

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
July 28, 2020

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred "Buster" McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Mary Bray, and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley  
The meeting was held at the Meriwether County Courthouse. Commissioner Hines and Commissioner Bray participated through ZOOM.

Staff Present: County Administrator Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, and County Attorney Michael Hill

Staff Absent: Finance Director Bill Gregory,

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Threadgill at 6:00 p.m.  
**INVOCATION** – Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley  
**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**II. ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to adopt the Agenda with the following changes: Add under New Business - 21. Resolution and Lease for the operation and maintenance of a boat ramp to be constructed by the Department of Natural Resources. Unfinished Business- Remove upon the request of AUR, 1. Veronica Dowell – request on behalf of Ms. Beverly Ball, Executive Director of the American Union Relief Society, Inc. (AURS) Summer Focus Learning Program, for funding in the amount of \$12,000. All were in favor.

**III. MINUTES**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to approve the Minutes from the June 23, 2020 Regular Meeting at 6:00 pm. All were in favor.

**IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS**

None

**V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

None

**VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS**

None

**VII. PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Motion was made by Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go into a Public Hearing to hear Case #8- Jerry Lentz, Agent for Jacob Lentz, requested a rezone of 5.85 total acres from LDR to RD to create two - 2+ acre lots. One lot for a new, 2,138 SF Manufactured Home and the second for two rental homes on Lion Lane. Tax Map 093-010, Parcel #7, LD #10, LL# 73 with a frontage of 788.52', with an area of 5.85 acres  
All were in favor.

Cathy Johnson, Building, Zoning and Community Development Director, stated each 2+ acre lot shall have a minimum of 200' of road frontage on Lion Lane which meets the zoning requirement on road frontage for RD zoning. Surrounding properties are a mix of large and small tracts. Some tracts are currently 2 acres and larger tracts are in excess of 100 acres. Property values of neighboring parcels will not be adversely affected. Property value on new parcels will

increase the value with improvements on property. No excessive or burdensome use of existing street, transportation, utilities, or schools.

Staff recommendation is to approve the rezoning from LDR to RD on 5.85 acres for the creation of two parcels consisting of no less than 2 acres each.

Mr. Lentz stated both trailers have residents. One resident will be moving in 6-8 months and the other is a senior lady who will be allowed to remain in the trailer located on a 2-acre lot.

There were no other comments.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely Hadley to approve the request for the rezone. All were in favor.

2. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to go into a Public Hearing for Case #10 – Gene King, Agent for L.C. Atkins and Dawn Atkins requested to rezone property identified on Tax Map #162-042, Parcel 4-Split Rail Farm Subdivision, LD upper 9<sup>th</sup>, LL# 93, with an area of 4.102 Acres from LDR to RD. The proposed use of the property will be to build a residential house. All were in favor.

Cathy Johnson, Building, Zoning and Community Development Director, stated the proposed lot known as 13 Split Rail Farm Road has been cleared of an older mobile home and will be the site of a new, 1,700 sq. ft. single family residence. Lot known as 43 Split Rail Farm Rd. will be cleared of an existing mobile home at a later date and will become the site of another new, 1,700 square foot single family residence. The surrounding properties along Split Rail Farm Road consist of 2-6 acres per parcel. Property values of those neighboring parcels will not be adversely affected. Property value on newly created lots will increase with new residential improvements. No excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation, utilities, or schools.

The staff recommendation is to approve the rezoning from LDR to RD on 4.102 acres for the creation of two 2+-acre lots.

Gene King stated Mr. Atwell and his wife own the property and they asked if they could sell one lot now and Gene King would purchase the other lot from them once the gentleman passes that lives in the trailer. Mr. King stated he would build a 1,700-1,800 square foot home that would be priced at \$234,900. Mr. King is ready to start on this project if approved by the Commissioners. There were no other comments.

Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of the Public Hearing at 6:13 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Chairman Threadgill to accept the rezoning recommendations from Planning and Zoning and make this into two lots. All were in favor.

#### **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. This topic was removed from the Agenda.
2. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to table the appointment to the Planning Commission Board, District 4, to fill an unexpired term. All were in favor.

#### **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Arkeious Grier asked the Board to removed Dwight Allen from the Water & Sewerage Authority. Mr. Grier stated the situation was explained during the June 23, 2020 meeting. Mr. Grier stated someone like Mr. Allen does not need to represent Meriwether County.

County Attorney Michael Hill stated the Board of Commissioners asked the Attorney to look at the legal aspect relative to the Water & Sewerage Authority. The Water & Sewerage Authority is separate from the

County and was created by Legislature. The Legislature is silent regarding a removal and the County Board cannot remove the appointment before the term ends. There is no authority otherwise. Chairman Threadgill stated he would look into handling this further.

Mr. Grier stated if Mr. Allen has to finish his term in office is there a legal manner. Mr. Grier stated he feels Mr. Allen's actions and words can have the people he represents in trouble. Mr. Grier asked if the County would be responsible for Mr. Allen's actions.

Attorney Hill stated if he was asking if his personal statement can, the Water Authority is a separate legal authority and is not part of the Board of Commissioners. They stand as a separate legal authority.

Chairman Threadgill stated he would look into any authority this Commission Board may have.

2. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the Resolution to support the Meriwether County Recreational Complex for the County of Meriwether and confirm allowing the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the 2020-2021 ACCG-IRMA renewal and confirm allowing the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

4. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to appoint Mike Robertson to the Recreation Board to fill an unexpired term in District 1. All were in favor. Mr. Robertson's term will expire on 12-31-2021.

5. Administrator Gay mentioned an at-large appointment to Region IV EMS Council during the last Commission meeting. The position is still open, and they are receiving recommendations for nominations. This would be a good position for someone in the field of Healthcare to provide guidelines to EMA and EMS. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated Chairman Threadgill had expressed interest in this appointment through e-mail correspondence. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to recommend Chairman Threadgill for an at-large appointment to Region IV EMS Council. All were in favor. Chairman Threadgill stated he was honored to be recommended to serve on the Region IV EMS Council.

6. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy to approve the FY 2020 Budget Amendment #2, for Animal Shelter grants in the amount of \$22,450. All were in favor.

7. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the FY 2020 Budget Amendment #3 – Deed Fees through 6-30-2020 in the amount of \$2,500. All were in favor.

8. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to approve the FY 2020 Budget Amendment #4 - HHS Stimulus Grant in the amount of \$25,814. All were in favor.

9. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #5 – EMS Equipment Grant in the amount of \$4,357. All were in favor.

10. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #6 – 2019 Emergency Management Performance Grant in the amount of \$8,511. All were in favor.

11. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to accept the July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019 Meriwether County Unit, Georgia Forestry Commission, annual report. All were in favor.

12. Administrator Gay stated the Farm Brewery Ordinance was not ready to be finalized now, but would be available at the next Commission Meeting. Motion was made by Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to add this to the August 12, 2020 Meeting. All were in favor.

13. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to set a Special Called Meeting to include a Public Hearing for discussion of a Subdivision Ordinance on August 25, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. All were in favor.

14. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to set a Special Called Meeting on August 25, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. to include a Public Hearing for discussion of the proposed Zoning Ordinance changes. All were in favor.

15. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to set a Work Session for Saturday, August 15, 2020 at 9:30 am to discuss T-SPLOST projects. All were in favor.

16. While working on the Flint River Trail it was noted there was .42 +/- of an acre the County does not own. The owner of the property, John Hubert Gilbert, signed a deed to convey the property back to Meriwether County. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to accept the deed in association with the Flint River Canoe Trail in order to add a Boat Ramp. All were in favor.

17. Public Works needs a Gradall Excavator for drainage maintenance, tree, and brush removal and many other related road maintenance functions. The Gradall can work from the road and is a great piece of equipment to use during the winter months to continue cleaning ditches. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to purchase one new D152 Gradall from Tractor and Equipment through the Sourcewell Contract #040319-GRD for \$254,554.15. All were in favor.

18. Administrator Gay stated the Lease with DFACS is a standard lease. Administrator Gay asked to allow the Attorney to review the lease. Dates were incorrectly listed as last year rather than this year and that will be corrected. Administrator Gay recommended that we approve and allow the Chairman to sign the lease following legal review. Motion was made by Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the DFACS and allow the Chairman to sign pending review from the County Attorney. All were in favor.

19. Administrator Gay explained the controversy regarding the incorrect closing of Halls Mill Road by a former Commission Board during the 1990's. There was no advertisement for the closure. Shortly, following the closure, a letter was received from Attorney Ken Gordon advising the Board that his wife owned property there and they were opposed to the closure. Administrator Gay suggested the Board set a hearing to determine the abandonment of Halls Mill Road. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to set a Public Hearing for August 25, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. to determine the abandonment of Halls Mill Road. All were in favor.

20. Administrator Gay mentioned at the last meeting that Meriwether County was approved for the Georgia Road and Tollway Authority Grant and Loan. The Grant is \$100,000 and the loan is \$150,000. This would be used on County Line Road to widen the bridge and pave. There is a 1% origination fee of \$1,500 and no interest until we begin to draw funds. Upon the recommendation of Administrator Gay, motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to accept the Grant and Loan, allow the Chairman to sign after legal review, and pay the 1% origination fee. All were in favor.

21. Administrator Gay discussed the Resolution and Lease for the operation and maintenance of a boat ramp to be constructed by the Department of Natural Resources at the Flint River. This would be a 25-year lease and DNR will install a new boat ramp. We must include the property accepted earlier tonight.

The county is responsible for inspections and picking up trash. We must get approval from DNR for any signage we want to add. Vice Chairman McCoy stated the State intends to build a state of the art ramp that is ADA accessible. They will spend around \$250K which includes permits to work on the bank of the River. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and

seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the Resolution and 25-year Lease, and allow the Chairman and Board members to sign. All were in favor.

**X. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, was not present but the Board was furnished with a Bank Balance report.

**XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Administrator Gay advised the methane monitoring report for the Durand Landfill was fine in the months of May and June.

There is an opportunity for more funding in the COVID Act.

There is a lot going on at the Airport. The State is allocating funds for crack sealing and runway striping with the possibility of no local match. The fuel farm was inspected today, and it passed inspection. We are working to remove the old fuel system. There are plans for a mural on the blue hanger.

We received notice from GDOT that we would receive \$677,856 in 2021, LMIG with a 30% match from the County. This will be discussed at the T-SPLOST meeting.

Administrator Gay appreciated all the help and support while he was absent and sent well wishes to all who have dealt with this issue. Commissioner Bray asked about Hill Haven Road. Administrator Gay stated the paperwork and the bond has been completed and the Contractor is ready to move forward. The contractor for Owens Road was given a notice to proceed.

Administrator Gay was waiting on a timetable of when the current lease expires and discussed taking proposals from any interested party regarding the Lone Oak Ballfield. The Board could then decide on the best short- and long-term use for the property. Mary Bray wants to discuss this at the Work Session.

Administrator Gay would like to discuss this at the next Board Meeting and go out for an RFP that is not specific. Administrator Gay will prepare the RFP for the next meeting.

**XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Shirley Hines: Nothing to report at this time.

Commissioner Mary Bray: Nothing to report at this time.

Vice Chairman McCoy: Plans are being discussed for an Open House at the Airport in September. Peaches in the Pines is scheduled for September 12, 2020.

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley: Asked to have at least one door raised at the Fire Stations so they did not look empty and would look more inviting. Administrator Gay wants a Meriwether County Sign and Logo on the Buildings.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: Nothing to report at this time.

**XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Reported an Executive Session was needed for Litigation and Personnel.

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to go into Executive Session at 7:09 p.m. to discuss Litigation and Personnel. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go out of Executive Session at 7:48 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to go back into Regular Session at 7:50 p.m. All were in favor.  
There was no action taken.

**XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Threadgill read the Future Meetings and Announcements.

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to adjourn at 7:51 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*  
Attest: *Beverly Thomas, County Clerk*  
Date: *August 12, 2020*