

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
June 22, 2021

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

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy

Staff Present: Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects Theron Gay, County Administrator Brad Vaughan, Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Michael Hill.

Staff Absent: County Clerk Beverly Thomas

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
INVOCATION – Commissioner Neely-Hadley
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ADOPT AGENDA

A motion was made to adopt the Agenda by Commissioner Plant with the following changes: Under New Business: *Change #7 Consideration of a change order for LMIG (District 1) to #2 on the agenda and make #2 Recreation Advisory Board request to purchase Banners for the Walk-A-Thon #7. Also moving #1 Proclamation -Retirement of Reverend Lonnie Thornton, Sr after Department Head Comments.* Commissioner Neely-Hadley seconded the motion. All were in favor.

III MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to accept the Minutes of the June 9, 2021, 9:00 a.m. Regular Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hines. All were in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Hines to accept the minutes of the June 17, 2021, 5:00 p.m. Special Called Meeting. All were in favor. Commissioner Neely-Hadley abstained.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS

None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS COMMENTS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

None

Chairman Threadgill presented a proclamation to recognize Reverend Lonnie L. Thornton, Sr., and his wife Sybrenna upon their retirement from Rust Chapel United Methodist Church in Greenville, Georgia. Reverend Thornton provided 17 years of devoted service and leadership as the Pastor of Rust Chapel United Church. The Proclamation was presented to Reverend Thornton and Mrs. Thornton.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

Case# 18-2021 Michael Cory Wargofcak – request for a 65’ Variance at 2041 Lone Oak Road, known as Tax Map and Parcel #046 037 004. The purpose is to build a Pole Barn, District 1. A motion was made by Commissioner Hines and seconded by Commissioner Plant to go into Public Hearing at 6:06 p.m. All were in favor. Butch Oliver, Interim Director of Building, Zoning, and Community Development presented the request for a 65’variance onset back for the purpose of building a pole barn. Mr. Oliver

stated that Mr. Wargofcak would like to request the 65' set back from the center line in order to build a pole barn for storage of equipment. Mr. Oliver stated the Planning Commission recommended approval with the condition that Mr. Wargofcak will plant the buffer with trees. Mr. Oliver advised there had been no calls for opposition of the request. With no one else wishing to speak, a motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Hines to go out of Public Hearing at 6:10 p.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Hines and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to approve the request for a 65' setback variance to build a pole barn. All were in favor.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to table the appointment to DFACS, District 5 to fill an unexpired term that will end on June 30, 2022. Commissioner Plant seconded the motion. All were in favor.
2. A motion was made by Chairman Threadgill to table the appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals to fill an unexpired term ending on January 5, 2022. This was seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley. All were in favor.
3. A motion was made by Chairman Threadgill to appoint Mark Trimble to the Water & Sewerage Authority, District 4. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley. All were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

2. Administrator Vaughan stated that the 2021 LMIG previously approved included a 1.1-mile section of Mt. Carmel Rd. This included a contracted price of \$116,132.65. Administrator Vaughn stated after further study, the condition of Mt. Carmel Rd. indicates a need for a greater level of repair. Administrator Vaughan recommended the section of roadway be rescheduled and funding determined at a future date for full depth reclamation. Administrator Vaughan stated after discussion with Commissioner Hines and analysis of other eligible roads in District 1, they are requesting a change order to include approximately 1065 feet of Turkey Trail Ct. and approximately 1657 feet of Bobcat Trail for full depth reclamation, asphalt leveling, and double surface treatment for a total estimated cost of \$184,143.30. Administrator Vaughan stated this would be a difference in cost of \$68,010.65 above what was previously approved. A recommendation from Administrator Vaughan would be that the additional funding be approved from SPLOST by the Board. Commissioner Hines stated that this would be to do only parts as this is where the bulk of the homes were on Bobcat Trail. Chairman Threadgill asked how long before we would need to make the change. Theron Gay stated that we would need to find out where the additional funding would come from. Chairman Threadgill asked where the money would come from as the Board when getting SPLOST approved has to be specific on what the money will be spent on. Commissioner Hines stated she attended a meeting in Atlanta with Senator Donzella James, Chairman of the Senate Interstate Cooperation Committee. Commissioner Hines suggested reaching out to NACO, ACCG, and GMA. Commissioner Hines also stated there was an Executive Order 13985 regarding advancing racial equality to underserved communities. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to table the request for a change order until the July 27th Regular Meeting. All were in favor.
3. A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Hines to set a Work Session for July 21, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. to discuss Recreation, SPLOST, and the American *Rescue* Plan act (ARPA). All were in favor.
4. Administrator Vaughan stated there is a section of roadway on Crowder Road that is in base failure and needs patching according to Bill Cawthorne, Public Works Consultant. Administrator Vaughan stated three bids had been received and the low bidder was Pavement Solutions, LLC. Administrator Vaughan recommended approval of repair to a 142 sq. yard section of Crowder Road. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated that this road was resurfaced within the last 2 years. Theron Gay stated that there is a base failure on the road and truck traffic is not helping it. A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to approve the bid from Pavement Solutions, LLC in the amount of \$8,000.00 to complete repairs to Crowder Road. All were in favor.

5. Administrator Vaughan stated Medcom was the new HRA company chosen for the Insurance renewal. A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Hines to approve the Business Associate Agreement with Medcom and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

6. A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to confirm approval of the Health Reimbursement Plan Administration Service Agreement with Medcom. All were in favor.

7. Recreation Advisory Board request to purchase Banners for the Walk-A-Thon: Mary Bray, Representative from Recreation Advisory Board stated that she would like to request approval for Banners, T-Shirts, and Wrist Bands for the event. Mrs. Bray advised that she has left over donations from the 2020 Country Christmas that did not take place due to COVID. Mrs. Bray is requesting using those funds to support the Walk-A-Thon. Mr. Gay advised he will reach out to the businesses that have already donated and ask them if their donations could be put toward the upcoming event. Mr. Gay advised that he was not comfortable sending letters out to vendors of the county and asking them for donations. Finance Director Bill Gregory stated there had been two checks received already. One in the amount of \$500 and one in the amount of \$200. Chairman Threadgill asked Mrs. Bray if she knew the number of participants and had a list of who had already paid. She stated that she expects to have around 30 people participate. Commissioner Hines asked who put on the Country Christmas event. Chairman Threadgill responded that it was a Chamber event. Chairman Threadgill also asked how we would keep up with the participants. Mrs. Bray stated she preferred a check or money order. A motion was made to approve the use of previous donations towards the purchase of banners, wristbands, and T-shirts by Commissioner Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.

8. A motion was made to set a Public Hearing for the update of the Zoning Map and corresponding Ordinance for July 27, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. by Commissioner Plant. This was seconded by Commissioner Hines. All were in favor.

9. Commissioner Hines left the meeting at 6:48 p.m. County Administrator Vaughan stated there was a bid opening regarding the purchase of two ambulances. He advised that the County received two bids. Administrator Vaughan advised the low bid was \$211,000. Executive Director Gay would like to go back and try to negotiate with the low bidder. He is also interested in possibly purchasing used ambulance and one of the bidding companies had one that was van-based. Mr. Gay would like the approval from the Board for Administration to go back and negotiate with the low bidder and purchase at least one ambulance and look at used units as well. There was discussion regarding the timetable on purchasing a new unit as it could be 9-12 months out for delivery. A motion was made by Chairman Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to reject all bids and allow Administration to go back to the low bidder and negotiate the purchase of at least one new ambulance as well as discuss the possibility of purchasing a used unit. All were in favor.

10. 2021-2022 Budget Requests

DFACS – Finance Director Bill Gregory stated that the past budget for DFACS was \$22,500 and they are requesting \$28,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to approve \$25,000 for DFACS. All were in favor.

D.A. Office- A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to approve the budget for the D.A.'s office in the amount of \$238,273. All were in favor.

Public Defender- A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to approve the budget for the Public Defender's office in the amount of \$172,919 which included 3% increase for salaries and also reject the 5% suggested increase in state expenses. All were in favor.

Health Department- A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to approve the budget for the Health Department in the amount of \$152,500. All were in favor.

Three Rivers Regional Commission- A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to approve the budget for Three Rivers Regional Commission in the amount of \$13,865. All were in favor. Finance Director Gregory stated this is based on population.

Library- A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Hadley to approve the budget for the Library in the amount of \$103,000. All were in favor.

County Agent and allow the Chairman to sign the MOU between the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia by and on behalf of the UGA Cooperative Extension and Meriwether County- A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to approve the County Agent for Extension Service budget in the amount of \$53,218 and allow the Chairman to sign the MOU. All were in favor.

State Forestry- A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to approve the State Forestry budget in the amount of \$24,372. All were in favor.

Pathways- A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to approve the budget for Pathways in the amount of \$5,000. All were in favor.

Community Action- A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to accept the budget for Community Action in the amount of \$10,000. All were in favor.

X. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director Bill Gregory stated the bank balances were good and strong. He stated the General Fund Balance was \$3,225,041.03 and the prior year at this time 2.8 million. Director Gregory also stated there was also \$2,000,000 in the LGIP.

XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Vaughan stated that he had been taking on several tasks. He stated he had been to Building and Zoning and assisted with some zoning issues. Administrator Vaughan stated he had been researching information on ambulances and also met with Patty Threadgill at the Elections Office regarding House Bill/Senate Bill 202. Administrator Vaughan stated he met with the Sheriff regarding truck traffic on Forest Road and on Juke Line Road. The Sheriff was amenable, and he also reached out to GSP.

Administrator Vaughan stated that he and Mr. Gay will be setting up a meeting with GDOT. He stated that he did a ride-a-long with Commissioner Hines in her district and would like to set up a time to do that with each of the Commissioners. Administrator Vaughan stated that he and Mr. Gay met with Human Resources and the Fire Chief to discuss salaries and also discuss the SAFER grant and future fire stations. He advised he attended the Airport Authority and I.D.A. meetings and had a follow-up meeting at the Airport and has another one coming up. Administrator Vaughan stated he had attended an online-zoom meeting for the recreational water use *Classification. The Flint River is on our eastern border and is under consideration to be used as a Tier II Recreational Water Use which would open us up for tourism grants and development. Boat Ramps and Parks could be a part of this. Administrator Vaughan spoke with other jurisdictions regarding a Recreation Authority vs. a Recreation Advisory Board. Jurisdictions similar in size to Meriwether were contacted. There were commonalities on how they got to where they are now. All jurisdictions that were contacted started with a Recreation Department that was operated by the Board of Commissioners. As they become more established it got to the point where it was dominating the Commissioners Meeting, so they created a Recreation Authority. With the Authority they could have their own negotiations for land and park acquisition. Ultimately, they would appoint a Director.*

Administrator Vaughan stated Executive Director, Theron Gay, was further along working on another recreation project. Administrator Vaughan stated he would gather some more information and stated the main point was it started with the Board of Commissioners in control before it became a department, and most were based on heavy input from the Board of Commissioners and at least one major City.

Mr. Gay stated that there would be an air show October 16, 2021. He advised the Covered Bridge had been repaired and re-opened. He also stated that the repairs for Primrose Road would be handled by the new subcontractor Epps Paving. Mr. Gay mentioned truck detours and that there would be a meeting set up with GDOT. He also stated that the paving process had begun on Mt. Pilgrim Road and Mrs. Ellis of the community prepared lunch for all the contractors and workers. This was appreciated by all according to Mr. Gay.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: Absent.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: Commissioner Plant stated she had received numerous calls regarding roads following the recent rain. She also stated that Primrose Circle was in need of gravel. Commissioner Plant stated there are several issues with truck traffic on county roads that needs to be addressed. Executive Director Gay stated they would get in touch with GDOT and see about getting someone out to weigh trucks and begin to issue fines.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated there would be a Freedom Celebration in the City of Warm Springs on Saturday, June 26th. She also advised that there would be a parade at 11:00 a.m. and that golfcarts and bikes were welcome and will be decorated in red, white, and blue. Commissioner Neely-Hadley encouraged everyone to come out to the Freedom Celebration and stated there will be vendors and shopping as well.

Vice Chairman McCoy: Absent

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: Stated the Manchester Development Authority will host a Fireworks Celebration on July 3, 2021. He advised there will be bands and a celebration and the fireworks display would begin around 10:00 p.m.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Michael Hill had nothing to report but stated there was a need for Executive Session to discuss Litigation, Personnel, and Real Estate. Mr. Hill also reported that he and his wife were expecting twins in September.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dorothy Moore of 8751 Forest Road, Grantville GA, 30220 spoke regarding the truck traffic coming off the interstate and coming down Forest Rd. Mrs. Moore stated it had gotten really bad and dangerous. Executive Director Gay explained to her that they would be reaching out to GDOT to see about getting someone to come out and monitor this location. They would also look at getting more signage up in the area.

Shawn Buckley, Keck & Wood 445 Jeff Davis Road N, Suite B, Fayetteville, GA 30214 spoke regarding repairs to County Line Road. Mr. Buckley explained that he was told the amount for replacement to the culvert would be \$750,000 - \$800,000 and he felt this could be done for a lot less. Mr. Buckley explained he was an engineer that had found himself on County Line Road. He advised he could do the job for less than \$750,000 - \$800,000 above the loan amount. Mr. Buckley advised he had done culverts in Pike and Lamar Counties. He stated that there was a bridge there now over Blue Creek, but a bridge was not needed. He stated the GDOT minimum to put in a bridge per Mr. Buckley is a 20 square mile minimum of drainage area. Mr. Buckley stated the drainage area draining under County Line Road is 3 ½ square miles. Mr. Buckley stated that Georgia EPD and Fish and Wildlife would be involved. Executive Director Gay explained to Mr. Buckley that the scope of work was greater than just a culvert. He stated the Corp of Engineers would be needed as there is an existing wetland mitigation. Executive Director Gay advised Mr. Buckley that they are already in talks with engineering for the project but would be glad to set up a meeting to discuss, however this project is much more than just a culvert.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to go into Executive Session at 7:24 p.m. to discuss Litigation, Personnel and Real Estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to go out of Executive Session at 7:58 p.m. All were in favor.

Chairman Threadgill stated there was not action taken but authorization was needed to release a tax matter that was discussed. A motion was made to authorize the release and correction of a tax request by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings prior to Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 pm. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Allyson K. Stephens, Deputy Clerk

Date: July 14, 2021