

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**February 22, 2022**

**This meeting was held in person and also by Zoom due to COVID-19**

Commissioners Present: Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley, Vice Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Alfred "Buster" McCoy  
Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Shirley Hines  
Staff Present: County Administrator Michelle Irizarry, Director of Special Projects Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Michael Hill attended by Zoom

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. INVOCATION** – Commissioner Alfred McCoy

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - All

**IV. ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Bryan Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to adopt the Agenda with the following changes: move New Business 1. Proclamation – In Remembrance of Josie S. Walls and 2. Proclamation – In Remembrance of Nancy Stribling Jones to follow the Public Hearing section. All were in favor.

**V. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, reviewed the 2022 SPLOST Funds Analysis as of January 28, 2022. The County portion of revenue was \$150K which was \$8K more than December 2021. December had been the highest in revenue since the beginning of collections. In the twelve months of 2021 the County was averaging \$121,574 and we were at \$150,134 in January 2022. T-SPLOST - we received \$130K in January, 2022 and in December, 2021 we received \$122,300. Mr. Gregory stated we were trending upward on SPLOST and T-SPLOST. Mr. Gregory stated we were in pretty good shape with the bank balances. The General Fund was reported at \$2.8M. Finance Director Gregory reported there had been no Property Taxes received for the first two months of this year and most likely during the next meeting, Mr. Gregory will request permission to begin the process of going out for a Tax Anticipation Note, just in case the property tax receipts do not start to come in. Mr. Gregory stated he certainly did not want to have to do that. If we put this out for bid, funds will be there in case we have to use it. The auditors have completed all of the field work they could while they were here. They will have to come back to work on the records of one of the Constitutional Officers once that office has their documents ready.

Five years ago, we entered into two leases with Caterpillar for motor graders. Those leases will expire in April. Meetings will be held between Special Projects Director Theron Gay, Administrator Michelle Irizarry, and Finance Director Gregory to further discuss the equipment. The two leased motor graders can be purchased for \$148K each. New motor graders are hard to come by now on a Lease Program. There will be more information available that will be shared during the March evening meeting. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked, when was the last time that the County received Tax money from the Tax Commissioner's Office. Mr. Gregory stated it was December 30, 2021.

**IV. CITIZEN COMMENT**

None

## **VII. MINUTES**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Minutes of the February 9, 2022, 9:00 a.m. Meeting. All were in favor.

## **VIII. PUBLIC HEARING**

None

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS 1 AND 2 (*Board voted to move New Business items 1 and 2 to follow Public Hearing*)

1. Chairman Neely-Hadley read the Proclamation in remembrance of Ms. Josie Walls, former Meriwether County Commissioner who passed away on April 6, 2021. The Proclamation was presented to family members of Ms. Walls. The Board shared their condolences with the family.
2. Chairman Neely-Hadley read the Proclamation in remembrance of Ms. Nancy Stribling Jones, former Meriwether County Commissioner who passed away on December 13, 2021. The Proclamation was presented to family members of Ms. Jones. The Board shared their condolences with the family.

## **IX. APPOINTMENTS**

1. Motion was made by Bryan Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to appoint Nneka Carter to the CAFI Board. All were in favor. This term will expire on January 1, 2023.
2. Motion was made by Chairman Neely-Hadley and seconded by Alfred McCoy to table the appointment to the Water and Sewerage Authority, District 5. All were in favor.

## **X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Mike Watson, Airport Authority Chairman, A.J. Acheson, Paul Harmon, and Phil and Whitney Eberly from Lead Edge shared good news regarding the Meriwether County Airport. Mr. Acheson stated he was given the responsibility by the Authority to market the surrounding areas for interest in aircraft hangar space before they moved forward. There are ten aircraft owners who have submitted deposits to rent T-Hangars and three box hangars. Information was provided on how many planes and what size planes could be stored in the hangars. Calls have been received from those wanting to enter into a ground lease at the Airport to build hangars. There are many corporate owners interested in coming to the Meriwether County Airport.  
Phil Eberly, Lead Edge Design Group, provided information on the history of the Airport and where it is today. The runway has been extended to 5,000 feet, the 10-unit T-Hangar is full, the large storage Hangar is full, and they have worked on safety improvements and obstruction clearing. A slide show was presented that showed the runway crack seal and marking, LED lighting, windsock replacement, and the repainted beacon tower meeting current FAA standards. A new fuel farm has been installed with a self-serve credit card reader. Fuel sales have increased since installation. Mr. Eberly provided estimated Ad Valorem tax on several different sizes of planes which will provide additional revenues for the County. There is an automated weather observing system with an installation in 2022. The Warm Springs Roosevelt Memorial Airport is ranked #39 in the State in based aircraft with new hangars. The next project is to build hangars at a cost of approximately \$1.7M with 100% of the debt service coming from hangar income. This will increase the based aircraft from 16 to 32 and will increase Ad Valorem tax to Meriwether County. Mr. Eberly gave examples of how the facility at the Airport could be used for the County and Community. Staff recommend approval for the Airport Authority to finance \$1.7M for the hangars. Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to allow the Airport Authority to finance \$1.7M for the new Hangars. All were in favor.
2. Special Projects Director, Theron Gay, stated the Bridge Replacement Project at Flat Shoals Road had been a project in the works. GDOT requested a Memorandum of Understanding with Meriwether County for participation in right-of-way acquisition for the Road at Flint River. This has been classified a Tier 3 project. The amount of the participation requested is \$100,000. DGOT is requesting the MOA be executed and returned by February 28, 2022. Documents were provided for the Commissioners to review.

Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to approve and allow the Chairman to sign. T-SPLOST will be the funding source. All were in favor.

3. Special Projects Director, Theron Gay, stated the original program on the Fire Department was to build eight new Fire Stations. Commissioner Hines had asked about this at an earlier meeting. We committed on our original proposal for eight new fire stations and to remodel a station at Alvaton. If there were additional funds remaining we could build satellite stations in some of the areas. Currently, six new stations have been completed and the one in Greenville is under construction. We had programed another new station in the Primrose area and a remodel in Alvaton. The original bond was for \$3.5M and was based on 2015 numbers. Materials have increase and we have kept the Fire District below the 3 Mil maximum. The County has never levied more than 2.5 Mils so there are still dollars available if they are needed. The cost of materials have increased everywhere, and we did not try to overstate the cost in the original program. There are still plans to build the 8<sup>th</sup> Station and to remodel the Alvaton Station. We will have to consider other funding sources rather than just the bonds. ARP funds are a possibility, we have a ½ Mil Levy left in the Fire District Referendum. The schedule for construction was based on obtaining property for the new stations. It has been more difficult to obtain property in the Primrose area. Instructions were originally given to locate the station north of Primrose and it had to be west of Roosevelt Hwy. A station located in that area would have overlap which would provide triple coverage in some areas and coverage gaps in other areas. The original plans showed the Primrose Station further down the road toward Roosevelt Hwy. There were two pieces of property that were considered, with one having a 40' deep drop off and the other property owner wanted 3-4 times the value of the land. It would be more cost efficient to locate property off Roosevelt Hwy. in order to not have to pay for acceleration and deceleration lanes. No one wants to give up property to locate a station. The remodel of Alvaton and building of Primrose is all that remains in the promise to the citizens. Most of the bond will be exhausted after Greenville is complete. Vice Chairman Threadgill was not in favor of using ARP funds to build another station. Mr. Gay stated they would look at other options. The only reason this is the last station not built is due to not being able to obtain property. Commissioner McCoy stated there are still areas without coverage such as down Rocky Mount Road. Mr. Gay showed a map of the area and coverage was discussed. It may be possible to build a satellite station at St. Marks and Rocky Mount. Commissioner Plant asked if we go further south, would it need to be as far south as Todd Road. Mr. Gay stated with the County relocating the Greenville station it gives us a little bit of area to play with. There was further discussion of the location around Todd Road, Primrose and Coleman Creek. Mr. Gay stated he will meet with the Administrator, Fire Chief and IT Director and see where our optimal search area should be for the best coverage.

4. Theron Gay, Director of Special Projects, stated at the meeting before last the question came up about a repair project on Hunter Welch Parkway, located in Chambliss Village. There is a lot of road failure and a dip at the entrance to the subdivision. There needs to be work on the interior of that road and the dip has gotten worse and it is a safety issue. We needed to make the repair. The question came up and Mr. Gay was asked by Commissioner Hines why this wasn't bid and what are our threshold limits before bids are required. Mr. Gay stated we have a policy on bids. Emergency bids are excluded from the bid process. This was an emergency. Even though this emergency repair wasn't bid, the project was bid, and the prices used were bid as part of our LMIG program. The Hunter Welch bid was approved, and the Board approved the change order totaling a little over \$28K. This was on a LMIG project that was almost \$1.2M. That project had been bid. You can add to a contract. When you bid a project this small it is hard to get contractors to bid. It was wise to do this as an add on to the existing contract we had. It saved us money. To bid every little contract you delay the process by at least two-months. Mr. Gay then reviewed the process of a bid. If this had been bid as a separate contract it would delay the process and be substantially more money. During that time, the road would continue to deteriorate. The County would have had to pay for a mobilization cost. The contractor was about to start another County project and it saved us money by adding this to the existing contract with the same unit price and same materials cost. This was the same procedure that was followed last year with Turkey Trail Court, and Bob Cat Trail where we added those roads to the existing LMIG projects. Those additions to the contracts totaled almost

\$200K. Mr. Gay gave an example of trying to help the City of Greenville with a projects in which there were no initial bidders. Bidders had to be called and ask if they would bid a project because of the size. We did this last year and have done this throughout the years. It is completely legal. This project was bid with a unit price and was no more than an extension to the bid. This saves the County time, effort, and money to do the process this way. Mr. Gay stated if the Board wanted to change this methodology they could, but it was not recommended.

#### **XI. NEW BUSINESS**

1. The Proclamation in remembrance of Ms. Josie S. Walls was moved to earlier in the meeting.
2. The Proclamation in remembrance of Ms. Nancy Stribling Jones was moved to earlier in the meeting.
3. Following the review from Legal, motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve and allow the Chairman to sign the 2022 ACCG Internship Program Grant Agreement. All were in favor. This is a grant for an intern at the Probate Office.
4. Catherine Jenkins, Tax Commissioner stated her request for temporary assistance is actually a request for emergency assistance. After hearing the request from Finance Director Gregory for a TAN, because she cannot get any accounting done on her records, she feels she is in an emergency situation. The Tax Office can make limited progress with the amount of people they have. They still have to do their jobs every day and are still catching up. The office is currently working on November 17, 2021 because the backup they had took them to November 15, 2021. They are repopulating the data they have back to November because of the Cyberattack on the County Server. Vice Chairman Threadgill confirmed the last back up was on November 15<sup>th</sup> and then asked who does the back up her office. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated what she had heard from the County is the County IT Department does the back up. That is where the information is stored, on the County's IT server. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated they have had a very difficult time since then getting that information and getting IT support. At this point Tax Commissioner Jenkins did not know how they were supposed to do this and if they should contact Skip Richmond, IT Director, or go through Liberty Technology, the IT company the County brought in. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she would like to add the County did not get a contract with Liberty according to IT Technology because of the emergency situation but the County was able to bring in someone and allocate funding so the County could take care of the issue. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she is asking the Board to get some assistance and some verification for when she puts out the request to ask for people to come in and enter the data that is needed. She does not have the staff to research what has to be done. There are not many experts out there in the Tax Office's VCS Manatron Tax Software. It is specific to the State of Georgia. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she would have to bring someone in and train them. Just to get this person trained to get data entered will take time away from the people who are working to get the system back on track,. The data must be entered before the Office can figure out where the money is supposed to go. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated in the email that Tax Commissioner sent her, she was asking for \$6K to hire somebody temporarily to start working on the records. Chairman Neely-Hadley had asked for something in writing and all that was received was the email. Tax Commissioner Jenkins asked if there was something else she would request, since when she hears you would like it in writing, she feels it can be by email and asked if there was some other process and was unaware if there was another process. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated in the email to her, Tax Commissioner Jenkins said she needed the funding and asked Chairman Neely-Hadley in the email if she needed to put something in writing. Chairman Neely-Hadley responded to the email from Tax Commissioner Jenkins and asked her to give the County something in writing so we would have it to go over in the Board of Commissioners Meeting. There was another email where Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she was spending time working on a request to bring before the Board on Tuesday night. Chairman Neely-Hadley addressed Tax Commissioner Jenkins and stated that she didn't know if Tax Commissioner Jenkins had something written down for the Board regarding the request or if the Board should go by the \$6K that she had requested in the email. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she sent Chairman Neely-Hadley the request because she was hoping the Board could act on it immediately and did not know if

there was another Constitutional Officer that has requested emergency funds to hire someone because they were in an emergency situation. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the request came to her on Thursday and Tax Commissioner Jenkins was told the meeting would be Tuesday night. County Offices were closed on Monday for the Holiday, and it was not expressed that she needed the money now. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she thinks she added in the email that she was in an emergency situation. With that Tax Commissioner Jenkins felt the Board would think this was a pretty significant thing, and hopefully she will be given the funds requested so she can go out and ask for people, accept and go through the applications, and get someone on board who they will then spend days training so that they can input data, so the rest of the staff is not going to be doing that. All of the staff is working overtime. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked if he could ask a question. Chairman Neely-Hadley told Tax Commissioner Jenkins that she agreed with her on that and said she could see where she needed help, but she had offered to put something in writing and was asked by Chairman Neely-Hadley to give the Board something in writing which would be covered on Tuesday night. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated that correspondence was on Thursday and offices were closed on Monday and the Board did not have anything for the meeting tonight. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked if there was something else other than the \$6K. Chairman Neely Hadley read the email that stated the cost was for an additional worker for that time period and did not account for overtime, Chairman Neely-Hadley stated she understood the staff needed to work overtime and that we needed to cover that, the email then stated she really needed to get moving on that soon and that it would take a few days to get a new person up and trained. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated she had responded to Tax Commissioner Jenkins with what she had asked and that we would bring it up tonight. There was no other response back to Chairman Neely-Hadley. Tax Commissioner Jenkins did not know what else she needed to present to the Board. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated Tax Commissioner Jenkins said in the email "do I need to put something in writing" and Chairman Neely-Hadley's answer was "thank you for the information, I can certainly understand the need for temporary help to rebuild your records. Can you submit something in writing so we can have it for our meeting on Tuesday night?" Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we don't have anything else but would go by the \$6K requested. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated Tax Commission Jenkins said \$6K was needed and it was for an emergency situation, then she made the statement "if I can find someone and train." Vice Chairman Threadgill asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins if she had someone in mind or was she still looking for someone. If it is an emergency situation, \$6K will not do any good unless there is someone in place. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she has several people in mind but cannot say to the person, I am going to pay you something, without having the funds. She stated she could take it out of her budget but would rather not have to and was still trying to figure out what she could take out of her budget. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated this is because there is another issue related to IT where she is not getting information from the County on this as far as what she has with her internet situation from Spectrum. Spectrum was at her office on Friday and according to Spectrum representative, the way it is set up, her office would have internet through the County and will not be able to separate it and not be able to put the information on her own server, which was what the request was from the County when we were going to separate everything and decouple from the County IT so she would not have to put in a request to IT to be ignored for some time then have someone sneak into her office. Commissioner Neely-Hadley told Tax Commissioner Jenkins that was enough, and Tax Commissioner Jenkins continued to speak and stated IT was a huge part of this. Her office is having errors getting on the server right now and she was unsure of who she is supposed to contact. Liberty does not know what her sever does and IT Director, Skip Richmond, will not respond when she sends a request. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we were here discussing temporary funding. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated this is part of the problem. She needs a solution to the problems and when she gets a little piece of it, it does not help the overall picture. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked Administrator Irizarry if she had any other information on Spectrum. Administrator Irizarry stated Mr. Richmond had sent an email. Mr. Richmond stated Spectrum was supposed to reach out to Tax Commissioner Jenkins. There was discussion on the Spectrum lines and Mr. Richmond confirmed they could be separated. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated the technician she spoke

with stated it was more involved. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the County has been told it can be separated and they are to contact her since she prefers to work with them and not the County. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the request was for \$6K in funds to be used to hire a temporary person to start rebuilding the files. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated \$6K would not be enough. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated this will get you started. Tax Commissioner Jenkins asked if the Board wanted her to come back every meeting to request more funds to do this. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins to put something in writing to let the Board know what she needs. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she put it in writing in an email and if the Chairman would like to define put it in writing then please do. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated the fact that this is an emergency situation, and she really needs the funds to get things moving is enough or what she was hoping was enough because she believes there is another Constitutional Office that has gotten funding for a person to come in because of the situation they had. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated nothing had come before the Board and they must have taken care of what they needed from their Department. Tax Commissioner Jenkins corrected Chairman Neely-Hadley and stated it was an Office not a Department. Chairman Neely-Hadley addressed Tax Commissioner Jenkins and stated you asked for this \$6K in your email where you said that you would be glad to put it in writing if necessary and Chairman Neely-Hadley immediately responded back "Can you submit something in writing" so all the Board has is the \$6K to go by that Tax Commissioner Jenkins put in her email. There is no request for any additional funds. Tax Commissioner Jenkins asked what kind of writing Chairman Neely-Hadley would like so she could get this down and not have to come back and say this wasn't enough on the last time. Chairman Neely-Hadley told Tax Commissioner Jenkins she could put it in an email but had offered to put it in an email earlier and did not do that. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins if she wanted a work order or something when someone comes to her office to show exactly what they are doing. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated the same respect here would be very much appreciated. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she had never received any signed request and every time she had asked. During this time of the conversation, Vice Chairman Threadgill was trying to speak, and Tax Commissioner Jenkins continued to talk over Vice Chairman Threadgill. Chairman Threadgill said bye. Tax Commissioner Jenkins told Vice Chairman Threadgill "this isn't your Board Vice Chairman." Vice Chairman Threadgill stated this was the Commissioners Board and it wasn't her Board. Tax Commissioner Jenkins continued to talk over the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins to give her what the amount is and if there was something different all she had to do it to put it in writing whether it is an email or whatever. Vice Chairman Threadgill left the meeting. Tax Commissioner Jenkins asked Chairman Neely-Hadley if she was to put this in writing, then define what she means. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated it could be in an email and that would be fine. Tax Commissioner Jenkins asked if she was saying \$6K for a person because that is what she has. Chairman Neely-Hadley told Tax Commissioner Jenkins that is what she had asked for and if it needed to be any different she would need to tell the Board because the Board could not read her mind. Commissioner Plant left the meeting and five-minute break was taken due to no quorum. Vice Chairman Threadgill and Commissioner Plant returned to the meeting. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the amount was for \$6K that she had put in the email to use for temporary assistance to start data entry. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated that is what she initially requested. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we can act on that tonight and if there is something else she needed, she would just need to get it to the Board. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated all she had asked was for Tax Commissioner Jenkins to put it in writing and had no idea it was any different than what she had put in the email. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she could have been clearer in the email and that was for certain. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she could have said if I can't get this going right now I am going to need to request funds but she was hoping she could have that so she could get going. Chairman Neely-Hadley said, "just talk with me, I emailed you back immediately and you never responded back." Chairman Neely-Hadley thought that due to no response back, Tax Commissioner Jenkins didn't want anything, or we would just go with the \$6K. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she had thought if she was going to put in a request for \$6K and then she would put in another request and a definition was needed as to what Chairman Neely-Hadley wanted in writing. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the email from Tax Commissioner

Jenkins led her to believe that she was about to spend hours writing up a request to give to the Board on Tuesday night. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated that she did not know what she was going to put in the email. There was additional discussion of the email and Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she could make her request more defined in the future. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated the process was so stilted due to the fact that we are at a Board meeting rather than just being able to talk and say I need this and that being able to communicate with the Board had been difficult. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins a question and Tax Commissioner Jenkins spoke over Vice Chairman Threadgill and told him to address her as Tax Commissioner Jenkins since she always addresses him by his title and to respect her and her office and do the same. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated this is two-way street and both parties, through emails have expressed the desire to get some things done. Tax Commissioner Jenkins agreed and stated they had to communicate and there has been a cyber attack where all of her data is gone, and she had hoped to have more communication. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated when she is begging for information it makes it difficult to do her job when she has all the other things. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the request that is before the Board is for \$6K. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated he had a question before the Board moved forward with the vote. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated Tax Commissioner Jenkins had said 6-8 weeks she hoped she would have it and would not be able to cut the County a check for the amount of property tax payments until that point. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she did not believe she said that at all and did not have the email in front of her. As Vice Chairman Threadgill was trying to speak, Tax Commissioner Jenkins continued to talk over him. Tax Commissioner Jenkins then said to Vice Chairman Threadgill that he needed to be more careful in how he quoted her. Vice Chairman Threadgill then said Tax Commissioner Jenkins was a worthless human being. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated when Vice Chairman Threadgill hears anything he does not like he starts turning it on. Vice Chairman Threadgill left the meeting. Chairman Neely-Hadley moved forward with the vote. Motion was made by Commissioner McCoy and seconded by Chairman Neely-Hadley to approve the request for the Tax Commissioners office for \$6K for temporary help. All were in favor. Tax Commissioner Jenkins thanked the Board for the funding and asking if there was anything they could discuss regarding the IT matter or did she need to come back or put something in writing to discuss it. Chairman Neely-Hadley told Tax Commissioner Jenkins to tell the Board what she needed so that the Board will know what needs to be done, since they cannot just pull it out of the air. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins to email Administrator Irizarry so that it could be reviewed prior to being added to the Agenda for a meeting in two weeks. Tax Commissioner Jenkins addressed Attorney Michael Hill and stated this was bordering on obstruction of her office and she cannot come to the meeting and know exactly what she will need since they are still in a developing situation but the fact that the Chairman Neely-Hadley was requiring Tax Commissioner Jenkins to come back at the next meeting and in the meantime put something in writing is going to do nothing but cause delays for her office. Chairman Neely-Hadley told Tax Commissioner Jenkins that she had asked her to give the Board what she needed so the Board would have something to go on. Chairman Neely-Hadley responded to Tax Commissioner Jenkins that she sees where our bank account has gone since we have not gotten any money from her office since December 30, 2021. The attack was on January 9, 2022 and Chairman Neely-Hadley asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins where the money was that should have been given to the County in between that time. Tax Commissioner Jenkins tried to talk over Chairman Neely-Hadley. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the County had checked and Tax Commissioner Jenkins could have already given the County and the School Board the collected tax money but was not following what her office was supposed to do. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated she did not want to go out for a Tax Anticipation Note and borrow money to run the County when there are millions of dollars in a bank account that is owed to the County. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated it was ridiculous to go for a TAN rather than to try and help her office. Chairmen Neely-Hadley stated we are trying to help your office and asked her to write the County a check for part of the collected tax funds. A meeting was held four weeks ago between Chairman Neely-Hadley, Administrator Irizarry and Tax Commissioner Jenkins and her words were that she could probably do a percentage for the payment owed to the County. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated the reason she said that was with the information she had at that time she

thought she had more records and more reports. She did have the information for the School Board and that is why she was able to provide them with a check which was not very much, but it is enough because of all the things she has had to deal with in the last two months that made it difficult to determine what she was supposed to have in the bank account. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the Commissioners and School Board know they get a certain percentage, and she did not have to use all of the money in the account but could use some of it to give us money that is owed. Tax Commissioner Jenkins addressed Chairman as Commissioner Hadley and stated it was a little more difficult than that and she has a couple of more things she has to consider and in light of the cyber attack and a fat zero when it comes to all the information going from November 17, 2021 to January 10, 2022, it makes it very difficult to determine how much of that percentage needs to go out and how much is getting refunded because that is another issue that her office has. There is an extensive number of refunds they will have to do because people are seeing that the property taxes do not look like they have been paid so they are paying them again and that has led to a lot of complications. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated that is why the County asked for an amount less than what was due and stated since there is \$8M being held she could possibly disburse \$6M or whatever amount she came up with. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated she was told during the meeting they previously held that there was a daily report they did, and Tax Commissioner Jenkins had told them her office stopped doing that report because they didn't need it, but by law the Tax Office is supposed to have a record of every day's work. If the Tax Office had that they could use it to build the files. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated there were some things when she trusted the IT Department and they verified her data was secure, and that her reports would be there when they needed them, then she should have done that. For the last 6-months Tax Commissioner Jenkins has been trying to extricate her office from the County IT and all that she has been doing is getting hurdles from that. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the law requires her to print the daily copy and keep it. Tax Commissioner Jenkins disagreed with that statement. Commissioner Plant read verbatim from the Tax Commissioner's Procedures 2.16. This included keeping a computer backup off site, back up all computer files daily or weekly and store them somewhere other than where the office is located. An example of a place to store the file would be in a Bank safety deposit box. Commissioner Plant started to ask Tax Commissioner Jenkins if she had followed this and was interrupted. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she did not believe there was any Tax Commissioner's Office that uses a Safe Deposit Box and that was a little outdated. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated she did have back ups and was told that she had back ups but trying to get information from the County IT Department had been like pulling teeth and because of this she has been trying to get out of this situation but instead of going back and trying to point fingers, what she would like to do is to move forward so she could get what she needs done. Commissioner Plant stated she was trying to establish the fact if there are any backup files. Before Commissioner Plant could complete her comment, Tax Commissioner Jenkins interrupted and spoke over Commissioner Plant and stated she had gone over this ad nauseum for the last two months and there is not, that is acceptable, and we could ask the County IT Director about why, but it is unnecessary to go into why and that is the case. Commissioner Plant asked Tax Commissioner Jenkins if she was required to provide back-up files and was the Tax Commissioner's Procedure 2.16 obsolete. Tax Commissioner Jenkins stated yes it is obsolete. Tax Commissioner Jenkins addressed Commissioner Plant and said instead of taking an insert from a handbook that is out of date, we should talk about what we need to do in the future, but she did not think it should be in this meeting. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we would do what was on the Agenda for this meeting and she could get the information to Administrator Irizarry who will do a straw poll and the Board will figure out what else we need to do. There had been an opportunity to bring that before the Board tonight and it could not have been any plainer than what was said in the email. Tax Commissioner Jenkins answered, define what you need. She did not think that was difficult. Tax Commissioner Jenkins asked the Board to define what they wanted her to put in an email. Attorney Michael Hill stated this Board can only act in open session with a quorum. Just like anyone else, if you have a proposal like any other petitioner that comes, it needs to be a detailed proposal presented and not just a blank check request. The Chairperson was correct earlier when she said the Board cannot act outside of this forum. Attorney Hill stated the Chairperson was asking Tax Commissioner to clarify with a proposal not a blank check



request every time and the Board had not gotten any subsequent information and was acting only on the proposal that was in front of the Board at this time which was the \$6K. Chairman Neely-Hadley thanked Attorney Hill for clarifying that information.

## **XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Administrator Irizarry read and passed around an invitation to the Board for a Board of Education Appreciation reception. This will be held on March 7, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

Piedmont Paving is performing FDR process on Luthersville Road and Oak Street. They should start asphalt paving on Wednesday. This is the final road on the 2021 LMIG projects.

4-H Summer Camp registration is underway. Thirty students have signed up to attend and there is room for more. Vidalia Onion sales are underway and tomato plants will be ready on the week of Good Friday at a cost of \$1 each. They are preparing for the District Project achievement public speaking next month at Rock Eagle in Douglas County.

There were 610 Emergency calls in January with MC Fire and Rescue Service receiving an average of 20 emergency calls per day and 52 emergency vehicles responding daily to emergency calls. They have applied for the Time Task Force Grant, the Fireworks Tax Grant, and have received the Georgia Fire Commission Grant.

Theron Gay, Special Projects Director, reported he had been working a lot on the Building and Zoning side.

## **XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Hines – Absent

Commissioner Plant – extended an invitation for the City of Greenville for the Grand Opening and ribbon cutting at Greenville Memorial Park on February 26, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. All former Mayors will be recognized and will have a paver placed at the Park. The Brown Sugar Festival will be held on the South Square and will follow the ribbon cutting.

Commissioner McCoy – wished we could do more on Luthersville Road. There have been many calls on road issues in the County due to the rain. Commissioner McCoy spoke to a Field Engineer this morning who was surveying for Broadband on his road. The work is moving forward with Southern Rivers.

Commissioner Plant stated she meant to mention, Commissioner Hines had asked about the Broadband for Diverse. In a news article that came out in LaGrange following our last Board meeting, it was indicated that Meriwether County would have 1,601 additional Broadband customers as part of that Grant.

Vice Chairman Threadgill- Absent

Chairman Neely-Hadley- announced February 2021, was the first meeting regarding Redistricting. Meriwether County, members of this Board and staff participated in that meeting. In June 2021, ACCG hosted a workshop about how to do redistricting. Again, members of this Board and staff attended. On October 26, 2021, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to ask Representative Debbie Buckner to serve as the Meriwether County Legislative Sponsor to work with the Reapportionment Office regarding the redistricting for Meriwether County. Representative Buckner did work with the Reapportionment Office and on December 14, 2021, the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session to discuss the plan. The meeting was attended by Representative Debbie Buckner, Senator Randy Roberson, and Representative David Jenkins arrived a little later. There was discussion about the maps and in the meeting that followed the Work Session, the Board of Commissioners voted 4-1 to go with the map that was minimal change. It has been before the House and Senate. Chairman Neely-

Hadley commended Representative Buckner and Senator Roberson for working together, even though they are on opposite parties, they came together knowing this was what the local Board as well as the Board of Education, had asked for. They went to bat for us. We did have to go through additional committee meetings in order to get our map approved. It is waiting on the Governor's signature.

**XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

County Attorney Hill added to Mr. Gay's comments on the bidding procedure. If the road had been a separate project, it was understood the cost was under \$100K, Attorney Hill clarified that would not have required a bid under the Georgia Procurement law. It was Attorney Hill's understanding from reading that law, that it could have been parceled out on its own.

County Attorney Michael Hill stated there was need for Executive Session for Litigation, Personnel, Real Estate and Tax Matters.

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go into Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. to discuss Litigation, Personnel, Real Estate and Tax Matters. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go out of Executive Session at 8:04 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go back into Regular Session at 8:12 p.m. All were in favor.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

**XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES**

Chairman Neely-Hadley announced Future Meetings and Notices prior to Executive Session.

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*

Attest: *Beverly G. Thomas, County Clerk*

Date: *March 9, 2022*