

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 9, 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
The meeting was held at the Administration Building and by Zoom.

- 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 Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to amend then adopt the Agenda with the following addition and change: New Business, add 19. Send letter to the Department of Public Safety requesting the renewal of our Speed Detection Devices Permit and allow the Chairman to sign. Move Proclamations, listed as items 4 and 5 on the Agenda, to the beginning of New Business. All were in favor.

III. MINUTES

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy to approve the Minutes from the August 25, 2020 Special Called Meeting at 4:30 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to approve the Minutes from the August 25, 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 discuss the 2020 Property Tax Millage Rate. All were in favor.

David Noles, Tax Assessor Consultant, stated they were doing a check off list with the Department of Revenue and the Tax Commissioners office is setting up the digest review. Mr. Noles stated he does not feel there is anything to prevent this from being approved. There was additional discussion on the mil rate and growth. The Board of Education approved their mil rate yesterday.

There was no one to speak.

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

2. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go into a Public Hearing to discuss the 2020-2021 Proposed Budget for Meriwether County. All were in favor. This will come back before the Board on September 22, 2020 for adoption.

Bill Gregory, Finance Director, reviewed the Revenue and Expenses of each department. The 2020-2021 proposed Budgeted Revenue is \$15,832.821. Code Red was moved to IT and HRA was moved to personnel.

The General Government proposed Budget was down from last year. Workers Compensation was down, and Property and Liability was up. ACCG will be bringing in an appraiser to review all property values for insurance purposes.

The Safety Budget stayed the same. Personnel cost was up due to employee benefits and the HRA account. Health Insurance increase this year has affected each department's group insurance. The Budget includes a 2.5% pay increase that the Board granted this year.

The Commissioners Office is up due to adding positions for an Assistant County Administrator and a Human Resource Director. Elections and Finance are up. The Tax Commissioners Budget is slightly up. The Tax Assessors Office is up. They are looking at mobile Tax Appraiser laptops. There is a different fee to maintain that program. Building and Grounds was down due to moving fuel cost to Public Works. There was discussion of the separation of Public Works and B&G. IT added a part time person to work 24-hours a week. Several line items were moved from other departments to IT such as Code Red, Zellow etc. There was no change in Court Services. Superior Court was up due to salaries and the increase in court. The District Attorney was included and approved a few months ago. Magistrate was up and Probate was close to last year's Budget. There was no change in the Board of Equalization. Juvenile Court was down. The Public Defender Budget was up, and Public Safety was down. Inmate care stayed the same. The Sheriff's Office was up due to personnel and insurance costs. The Jail stayed the same and EMS increased partially due to vehicle M&R and medical supplies. EMS fees have gone down. The Coroners Office was up. E-911 was up. The E-911 Director asked for an hourly increase of \$1.50 for entry level. The County hires and trains employees who sometime leave and go elsewhere where they make more money per hour. Chairman Threadgill stated we also need to look at the pay for Firefighters. EMA stayed the same. The Animal Shelter had an increase. Public Works increased. Roadside spraying and the inmate program with Harris County were addressed in the budget. There was discussion of culverts, pipes, and the Inmate Program with Harris County. The Health Department stayed the same. DFACS had an increase. Community Services stayed the same. Recreation stayed the same. Commissioner Bray asked about SPLOST money in the amount of \$250K for Recreation. The Library stayed the same. County Agent decreased. State Forestry stayed the same. Building & Zoning increased even though the employee cost was down due to the contract with Safebuilt. We hope to make this up with an increase in fees. Administrator Gay hopes to have the fee schedule available at the September 22, 2020 meeting and it will go in effect on January 1, 2021.

The proposed Fire District O&M Budget was presented as \$1,950,233. It is tied to the mil rate and taxes. The Department has grown, and the projected employee cost will increase as more people are hired. The capital outlay, Safer Grant, was \$1.3M. Capital outlay will be used to help subsidize the last two fire stations. Chairman Threadgill wants to look at the Fire employees amount before this is set in stone. Mr. Gregory stated the Cares Grant is the second portion in the amount of \$500K. Some of this can be allocated for pay increases for Fire/EMS and EMA. The Safer Grant is for three years. We can apply for this annually. Mr. Gregory stated the digest growth will also help. Administrator Gay stated it had been another good year with Finance, the Department Heads and the Board's Leadership. This has kept us from a Tax Anticipation Note.

No one requested to speak.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to go out of the Public Hearing. 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. Chairman Threadgill read the Proclamation for Constitution Week 2020 and it was presented to Ms. Andrea Newton, one of the three representatives present, from the Daughters of the American Revolution.
2. Chairman Threadgill read the Proclamation honoring Public Safety on the Anniversary of 9/11. It was given to Danny Stephens, Asst. Fire Chief, on behalf of all Public Safety.
3. Ms. Jenkins was unable to be on the call due to an issue with Zoom. The Board moved to the next item to allow time for Ms. Jenkins to arrive and speak in person. (see below following #8)
4. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the RFP to seek bids for two new ambulances. All were in favor.
5. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Luthersville for Development Plan Review and Inspection Services. All were in favor.
6. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the Social Media Policy. All were in favor. This will be added to the Policy & Procedure Book
7. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely Hadley to approve the Employee Use of Information Technology Resources Policy. All were in favor. This will be added to the Policy & Procedure Book.
8. Larry Dunaway, Water & Sewerage Authority Treasurer, reviewed their annual Budget. Two-line items were added, Luthersville water charge and residential water customer. More money will be spent on water sampling. The Authority is keeping up with their Bond payments and tipping fees are estimated to be around \$943K next year. Water & Sewerage rates will increase in November. There has not been an increase since 2014. There was additional discussion of trying to obtain a USDA Grant to connect Lone Oak water line to the Park.
3. Cat Jenkins, Recreation Advisory Board Chairperson, updated the Commissioners. There has been a quorum and they have met most months. Ms. Jenkins discussed a County Garden and a New Complex. They are working on a handbook to make sure the Advisory Board is following the correct procedures. There has been no contact with the BOE appointment, Ms. Tenney, and Ms. Jenkins recommended that she be replaced. Ms. Jenkins recommended the County have a Master Plan. The Advisory Board will take inventory of what the County has that can be used for recreation. Ms. Jenkins was made aware of the Georgia Jets, a group of people who fly drones. They are located in Gay, GA. Ms. Jenkins feels a consultant would cost \$10K - \$15K since this is something beyond what the Advisory Board can provide. Ms. Jenkins stated a Master Plan for the County and a plan to develop a complex is needed. Commissioner Bray stated we would need an RFP from the County if it is a County project. Commissioner Hines stated the project for the land behind the school is based on a D&R Grant. We can designate where we want to place facilities in the County. Commissioner Bray stated they would use funds from D&R and would need additional resources. The Master Plan is needed for a walking trail, baseball field, soccer field, etc. so that one does not overlap the other. There was discussion of starting a County Garden behind the Administration Building and what it would entail. Commissioner Bray asked about using left over recreation funds from this year's budget toward next year. Finance Director Gregory advised State Law reads the budget year ends on September 30th. Any remaining funds from a previous year cannot be allocated to a new budget year. Commissioner Bray stated she wants a recreation employee for the City of Greenville this year.
Chairman Threadgill told Ms. Jenkins the ideas were good and wanted a timeframe and cost. Ms. Jenkins stated they will work on the Garden Plan. Following more discussion of the projects, Mr. Gregory stated he would add \$10K to the Budget for Special Projects since many times grants require matching funds. Chairman Threadgill stated it will go back to the Advisory Board for the information on the plan and the cost. We will place a line item in the Budget for Recreation that will need to be approved by the Commissioners. An appointment to fill the unexpired term for the Board of Education Recreation

Advisory Board member will be added. Administrator Gay will make a list of what to look for in each RFP and send to the Board. Chairman Threadgill and Administrator Gay stated they had already handed out a copy of the Ordinance and guidelines to the Recreation Advisory Board.

9. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #6 – sale of property on McLaughlin Road in the amount of \$71,792.15. All were in favor.

10. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #7 – sale of surplus tractor in the amount of \$16,800. All were in favor.

11. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #8 – insurance payment for wrecked bus in the amount of \$10,915.50. All were in favor.

12. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #9 – Court Clerk Tech. Grant payments in the amount of \$10,082.95. All were in favor.

13. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #10 – receipt of Airport Grant payments in the amount of \$767,112.18. All were in favor.

14. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Mary Bray to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #11 – receipt of Humane Society Grant in the amount of \$2,500. All were in favor.

15. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Mary Bray to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #12 – receipt for Animal Shelter Grant in the amount of \$6,500. All were in favor.

16. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #13 – receipt of funds from Dept. of Corrections in the amount of \$9,240. All were in favor.

17. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve FY 2020 Budget Amendment #14 – receipt of funds from St. of GA for 30% advanced payment of allocation of the Federal Cares Act Grant in the amount of \$221,006.70. All were in favor.

18. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the 2020 millage rates as follows:

Meriwether County General Government – Unincorporated areas of the County 13.343 Mills

Meriwether County General Government – Incorporated areas of the County 13.343 Mills

Fire District – operations, maintenance, capital - 2.5 Mills

Fire District – debt service – 0.7 Mills

Meriwether County Board of Education – operations, maintenance, capital 18.124 Mills

Meriwether County Board of Education – for debt service 0.665 Mills

All were in favor. (see approval of Resolution in Report of County Attorney)

19. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to send a letter to the Department of Public Safety requesting the renewal of our Speed Detection Devices Permit and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor. (The letter and package will be mailed by the Sheriff's Office.)

X. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, provided the Board with a bank balance report and property tax analysis. The County does not need to go out for a Tax Anticipation Note.

XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Gay developed and sent out the RFP for the Lone Oak Ballfields. Administrator Gay attended the Water & Sewerage Meeting, Airport Meeting, and the Recreation Advisory Board Meeting. A mural has been painted at the Airport funded by Airport Engineers, Lead Edge. Administrator Gay met with the Community Development Staff, Safe Built and Skip Richmond from IT regarding the GIS system and updating the map. Commissioner Hines asked about the ACCG intern and if they would still be able to work following COVID. Administrator Gay stated there are plans to utilize this at a later date.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: no report

Commissioner Mary Bray: no report

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley: The Warm Springs Merchants will host a Harvest Hoe Down on October 10, 2020. Merchants are still struggling due to COVID.

Vice Chairman McCoy: Peaches in the Pines will be held at Lake Meriwether this Saturday. Vendors will be spread apart at a safe distance due to COVID. The Airport will have Business After Hours on September 24, 2020 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. A candidates' forum will be held on October 8th. Only the candidates will be present. This will be held on Zoom.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: Reminded everyone that COVID is still present as we move to cooler weather.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

Reported an Executive Session was needed for litigation.

Attorney Lee presented a Resolution for the Millage Rate. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to include approving the Resolution for the Mil Rate and allowing the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jane Fryer, Keep Meriwether Beautiful Director, announced Clean up day on September 26, 2020. We will accept tires at Public Works beginning on September 26, 2020 for two weeks.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to go into Executive Session at 11:04 a.m. to discuss Litigation. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to go out of Executive Session at 11:31 a.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to go back into Regular Session at 11:34 a.m. All were in favor. Action was taken in Executive Session.

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 11:34 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*
Attest: *Bevelly Thomas, County Clerk*
Date: *September 22, 2020*