

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

August 11, 2021

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

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley
Staff Present: Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Nathan Lee

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

INVOCATION – Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to add under New Business 5. Indemnification Agreement between the City of Warm Springs and Meriwether County regarding the upcoming Municipal Election. All were in favor.

III MINUTES

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Minutes from the July 27, 2021, Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. All were in favor.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS

None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS COMMENTS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

None

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

None

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to appoint Mike Womack to the Zoning Board of Appeals to fill an unexpired term ending on January 5, 2022. All were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Larry Dunaway, representative from the Meriwether County Water & Sewerage Authority, presented their FY 2021-2022 Budget to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Dunaway stated they had an increase in residential customers. Mr. Dunaway anticipates a new industry that will come to Meriwether County after the first of the new year. Tipping fees have increased slightly. There was additional discussion of the Budget provided regarding per month and per year tipping fees.

2. Theron Gay, Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, stated the Board approved the purchase of a new ambulance in June. Due to the delay of delivery of the new ambulance, the Board allowed the County to purchase three used ambulances at a cost of around \$90K each. Those ambulances included 12 lead monitors, 2 Stryker chairs and power cots. All are fully equipped, and we are getting them ready to put into service. All the old decals are being removed and new ones will be

added. EMS Maintenance is looking at the lights, brakes, fluids and changing the oil, etc. By the end of next week, the new ambulances should be ready for inspection. The lowest and highest mileages are 90K – 130K. This will be a boost to the fleet. The ones we take out of service will be set aside for remounts later. There was discussion of having unity on the paint schemes and using wraps to save money. Chairman Threadgill was interested in having EMS provide Non-Emergency Transports when we have a full fleet. There was additional discussion on how many paramedics were employed by the County. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to confirm the purchase of three used ambulances in the amount of \$270,000. All were in favor.

3. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated under our current T-SPLOST program, we have concentrated on improvement to dirt roads per direction of the Board. Currently, we have three dirt roads under paving contracts and have received two new applications which are under review. With projected T-SLOST funding, we can pave 4 or 5 additional roads depending on length but will not be able to impact the remaining 200+ miles of dirt roads. Another option is to invest in equipment and a crew dedicated to reconstruction of dirt roads, not just our routine maintenance. Routine maintenance and responding to potholes and weather-related calls does nothing except maintain status quo. Cleaning ditches, replacing nonfunctional drainage pipe, and returning the road to its original profile will significantly improve the dirt roads and will reduce our maintenance going forward. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, reviewed equipment which could be covered under T-SPLOST funding (\$349,641) and asked for consideration to purchase an Asphalt Recycler and Hotbox that will allow the County to reuse existing asphalt millings. SPLOST funds (\$50,000) would be used for those items since they will primarily be used on existing paved roads. Bill Cawthorne, Public Works/Construction, spoke about the equipment and how each piece would benefit Public Works and how it would pay for itself over a period of time. There was discussion of storage for the new equipment and maybe building a pole barn. There was additional discussion of road base conditions and what was needed to patch. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, asked the Board to move forward to get bids and stated it would make a big difference. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to allow the County to go out for a bid proposal for road equipment. All were in favor.

4. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, provided information on the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge program through Georgia Tech. Their mission is developing Community Research Assistance Programs that seek to Empower Communities to envision and plan for their smart and connected future. The program goals are to increase rural Community and greater Georgia involvement, target needs for enhanced or expanded Connectivity across Georgia, and optimize Community Research Co-Creation. The communities that would partner with this program are Meriwether County, City of Woodbury, City of Concord, and Pike County. The overarching goals are to enhance networks in regional communities, expand existing connectivity goals, and explore applications of connectivity. The community benefits are understanding challenges and exploring solutions, leverage research, prepare and plan for applications, and modeling/blueprint for other unserved communities. The outcome is a roadmap for communities with connectivity challenges who are the starting point for exploring solutions and roadmap for communities looking to expand or enhance connectivity specifically a WISP network. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated they will help with a road map that we have discussed to get internet here. We have been asked to become part of this group. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Haley and seconded by Rosla Plant to allow the County to move forward in being a part of this program. All were in favor.

5. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve and allow the Chairman to sign the Indemnification Agreement between the City of Warm Spring and Meriwether County for the qualification of candidates by the Meriwether County Supervisor of Elections on behalf of the City of Warm Springs related to the upcoming municipal election. All were in favor.

X. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director Bill Gregory reported the General Fund was strong at \$2.1M and the State treasury account has \$2M. The two SPLOST/T-SPLOST accounts have enough money to cover the road maintenance equipment purchases. T-SPLOST is running \$105K over what we budgeted, and SPLOST is running \$30K over what we budgeted. Mr. Gregory stated we needed to have some budget hearings in September. A tentative schedule for a meeting will be August 30, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. to approve the property tax digest. Chairman Threadgill stated the Tax Commissioner had asked the State for a three-week extension on the Tax Digest.

XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, reported Susan Pritchett had come before the Board and we had discussed the large animal holding area. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, had a sketch of a 24' x 24' pole barn with 4 cross sections and will get estimates on the project cost. There would be 4' hog wire with barbwire on the top. Each animal would have their own feeding area. This will be put in a 1.5-acre space and Ms. Pritchett agreed it would work. There was discussion of how to adopt those animals and how it is referenced in our Ordinance.

A meeting was held with Mike Stewart on ARPA, Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, attended the Airport Meeting, a few Budget Meetings. The Ratio Study was received from the Department of Audits and a meeting will be set up with the Cities to discuss ARPA projects to partner with some items. The Air Show will be on October 16th.

More information will be gathered on the ARPA, and we will check to see if we can file for a CDBG grant and use ARPA as matching fund.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: attended the funeral of Former Commissioner Richard English of Troup County. Former Commissioner English was elected in 1978 and served District 5 for 43 years. His service as a Commissioner, Military service and Community service was recognized.

Commissioner Hines asked about the outlook on the paving on Primrose Road. It has been more than a year when they started to pave, and the project has not been completed under the Piedmont Paving subcontractor. They first subcontractor left, and another subcontractor will take over the project.

Commissioner Hines wanted input from the Commissioners of where to go from here since the process has taken this long. There also needs to be an effective way to communicate this information to citizens. There was talk of delays due to COVID and the weather and all agreed the work needed to be completed. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated it is a specialized project. The South Georgia representative met with the north Georgia representative and has taken over the project. The weather has been odd and there is a call scheduled today to speak with Piedmont and Epps. The Board asked for the County to be more aggressive due to the delay and frustration from this project. Commissioner Hines asked if we have heard anything regarding the redistricting. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated we have not and feels ACCG will have a seminar on the process. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, did not feel like there will be much change that would cause lines to be redrawn. It may need to be tweaked.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: no report

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: meetings were held with two State Representatives, GDOT, and the Railroad regarding trains blocking the tracks. Our E-911 now has telephone numbers to contact them if this should occur again.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley was informed that it will take another 18 months to complete the Railroad Bridge project on Roosevelt Hwy. at Juke Line Road.

The Round-a-bout on Judson Bullock Road is scheduled for the summer of 2023.

Warm Springs will host their annual Harvest Hoe Down on October 9, 2021.

Vice Chairman McCoy: announced the grand opening at the Riverside Inn was successful. Roads have been a big problem due to the weather and the response from Tyrell Johnson and Bill Cawthorne has been phenomenal.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: no report

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Nathan Lee stated there was need for Executive Session to discuss Litigation, Personnel, Real Estate and Tax Matters.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go into Executive Session at 10:14 a.m. to discuss Litigation, Personnel and Real Estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of Executive Session at 11:03 a.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go back into Regular Session at 11:06 a.m. All were in favor.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings and notices prior to Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to adjourn the meeting at 11:06 a.m. All were in favor.

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

Attest: *Beverly Thomas, County Clerk*

Date: *August 24, 2021*