

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**WORK SESSION**

March 26, 2019 - 4:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Shirley Hines, Vice Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley, Mary Bray, Alfred "Buster" McCoy and Bryan Threadgill  
Staff Present: County Administrator Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, and Finance Director Bill Gregory  
Staff Absent: County Attorney

**I. WELCOME** – Chairman Shirley Hines, 4:30 p.m.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Administrator Gay stated Transportation is one of the costliest issues for the County. There has been discussion on options for funding to improve Transportation. We are resurfacing 10-12 miles of road each year with SPLOST dollars matching LMIG. There is no good way to address dirt roads due to lack of funding. General Information was sent out regarding T-SPLOST. If the Board elects to proceed with T-SPLOST we would need to move forward soon in order to have this on the November ballot. Everything must be ready by June 30, 2019. Administrator Gay did not feel the timing would be the best to have this on the ballot during the 2020 Presidential Election as the T-SPLOST issue would be lost in all the other issues on the ballot. The T-SPLOST would be for a five-year period and would include an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Cities. The County would receive approximately \$5M over a 5-year period. Administrator Gay mentioned the pros of having T-SPLOST. Commissioner McCoy thought T-SPLOST funds could be used for repairs of drainage issues, resurfacing and for equipment purchases that are dedicated to roads. That funding cannot be used to pay personnel but we can use it to pay contractors. Commissioner McCoy stated calcium chloride would be an improvement to the dirt roads. Vice Chairman Neely-Hadley stated if the County decides to move forward with T-SPLOST, she did not see how we could not use SPLOST and that T-SPLOST would be an addition. Allie Road was the last road paved by the County. Commissioner Bray stated this was a good idea. This year Coweta County is planning to have TSPLOST on their ballot. Administrator Gay stated the County would use the funds as received rather than use bonds. Finance Director Gregory stated we have the option for a short-term loan with local banks for our portion of a little over \$1M per year. Chairman Hines stated this would allow the County to purchase equipment for roads and transportation. Administrator Gay has not spoken with the Cities but feels they would be on board. Manchester Mayor Mike Brening stated it was good idea to take it to the voters and we would need to get all seven Cities involved. There were other ideas provided from the audience on how to sell the idea to the public. Administrator Gay stated he needed direction from the Board if they want to proceed. The cost of the election would be approximately \$15K.

2. Bill Cawthorne and Tyrell Johnson have been working on an organization plan for Public Works which includes work crews. The Board has been very supportive by adding personnel and allowing the purchase of equipment. Mr. Cawthorne addressed dirt roads first. Mr. Johnson has four motor grader operators on staff now. They were able to scrape 20 roads before the rain. They will develop a route list in the North and South Zones. Public Works will staff drainage crews. Commissioner McCoy asked for a copy of the route list. The plan is to scrape and crown every dirt road twice each year and pull ditches. Administrator Gay discussed the problems of jumping from road to road. Commissioner Threadgill stated the Board needs to be mindful and work off the list unless there is an emergency. Mr. Cawthorne stated there will be a weekly report of what roads have been scraped. Chairman Hines asked if the 2018-2019 LMIG could be put on an Excel Spreadsheet and made available to the public. It should include the miles and cost. Commissioner Bray knows having a spreadsheet with a priority list of roads would be good. The worse roads would be first on the list. Mr. Cawthorne has worked on the paved road list and now will

work on the dirt road list. Mr. Cawthorne will provide an evaluation for each road. Chairman Hines asked about the fleet maintenance. Mr. Cawthorne stated we are good. We are short handed due to two employees resigning. There was discussion of ways to retain staff and hire youth and train. Mr. Cousins, from Primrose Road, asked how he could go about having a road striped and who checks the roads for striping. Mr. Cawthorne stated this will be included in the evaluation plan to identify what roads need to be striped. There was additional conversation on how many miles had been striped over the last few years. Chairman Hines encouraged the public to go on the County website and report any issues with their roads.

Debbie Nelson stated we need to let citizens know the status of the reports. Vice Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the system should show that the problem has been reported if you register when you go in. It will not if you sign in as a guest. Administrator Gay will work with IT to find out if we can make sure an acknowledgement is always sent.

Nneka Carter asked if the County could list on the website that the road had been repaired and see how they rank on the list. Commissioner Threadgill stated we need to have a sheet that updates and closes out work tickets.

3. Nneka Carter provided an update to the Commissioners from the Recreation Advisory Board. Ms. Carter thanked the Board for assembling the Recreation Advisory Board and stated she was just completing her second meeting. Attendance for some has been an issue. Ms. Carter stated four of the Advisory Board members are on ball teams and can't come during the scheduled games. Many times, it is unknown if there will be a quorum until the last minute. There are trends on who attend meetings. Ms. Carter suggested the solution for the attendance issue would be to add three more people to the Advisory Board, an after-meeting sync and create an alternate plan. Commissioner Threadgill stated there are currently nine people on the Advisory Board and he was unsure how it would work to add three more. Ms. Carter stated some members are not directly connected to recreation. The suggestion for the three additional positions would include Senior Citizens, the Arts, and Outdoor Activities/Parks. The Goals of the Committee would be to complete a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Last year a community survey was taken. The survey was through Survey Monkey and it was not good for the large scale. Ms. Carter stated at some point we need to invest in a feasibility study and what it would cost. This will help create jobs and provide for a better quality of life. Ms. Carter asked the Board to hire someone to do a feasibility study to see how it would work throughout the County. Ms. Carter asked the Board to hold off on the renewal of the contract for the baseball field in Lone Oak to see if we have more opportunities to benefit the youth, especially in the Northern part of the County. Commissioner Bray asked what the timeline was on the Master Plan of the Meriwether County Recreation Department. Ms. Carter stated it depends on the resources and funding. More professional help is needed to get this done. Chairman Hines asked if Three Rivers would be an option to help. Ms. Carter stated Three Rivers and the County would have to do the work and there would still be a cost and a financial commitment. Commissioner Threadgill stated the Recreation Advisory Board was created three years ago and this was the first time we have heard from them. Ms. Carter stated she would like to come and provide an update more often and wants to look at the cost, funding, partnership and how to sustain. Chairman Hines asked if there had been discussion of meeting the needs of children, adults and seniors on a small scale and if so, what could it be. Ms. Carter stated this Advisory Board has looked at places for recreation and how to partner with others that are doing this service. Ms. Carter stated there was not a quorum at the last meeting. Those who showed up spoke about creating partnerships to be more cost efficient and to meet the needs of all citizens. Ms. McKinley, Meriwether County Chamber of Commerce Director, stated there is a Meriwether Arts and it has been in effect for over two years. Ms. McKinley stated they welcome a collaboration. Twanda Devauld Bryant, Recreation Advisory Board Member, stated she is fired up at getting things here in Meriwether County. Ms. Bryant has a military background and stated there are many possibilities that need support. There are empty lots where coffee shops, etc. could locate. We need to look at the land for

farmers markets and there are many more potential possibilities. At the last meeting there was not enough people for a quorum and funding is needed.

Administrator Gay passed along to the Board the letter from the City of Manchester including a copy of their Council Meeting Minutes. Manchester Mayor, Mike Brening, stated all Manchester wants is what is best for the Citizens of Meriwether County. We already have a Recreation Program and a well-known leader that puts in many hours. Tonight, we will recognize two teams who won State Championships. Mr. Brening stated the present Recreation Program includes many sports and after school care. The City of Manchester is working to plan for their budget. Mayor Brening stated the County would pay half of the \$150K they are paying now just to get an experienced person with the years of service the program already has. Mayor Brening stated if they can make improvements to let them know. They travel all over and take care of the maintenance.

Commissioner Threadgill stated Manchester contributes far more than \$150K and would love to have the County do this. There had been discussions of satellite areas with a small office for children to sign in. We have the hub of the program and just need to build it throughout the Cites.

Chairman Hines stated she appreciated everyone sharing and we would have to work things out. We have a successful program and will honor the youth throughout the County and add other items to help other citizens.

### **III. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **IV. CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

The meeting concluded at 5:50 pm.

### **V. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Future Meetings were listed on the Agenda.

Approved by:

Attest:

Date:

Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners  
Beulah Thomas, County Clerk  
April 10, 2019