

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
August 25, 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 Michael Hill  
The meeting was held at the Administration Building and by Zoom.

- I.     CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Threadgill at 6:10 p.m.  
**INVOCATION** – Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy  
**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 Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Minutes from the August 12, 2020 Regular Meeting at 9:00 am. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the Minutes from the August 15, 2020 Work Session at 9:30 a.m. All were in favor.

**IV.    MUNICIPAL COMMENTS**

None

**V.     CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

None

**VI.    DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS**

None

**VII.   PUBLIC HEARING**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go into a Public Hearing for consideration and clarification on the abandonment of Halls Mill Road. All were in favor. Administrator Gay stated he had received calls about Halls Mill Road and this Public Hearing has been properly advertised. Halls Mill Road was closed by the Board of Commissioners in May of 1999. The Commissioners were told that no one objected to the closure on that section of roadway and the property owners agreed with the closure. State law requires advertisement and a Public Hearing to abandon a road and that was not done. The closure of Halls Mill Road in May 1999 did not meet the guidelines for a road abandonment. Following the closure, a letter was received from Attorney, Ken Gordon, stating his wife owned property there and she was never informed. No one ever addressed that issue.

The Board is now asked to consider either abandoning the road or opening it back as a County Road.

The Board stated they would set the time to speak at a total of 15 minutes for each side. There were five people present that were in favor of opening the road and they were given 3 minutes each.

Jeff Hunter, 471 Halls Mill Road, stated he spent a lot of money keeping up the road and has one neighbor that blocks water which causes it to run into the road making it difficult to get in and out. This is an ongoing issue. Vice Chairman McCoy asked if the road was passable beyond Britten Creek. Mr. Hunter stated it was hard to pass.

LeAnn Stokes – stated she was new to the area and was in favor to open the road to the public for safety reasons and to prevent trash dumping.

Warren Stokes – stated he does not reside on Halls Mill Road but was present to represent his son and daughter-in-law who just purchased 12 acres there and wants to have the road open.

Ann Barrington, from Greenville, introduced Judy Graham who has been there for six months and has seen damage to the road. Ms. Graham wanted the County to keep up the road because she pays taxes.

Jay Ewing, 240 Halls Mills Road, stated he had been there for two years. When they first arrived at Halls Mills Road, they could not cross the bridge. Mr. Ewing wants it to be safe for the mail carrier, trash pick-up, and emergency vehicles. There are others on this road who do not maintain the road and that has caused deterioration. Commissioner Hines stated the road was not properly closed and technically it is still a County Road. During that time, the County did not maintain the road. The road was not abandoned. Ann Barrington stated it was a safety issue and if the County closes the road it will disappear from GPS. Jay Ewing stated it was not maintained at all.

Administrator Gay stated in a letter from the property owners they stated they would bring the Halls Mill Road back to the County's dirt road standard before it is reopened. Commissioner Bray asked if the County owns the road why are we not opening it all the way to the Highway. Administrator Gay stated the Board closure action form 1999 only addressed the road to Britton Creek. Administrator Gay also stated GDOT would need to look at the bridge or culvert to be sure it met GDOT standards. Meriwether County could still own the right-of-way on the other side, but it may have been abandoned. A lot of the property is in a flood plan. We would need to see if the other part of the road was abandoned toward Malcom Road past the creek. Jeff Hunter stated there was a 60' ROW on the plat and he wants to install a turnaround at the end of the road before the Britton Creek. Administrator Gay stated we will have to see if we have deeded or prescriptive ROW. If the landowner would give us the ROW, they can build a turn around.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to reopen Halls Mill Road from Rocky Mount Road to Britton Creek. All were in favor.

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

1. 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. Administrator Gay stated there was discussion today at the Public Hearing during the 4:30 Special Called Meeting regarding changes to the Subdivision Ordinance. During that meeting Administrator Gay reviewed all recommendations. Motion was made by Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to adopt Ordinance 2020-03, an Ordinance Repealing and Readopting the Subdivision Regulations of Meriwether County, Georgia. All were in favor.

2. Administrator Gay stated recommendations to the Zoning Ordinance were discussed today during the Public Hearing portion of the Special Called held at 4:30 p.m. The Board discussed home sizes and what could be allowed for a mini home. One example given of why someone may want a mini home on their property was to have separate housing for elderly parents.

Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to adopt the Zoning Ordinance and set the minimum heated square footage at 1375 square feet. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Bray asked about adding the provision for a small home.

Chairman Threadgill amended the motion and it was seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approved Ordinance 2020-04, an Ordinance Repealing and Readopting the Zoning Ordinance of Meriwether County, Georgia, and to set the minimum heated square footage at 1375 with provisions for special use for a small house. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Chairman Threadgill to appoint Melissa Wortham to the DFACS Board to fill an unexpired term. The term will expire on June 30, 2025. All were in favor.
4. Larry Dunaway stated each year Peaches in the Pines representatives ask the County for assistance during the event. This year they have requested Public Works to mow, weed eat, pick up trash and clean the restrooms during the event. There are plans to use the 4-wheeler from Fire/EMS. There are 40 vendors signed up including 8 food vendors. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Chairman Threadgill to allow Public Works to help during the Peaches in the Pines event. All were in favor.
5. Monica Wargofcak from Wargo's Pumpkin Patch requested the County closed Johnson Road beginning on September 26 – November 1, 2020. Johnson Road would be close each Saturday from 9:00 am – 6:00 pm, and each Sunday from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Johnson Road would also need to close on Fridays from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm if the School allows field trips during COVID-19. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to close Johnson Road September 26 – November 1, 2020 during their hours of operation. All were in favor.
6. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to set a Public Hearing to adopt the fee schedule and approve the codification of the Meriwether County Ordinances on September 22, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. All were in favor.
7. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to set a Public Hearing on September 9, 2020 at 9:00 p.m. for the Property Tax Millage Rate. All were in favor.
8. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to set a Public Hearing for September 22, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. to approve the 2020-2021 Budget. Discussion followed. Finance Director Gregory stated he would go over the rest of the Budget this week and next week then he will speak with Board members. There was concern from Commissioner Neely-Hadley of not having time to make changes to the Budget if we wait until September 22, 2020 for the Public Hearing. Vice Chairman McCoy withdrew his motion. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to set the Public Hearing for September 9, 2020 for the 2020-2021 Budget Public Hearing. All were in favor.
9. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Mary Bray to remove the Emergency Declaration regarding COVID-19. All were in favor.
10. Motion was made by Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Mary Bray to allow the Finance Director to access electronic online banking for two existing accounts with United Bank and allow the Chairman to sign the approval letter from the County. All were in favor.

**X. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, reported the General Fund Bank Balance was at \$2,517,691.51. There have not been any LMIG payouts so far. Other account information was provided.

**XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Administrator Gay has been working on the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances and presented a T-SPLOST presentation. We have a new Fire Chief and Assistance Fire Chief that will start work on September 1, 2020. A meeting was held with the Tax Appraiser, Deputy Tax Commissioner, Board of Education Superintendent and others regarding the Millage Rate. Work on the roads through the LMIG program has started. Public Works has been scraping the edges in preparation for paving. There was discussion of Cove Road and Hill Haven Road. There was also discussion of the future Greenville and Primrose Fire Stations. Administrator Gay stated he has contact information of a person who has a tract of land that is within our criteria for the location of a new Fire Station.

**XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Shirley Hines: at the last meeting, Commissioner Hines reported the Turkey Run Landfill takes in Coal Ash. Commissioner Hines stated this was personal to her since many people in this area have wells that supply their water.

Commissioner Mary Bray: no report

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley: received calls from citizens in the Cove area about someone turning off Hwy. 85 onto Cove Road and dumping trash. Someone has found a large bag of cans and bottles and pine straw twine. A citizen went to the Mayor of the City of Woodbury, and they have identified the trailer that had the twine. Commissioner Neely-Hadley wanted the County to touch base with the Mayor of Woodbury, since this is part of our scenic by-way, and issue citations.

Vice Chairman McCoy: no report

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: no report

**XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Reported an Executive Session was needed for litigation personnel.

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sue Ann Reid, of 3398 Mt. Pilgrim Road, stated Chairman Threadgill had called her about the future paving of Mt. Pilgrim Road. Ms. Reid wanted to know where this project was on the list for paving. Administrator Gay stated this road is one of the top two roads to be paved in Spring 2021.

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to go into Executive Session at 7:15 p.m. to discuss Litigation and Personnel. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to go out of Executive Session at 7:46 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely Hadley to go back into Regular Session at 7:47 p.m. All were in favor.

Action was taken in Executive Session to send a letter to all Boards and Authority members concerning responses to in social media.

**XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Threadgill announced Future Meetings.

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to adjourn at 7:48 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners  
Attest: Beverly A. Thomas, County Clerk  
Date: September 9, 2020