

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
(The meeting was conducted electronically due to the COVID-19 Virus)
April 8, 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 Nathan Lee

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill at 9:00 a.m.
INVOCATION – Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ADOPT AGENDA
Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to adopt the Agenda All were in favor.

III. MINUTES
Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the Minutes from the March 11, 2020 Regular Meeting at 9:00 a.m. All were in favor.
Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the Minutes from the March 20, 2020 Emergency Special Called Teleconference at 2:00 p.m. All were in favor.
Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Minutes of the March 24, 2020 Emergency Special Called Teleconference at 3:00 p.m. All were in favor.
The reason for the Teleconferences were due to a Countywide and State Shelter in Place order due to the spread of the COVID-19 Virus.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS
None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER'S COMMENTS
None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS
None

VII. PUBLIC HEARING
None

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
1. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to remove "Recommendations from Recreation Advisory Committee on Recreation Advisory Committee Ordinance" from the Agenda and add back later. All were in favor.
2. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to remove "Request from the City of Manchester to obtain approval for the City of Manchester to grant an EIP loan for a new business at the Manchester Industrial Park" from the Agenda and add back at a later date. All were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Tammie Starkey, James Clark and Lisa Wheelock from NFP reviewed the renewals for the 2020-2021 County medical, dental, vision, short/long term disability and life insurances along with the EAP program. The claims were high which in turn caused an increase of premiums. Ms. Starkey provided the history run of the claims. A portion of the increase is due to increasing staff. Most of the increase is due to high cost claims. Eleven members had claims over \$25K and \$973K accounts for 64% of those 11 members. The percentage in the past was only 25%. The County was hit hard by some claims, there are a few ongoing and there were some increases in medication. The loss ratio is 159%. The initial renewal quote with CIGNA was with an increase of \$339,789. With negotiations, that increase was reduced to \$285,831 for the annual premium. Ms. Starkey provided several options that would reduce the overall renewal cost. The first option would be to keep the policy as is with the increase of \$285,831. The second option (OAP10 with current plan), would be to have County base contributions of OAP10 as a base plan and employees buy up to current plan. In the third option (HAS 5 with current plan), all services are subject to the deductible except preventive care, eligible for health savings account and not eligible for HRA reimbursements. There was additional information provided on the HRA account and funding. There was no increase on the Dental Insurance with CIGNA, and they will guarantee their rate for 2-years. There was a slight increase on the UHC vision plan. (This was later negotiated to no increase), the STD and LTD would shift to Lincoln and they would provide a free EAP program with an online smoking cessation program and five face to face counseling session with a licensed clinician. Administrator Gay stated this would be added to the next Agenda on April 28, 2020 for a vote.
2. Public Works Consultant, Bill Cawthorne, provided a list of equipment and vehicles that were inoperable and requested they be declared surplus and sold to the highest price bidder. Those items were: 1974 Ford Backhoe VIN# CBG455 model 655-A, 1974 Caterpillar Motorgrader/Boom Mower VIN# 10R1974 model 140, 1990 Grad-all VIN# GO16534 model 660E, 2004 John Deer/Boom Mower VIN# LO6415A4232500, Bandit Chipper VIN#859635, John Deer Tractor VIN# 215776T, 2003 New Holland Tractor VIN#1270897 model Tn65 unit #511, 2003 New Holland Tractor VIN# no number given - model Tn65 unit #512, International Tractor VIN#B500214b011076-x model 584, Ford Tractor VIN#BC57322 model 250C, 7'0" Rotary Mower unknown VIN# Unknown model/make, 8-0 Rotary Mower VIN# 4994 model C-114-1 make Woods, Pot Hole Patcher, and Dresser Wheel Loader. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to surplus the select pieces of equipment and vehicles as listed and sell it to the highest bidder. All were in favor.
3. Administrator Gay stated bids were opened on March 18, 2020 for the 2020 Roadside Vegetative Management spraying. Administrator Gay and Public Works Consultant, Bill Cawthorne analyzed the four bids received. The lowest bid was from Nature Chem with 2 sprays per year. The cost was 80.17 per mile round 1 and \$46.47 per mile round 2. Total cost of \$37,992 for 300 miles of roadway. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the bid from Nature Chem. All were in favor.
4. Administrator Gay looked at the Retirement Plan due to COVID-19. Many people have lost jobs and have family members with the virus. If employees were to be in that situation, they could get into a financial bind. Because of this Administrator Gay recommended the Board amend the current plan with Mass Mutual to allow for an in-service hardship on the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and the 401a Retirement Plan until December 31, 2020 and revise the vesting schedule as follows: 3 years – 30%, 4 years 50% and 5 years 100%. The revised vesting schedule would remain in effect unless changed in the future. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to sign a Resolution adopting the Employee Retirement Plan changes which allow a service hardship on the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and the 401a Plan until December 31, 2020 and to permanently change the vesting schedule to: 3 yrs. – 30%, 4 yrs. – 50% and 5 yrs. 100%. All were in favor.
5. Administrator Gay stated the Chairman and Board had already approved a Declaration of Local Emergency. The situation is everchanging and we want to update the Declaration so that ours will be in place in case the Governor lifts the one for the State. Administrator reviewed the added items of 8, 9 and 10 which include citations that could be given. Attorney Nathan Lee stated the Board could approve this

subject to legal review. Other changes were discussed. This can be sent to the Cities once it has been implemented. The current Order from the Governor ends on 4-13-2020. Our Order would go into effect on 4-14-2020 at 12:01 am and would last until further notice. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the Declaration of Local Emergency as presented once it has been reviewed by Attorney Lee, and to allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

6. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to remove the Meriwether County Resolution during Local State of Emergency from the Agenda. All were in favor.

7. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve and allow the Chairman to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Evidence Based Associated, LLC. All were in favor.

8. Finance Director Gregory stated as part of housekeeping, last year's budget is closed but there are items that need adjusting for the Auditors. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to approve FY 2019 Sheriff Drug Forfeiture Fund Budget. All were in favor.

9. Mr. Gregory stated this is the labor side of personnel cost that each department has to use to balance the budget. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve FY-2019 Budget Amendment #20. All were in favor.

10. Mr. Gregory stated this is to clean up all items except personnel. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve FY-19 Budget Amendment #21. All were in favor.

11. Due to COVID-19 and the inability for some people to call or link in to the BOCC meeting via ZOOM, Administrator Gay spoke with the Attorney representing JB Communities to defer the Public Hearing on Phase II Culpepper Circle from April 28, 2020 to May 26, 2020. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the request from JB Communities to defer the Public Hearing until May 26, 2020. All were in favor.

X. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, provided the finance report and reviewed the Property Tax Analysis for 2019. The Tax Commissioner's collection rate was at 91% at the end of February. The General Fund is strong at \$4.5M. Mr. Gregory has not heard from the DOR about extending the submission of the digest.

XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Gay thanked the Board of Commissioners for their leadership during the emergency declaration and thanked the Sheriff's Office, all Department Heads and citizens who have been very understanding. So far all has run smoothly, and we are providing services in a different way.

Administrator Gay hopes everything will get better soon, appreciates all the support and stated we will overcome this together.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: stated 39% of Meriwether County citizens had completed and returned their Census Form. Commissioner Hines wants the County to continue to push the information through the County social media. Commissioner Hines thanked all Commissioners for helping feed the school children and gave special thanks to Commissioner Neely-Hadley for spearheading the project.

Commissioner Hines heard about the Mother-Baby satellite project and wants to see where they are with that.

Calls have been received regarding cleaning out ditches on John Trammell Road. Public Works needs to make sure they clean ditches when roads are scraped.

Commissioner Mary Bray: Stated everyone did a great job distributing the food at the schools.

Commissioner Bray asked for an update on Hill Haven Road. Administrator Gay stated he was working on the final design build/repair and the bid package should go out at the end of the week. It will include

Hill Haven Road and Owens Road. A copy will also be sent to the Commissioners. A guardrail may need to be added to Hill Haven due to the depth.

Vice Chairman McCoy: reported Lake Meriwether is closed, and it appears DNR may have conflict with that.

Scott Harris contacted Vice Chairman McCoy last week and stated they found rock in the Cove and may be able to recognize the Cove as a meteor strike site.

There was other discussion of closing Lake Meriwether for camping, fishing and other events. There have been some negative responses. The caretaker is older and at risk for COVID-19 and people would have to share bathhouses. Chairman Threadgill stated safety must come first.

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley: thanked everyone for their comments on feeding the school children and thanked all who helped. There were 50-60 volunteers across the County. The program will resume on April 20th and meals will be served through May 15th. They are taking temperatures and asking everyone to wear masks.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: reported COVID-19 is very real, and we are following the advice of those close to the experts. The Census Committee reached out to Chairman Threadgill and recorded a public statement about the CENSUS. This is also on our website.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

None

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Glover of Greenville was concerned for the local nursing homes and how they could be impacted with COVID-19. Chairman Threadgill stated people could reach out to the Nursing Home Administrator and if they could not reach the Administrator, they could contact Pruitt Health. There are Federal and State Guidelines that must be followed at Nursing Homes.

Chairman Threadgill provided more information on COVID-19 and precautions all should take. There were concerns of SPLOST and TSPLOST collections. It may have the opposite effect since people are shopping local.

Commissioner Hines stated the Legislature in pushing for each County to get the revenue from the taxes collected on all online sales.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Threadgill read the Future Meetings and Announcements. There is not a Work Session planned for April.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to adjourn at 10:43 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners
Attest: *Becky Thomas, County Clerk*
Date: *April 28, 2020*