security taxes until a later date. Employers can opt out of this if it creates an undue burden as well as potentially creating financial stress on employees who might not be able to pay the deferred money back when it is due. One County employee has asked about deferring the taxes. Mr. Gregory stated it was best not to do this since employees will have to pay back the money after the first of the year and it could create a hardship. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Resolution of the Board of Commissioners electing not to impose or participate in the provisions of IRS Notice 2020-65; to authorize the Chairman to sign the Resolution on behalf of the Board of Commissioners; to authorize the Clerk to attest all Documents; and for other related and lawful purposes. All were in favor.

7. Administrator Gay stated the County has already approved a contract regarding paving 7+/- miles on the Cove Road. In the County section of Cove Road, there are 3.05 miles remaining to be paved at a projected cost of \$287,275. This does not include .14 miles in the City of Woodbury. The contractor is about to start this project and it would be less expensive to have the short section paved at the same time as the approved mileage. Administrator Gay will reach out to the City of Woodbury and ask if they would like to receive a quote to pave the .14-mile area in the city to save them money while the work is in progress. Funding to pave the County section will come from SPLOST and T-SPLOST. Administrator Gay stated if we do not pave this short section now it will be on the program for next year. They will start paving in a few weeks and once they leave the opportunity to save funds will go away. Board members asked Administrator Gay to get a proposal and this will be added to the next Agenda.

8. Administrator Gay received a request from the Town of Lone Oak to extend the RFP on the Ballfield Property. Administrator Gay stated a letter was received from their City Attorney, Cat Jenkins, requesting the County extend the proposals for 60 more days, until the end of November. Advertisements ran in the Newspaper and online. Questions are due tomorrow by 5:00 p.m. This has been discussed for some time and the common bid period is one month. Commissioner Hines asked to extend due to COVID. It was talked about to bring in the RFP in October, though there was discussion to extend. The

three who expressed interest would receive this. There is no full staff at this time, and we would get a variety of people bidding on this. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated the Board had already made a motion to extend at a previous meeting. It originally would have been due at the next meeting. The Board voted to extend it to the last meeting in September.

Commissioner Bray wanted the Board to consider extending it longer since Lone Oak meets one time a month. It is not enough time to meet and talk about the bid. Commissioner Bray wanted to allow Lone Oak at least one more month and felt they needed fair time to bid on this.

Administrator Gay stated a copy of the Bid was mailed to four groups who had expressed an interest and the City of Lone Oak was one of them.

Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to deny extending the RFP for the Ball Field property. Voting in favor were Chairman Threadgill, Vice Chairman McCoy and Beth Neely-Hadley. Shirley Hines and Mary Bray were opposed.

Administrator Gay stated the RFP is due on September 30, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

9. Chairman Threadgill stated there had been previous discussion regarding Government documents. It was brought to the Board's attention that someone on an appointed Board removed documents from an office. A letter was sent to that individual asking for the return of the documents. Our County Attorney cannot represent the Board of Commissioners since they also represent the other Government Office. The County would have to hire an outside Attorney for representation. Chairman Threadgill stated the Board of Commissioners cannot determine if the law was or was not broken without further legal review. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to seek legal opinion to determine if the allegations are true, if laws have been broken, and what ramification that may hold for the County. Discussion followed. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated there had been prior discussion. The Board of Commissioners do not have the right to make a decision to see if anything had been done and to go forward without additional information. Commissioner Hines stated this had been discussed before and voted on. Commissioner Hines asked if the vote was not valid. Chairman Threadgill stated he was not comfortable with the Board of Commissioners deciding if the law was broken or not without further review. Attorney Hill stated he could not advise at all since he represented the Board of Commissioners and the other Board Member. Commissioner Hines stated when the Board discusses this and there is a vote, why are we voting again. Chairman Threadgill stated he placed this on the Agenda as Chairman out of concern the law may have been broken. Commissioner Bray stated this was the second time the Commissioners voted then brought back the matter again. Chairman Threadgill asked Commissioner Bray if she was ok with allowing a law to be broken. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated any Board member can add something to the Agenda. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated she did not feel the Board has the right to make this decision and was afraid that the Board had put themselves in a situation where they do not have a say.

Attorney Hill told the Board to think of this as a process question. The Administrative Legislative Body can re-raise a motion. It is similar to a bill on the House floor and goes from a process standpoint. Commissioner Hines stated she was more concerned of the process and not aware it could be brought up again. It was discussed, voted on and is being brought up again. Voting in favor were Chairman Threadgill, Vice Chairman McCoy and Beth Neely-Hadley. Shirley Hines and Mary Bray were opposed.

10. Administrator Gay stated the County has the complete GRTA grant and loan on the County Line Road Bridge replacement project and recommended the County negotiate service with an engineering firm for the process and then let the Bid on the Engineers drawing. The Bridge is at the slope of a hill and it is a project that we do not want to tackle inhouse. We do not have to do an RFP for the engineer and can bid the project once it is designed. Commissioner Neely-Hadley confirmed we have received a grant in the amount of \$100K- \$150K and will have a loan. This is a \$500K-\$600K project that will not be totally covered by the grant. The engineering cost is the normal 7%-10% of the project. It is a complicated project with paving a slope and bridge going from one lane to two lanes. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to negotiate professional engineering service on County Line Road. All were in favor.

**X. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, provided the Board with a bank balance report and stated \$400K from the E-911 account would be moved to the General Fund.

**XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Administrator Gay reported he had been working on the Ordinances, working with Commissioner Bray on the Greenville Park and Recreation Grant and meeting with other partners to donate land, called property owners regarding potential Fire Station property, attended the IDA meeting, updated the fee schedule for the Ordinances, and wrote Job Descriptions for public officials. A copy of the card from Hope Harbor was sent to Board members via e-mail. Commissioner Bray asked what day work would begin on Hill Haven Road. Administrator Gay stated they are already working on the engineering. They have called for the utility check on Owens Road.

Administrator Gay spoke of the process and of the Greenville Fire Station and stated they are looking at the upper lot.

**XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Shirley Hines: stated she had mentioned Coal Ash being brought into the Landfill during a previous meeting. Commissioner Hines stated she received an e-mail that included a copy of an article from The Times Georgia Magazine. This magazine article included quotes from several Commissioners. Commissioner Hines stated the Landfill was her district and no one had reached out to her for an interview. Commissioner Hines stated citizens have reached out and we need to let them know how this will affect their water since many homes are on wells. Chairman Threadgill assumed a water quality report would be placed on the County website or on the County Facebook page. Administrator Gay spoke with representatives at the landfill and they have received very little coal ash. Commissioner Hines was concerned of transparency and lives in the Landfill area. Commissioner Hines stated she was not against Landfills since we have a lot of waste and it has to go somewhere but was against the location of the Landfill. We may not legislate what Landfills take but we can be aware of the effect it has and wants to let the citizens know. Commissioner Hines was concerned of supplying water to that area and will bring this back to discuss later. Vice Chairman McCoy worked with coal ash in the 1990's and it is no longer a sellable product due to the carbon. Landfill liners should protect the wells and they should know if something goes out that should not in the reporting. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated someone called her three months ago from North Georgia where they were proposing a Landfill. The lady thought Commissioner Neely-Hadley was on the Board when the Landfill opened. The person said she would reach out to others but in unsure if she did reach out or not.

Commissioner Mary Bray: apologized to the Board and the audience for being emotional earlier in the meeting. Sometimes it gets personal and Commissioner Bray wants the Board to do what is best for the citizens.

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley: Peaches in the Pines was successful, and everyone enjoyed the day. Commissioner Neely-Hadley reminded everyone about the Harvest Hoe Down on October 10, 2020 in Warm Springs. There will be many vendors, and all are taking precautions for COVID.

Vice Chairman McCoy: The Airport will have Business After Hours on September 24, 2020 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: reported there would be social distancing during the Airport Business After Hours event. Masks are required unless you are less than 6' from another person.

**XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Reported there was no need for an Executive Session.

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sharon Moore owns a place on Crawford Creek Road. Ms. Moore stated that Tiffany Prather from the Tax Office was very professional and did a good job when she registered her tags in Meriwether County. Ms. Moore stated she also received a call from Administrator Gay at 6:30 yesterday evening to discuss the bridge on Crawford Creek Road and trash on the roadway. Ms. Moore told the Board they were fortunate to have local people working in the offices.

Shirley Louder was concerned about Hill Haven Road on the South end toward Hwy. 100. Someone keeps knocking down the signs and barricades. There is a dip on one side and Ms. Louder sees more tractor trailers, ambulances, and fire trucks in this area. Ms. Louder said the road is a mess. Administrator Gay stated the project has been Let to Bid and they are doing a design and checking the road weekly. We are anxious to get the project started and the contractor should be near to starting. We will post signs and put on the County website when we have to close the road.

Angela Turner, Ellis Place, Grantville, received information about coal ash in the Landfill last week. They have been there since 2007. Ms. Turner does not feel they will be forthcoming about the liner across the landfill. Ms. Turner wanted the Commissioners to let them know they are safe and will drink safe water.

Jane Fryer, Keep Meriwether Beautiful Director, reminded everyone of Clean-up day on September 26, 2020.

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no Executive Session

**XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Threadgill announced Future Meetings.

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to adjourn at 7:41 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*  
Attest: *Beverly A. Thomas, County Clerk*  
Date: *October 14, 2020*