

**MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

December 9, 2020

This meeting was held by Zoom and not in person due to COVID-19

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred 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

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order 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 Mary Bray to Adopt the Agenda. All were in favor.

III MINUTES

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Minutes of the November 24, 2020 6:00 p.m. Regular Meeting. Voting in favor were Vice Chairman McCoy, Shirley Hines, Chairman Threadgill, and Mary Bray. Beth Neely-Hadley abstained from the vote due to being absent from that meeting. The motion passed.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS

None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS COMMENTS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

None

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING

None

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Administrator Gay provided two options for the 2021 LMIG projects at the last meeting. Option 1 includes one mile of Luthersville Road, and portions of Mt. Carmel Road, Graham Road, Imlac Road, Lake Drive, Spring Street, Summer Lane, Gold Street, Fowler Street and Mt. Hope Road for a total of \$1,026,382. Option 2 is for Luthersville Road and would start at the beginning of the City limits of Luthersville for 2.5 miles and would total \$1,250,000. Administrator Gay recommended Option 1 and plans to meet with GDOT to request assistance since Luthersville Road connects with three State Routes. Administrator Gay stated the Clerk was unable to hear the meeting on Zoom due to a technical issue with the equipment in the Commission Chambers. Chairman Threadgill stated it was being recorded and information could be gathered from the recording. Attorney Lee stated that was fine as long as we had the motions and votes recorded properly and there was a recording of the meeting. Clerk Thomas left the Chambers and went back to her office where she was able to log into the meeting successfully.

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to accept the recommendation of Administrator Gay and select Option 1. Discussion followed. Commissioner Hines asked if paving would start where it left off on Luthersville Road. Administrator Gay stated we would start at the City limit but would reach out to Luthersville to discuss participation to complete the remainder of the road inside the City. Administrator Gay then explained both options. Commissioner Neely-Hadley asked about the difference in cost of Option 1 and Option 2 since Option 1 included more miles. Administrator Gay stated Option 2 for Luthersville Road will be a full depth reclamation and the other roads in Option 1 can have a regular resurface.

All were in favor.

2. Administrator Gay stated we were waiting on the surveyor and will have the entire property surveyed. A portion of that property will be for the new Fire Department. There was no action needed.

X. NEW BUSINESS

1. Commissioner Mary Bray stated the Board of Commissioners had received recommendations from the Recreation Advisory Board and asked for the consideration and a vote on the following recommendations. The first recommendation was to hire a recreation director. Commissioner Bray stated a Recreation Director would plan, organize, and direct the operations of fitness programs, activities, and services to Meriwether County. The Recreation Director will also work with the current Manchester/Meriwether Director, Vic Dowis for active athletic recreation programs. The Director would oversee social programs for seniors, youth and young adults and oversee the County Garden Project. The Director would be responsible for finding volunteers, organizing events, and working with members of the community to educate people on the importance of causes and events. The second recommendation was to approve the proposal for a County Garden. The County Garden would be part of a sharing program and would allow an opportunity for people who cannot afford their own garden. The County Garden would be placed on the property behind the Administration Building. The group decided on having raised beds and a picture of an elevated model was presented. Commissioner Bray provided the objectives, opportunities, and strategy for the raised beds at the County Garden. The estimated price for three elevated garden beds was \$3,000. This does not include soil, tools, fertilizer, plants, and seeds. Commissioner Threadgill wanted to have a work session to discuss this further. Commissioner Neely-Hadley felt we need to discuss a plan. Commissioner Bray asked about the \$30K that was in the contract for a Director to work with Vic Dowis. Administrator Gay stated if we do not have a position in place, we pay Manchester. Commissioner Hines appreciated the written proposal and wondered if we could find a Director for \$30K per year. Commissioner Hines asked if the Garden funds would come from this budget and Commissioner Bray stated no, the funds would come from another fund. Commissioner Neely-Hadley did not realize we had \$30K and stated we may have to start with someone part-time. Vice Chairman McCoy thought the \$30K helped to pay the auxiliary help we currently have. Following additional conversation of hiring a Recreation Director, motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to table the recommendation to hire a Recreation Director until after a Work Session is held in January 2021. All were in favor.

Commissioner Bray stated the second recommendation was for a County Garden. Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley feels a Director will be approved then asked if this did not happen who would oversee the garden. Commissioner Bray stated if we can get the garden approved, we can start it right away. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the County Garden. All were in favor.

2. Administrator Gay reported the tenants who are leasing the mobile homes on Heather Lane are interested in doing extensive work on the kitchen. Administrator Gay asked the Board to allow for a month-to-month lease after their lease expires at the end of this year. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to allow the tenants at Heather Lane to enter a Lease with the County on a month-to-month basis when their lease expires at the end of this year. All were in favor.

3. Administrator Gay stated Liberty Utilities has been operating the natural gas system in the Meriwether Industrial Park since they purchased the City of Manchester's Natural Gas system in 2018. The natural gas system in Meriwether Industrial Park and the pipeline providing its gas supply were constructed and placed in service subsequent to the signing of an Intergovernmental Natural Gas Sales Agreement by the City of Hogansville, the City of Manchester, and Meriwether County in 2008. The 2008 Agreement has certain provisions that are not consistent with how the parties are currently operating, and some provisions have been interpreted differently by the parties, both at the time of the transaction in 2018 and subsequently. In addition, Liberty has detected a Grade 3 leak on the pipeline supplying the Industrial Park that is at or near the county line between Troup County and Meriwether County. This is the location where the 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement indicated a gas meter was intended to be installed but was not.

The Grade 3 leak is only required to be periodically monitored, but Liberty wants to repair the leak and install a gas meter at or near the county line as originally contemplated in the 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement. They feel the leak may lead to additional problems. The cost to repair the leak and install the gas meter will ultimately be borne by Liberty. This gas meter could then be used to measure the gas supplied by Hogansville in lieu of using the meter currently installed near where the pipeline supplying the Industrial Park connects to the Hogansville gas system. In addition, Liberty would like to memorialize the terms under which the parties are currently operating to the extent they are not consistent with the 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement, and to clarify the responsibilities of all parties in a manner consistent with the existing certificates of authority granted by the State of Georgia to Hogansville and Liberty. This has not been approved yet by Hogansville or Manchester. They would like to wrap this up by the end of the year. Vice Chairman McCoy motioned to approve the Amendment to the Intergovernmental Natural Gas Sales Agreement and allow the Chairman to sign following review from the County Attorney. Shirley Hines seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Commissioner Hines asked if they had to go through an approval with the Public Service Commission. Vice Chairman McCoy stated they did not. Their plans show if there were to be an issue Liberty Utilities would pay. All were in favor.

4. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to appoint Danny Hosey to the Industrial Development Authority to serve an unexpired term for District 4. All were in favor. The term will expire on January 8, 2024.

5. Chairman Threadgill read the Proclamation recognizing Janice Chatham for 28 years of service to Meriwether County upon her retirement from the Office of Superior Court.

6. Chairman Threadgill read the Proclamation recognizing Judy Ledet for 9 years of service to Meriwether County upon her retirement from the Office of Superior Court.

7. Chairman Threadgill read the Proclamation recognizing Tim Huff for 29 years of service to Meriwether County upon his retirement from the Tax Assessors Office.

8. Chairman Threadgill read the Proclamation recognizing Bruce McCoy for 17 years of service to Meriwether County upon his retirement from the Public Works Department.

The Board of Commissioners thanked the employees for their years of service at Meriwether County and wished all of them well.

XI. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director Bill Gregory stated he had emailed the reports to everyone. The general fund has \$2.2M and there is \$1M in the Local Government Investment Pool. We should receive approximately \$2M from property taxes by the end of the year

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Gay stated it had been a very unusual time since the end of November and into December. Administrator Gay attended the Water & Sewerage Meeting by zoom, addressed numerous emails, and has spoken with staff members several times each day. Administrator Gay spoke with developers including one who was interested in a substantial residential development. Administrator Gay thanked

everyone for their support during the last few weeks and for the staff who have stepped up to keep things moving forward.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: No report

Commissioner Mary Bray: No report

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: No report

Vice Chairman McCoy: No report

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: No report

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Nathan Lee stated there was need for an Executive Session for Real Estate and Personnel.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go into Executive Session at 9:51 a.m. to discuss personnel and real estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Mary Bray to go out of Executive Session at 10:20 a.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to go back into Regular Session at 10:22 a.m. All were in favor.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings and notices that were listed on the Agenda before Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 a.m. All were in favor.

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

Attest: *Beverly J. Thomas, County Clerk*

Date: *December 22, 2020*