

**LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**WORKSHOP MINUTES**  
August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
12:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 P.M. on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chairman Horton, Commissioner Heiney, Commissioner Traylor, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Zellner and County Clerk Davidson.

**Agenda Discussion**

- 1) Reviewed the following minutes.
  - a) Workshop Minute Meetings-July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017
  - b) Special Called Meeting-July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017
  - c) Public Hearing-July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017
  - d) Regular Business Meeting-July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- 2) Reviewed the Charge on Charge Off Digest from the Tax Commissioner. The difference is a positive \$87,086.54.
- 3) Reviewed the following Board Appointments:
  - i. Planning Commission Board. Ms. Angela Preston has agreed to serve another four years on the board. Mr. Danny English hasn't attended a meeting in over a year so someone needs to be appointed to take this position. Chairman Glass suggested Mr. Dwight Fleming.
  - ii. McIntosh Trail Community Service Board. Chairman Glass stated that the service board isn't involved in the actual health issues. They work to purchase vehicles, financials, and any State Grant funding. The board doesn't get involved with treatments or diagnostics. Commissioner Thrash stated that Pastor Tate at Rock Springs Church may have some people interested in this position.
- 4) Reviewed the bid award for Industrial Road. Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood recommended that the contact be awarded to the low bidder, Blount Construction Company, Inc. in the amount of \$1,556,940.39. Piedmont Paving, Inc. and C.W. Matthews Contracting Co., Inc. were the high bidders. The board discussed the high bid and the alternate bids that were presented. The difference between the high bids and the alternate bids were based on asphalt choices. The bids are attached to the minutes.
- 5) The board reviewed Ordinance 2017-03 Right of Way Locations and Ordinance 2017-03 Right of Way Accommodations. The first reading was done at the July 18<sup>th</sup> Regular Business meeting. County Administrator Zellner reported that he had received a call from AT&T regarding a permit for Needleleaf Subdivision and he explained that he would get back with them once the Ordinances are approved.
- 6) The board agreed to table the Media Permit Ordinance for 30 days. The board discussed the fact that the City of Barnesville and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) had visited the town of Senoia and the Georgia Film Institute in Atlanta regarding information on movies. The City has some specifics that they would like to talk about before the County approves a media permit. Chairman Glass stated that the film producers like to have one point of contact for the School, City and the County. County Administrator Zellner stated

that the City of Barnesville contracted with HBO via invoice rather than a permit. Once HBO was invoiced from the City they paid it immediately. Movie projects report their total spending to the State and they get tax breaks based on this. Mayor Banks stated that Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle is planning a service recognizing the City of Barnesville and Lamar County for their role in the recent filming of Sharp Objects.

- 7) The board discussed the Resolutions for the Board of Commissioners, the Local Option Sales Tax Roll Back (LOST), the Board of Education millage rate and the Bond Repayment which will all be subject to approval at the August Regular Business meeting. The debt repayment millage was lowered from 2.00 to 1.5 at the Board of Education meeting. Chairman Glass discussed the fact that Education Special Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) is higher than the Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) distributions in all Counties and he is researching the reason for this.
- 8) Chairman Glass announced that Wes Smith is retiring from the University of Georgia Extension Service.
- 9) Chairman Glass reported that the Bridge at High Falls Road will be out for 45 days and that a detour from Chappell Mill Road is scheduled.
- 10) Chairman Glass shared with the board information regarding services offered by the Lamar County Family Connection Collaborative.
- 11) Chairman Glass reported that the Lifelong Learning Academy: Service Delivery Strategy Agreements Service Delivery meeting will be held at the Lamar County Career Academy on August 31<sup>st</sup> at the Lamar County College and Career Academy.
- 12) Chairman Glass reported that the Southern Rivers Energy's 80th annual meeting will be held on August 26th.
- 13) Chairman Glass stated that he would like to fund a position that would just deal with searching for grants. This is a full time position which takes lots of time and research but there is money to be found if you look for it.
- 14) Commissioner Thrash reported that she had meet with the Public Defender and every child in a case has to have an attorney. If there is more than 1 child then the State will provide a conflict attorney but an application has to be filed within 72 hours. If the time line is not met, Betis and Howard are taking the cases and charging \$18,000 a year when the State should be picking up this tab. Commissioner Thrash stated that Judge Fears is refusing to accept the application and therefore Natalie Sellers with Betis and Howard is getting the conflict cases. If the State provides the service then the conflict should be between the judge and the State. Representative Johnny Caldwell hoped that he could have resolved this issue but it hasn't happened. Monroe County says they aren't paying for the conflict attorneys.
- 15) The board discussed the pros and cons of having a Facebook page including who will monitor it, how much time it will take and whether or not to allow comments. Commissioner Traylor inquired about having a County Website. County Clerk Davidson stated that there are certain items that are required to be on a County Website. These items include budget information, Regular meeting agendas and minutes, human trafficking links, and County Commissioner information. The board discussed the Work Order System that the County uses which is called Facility Dude. The work orders can be submitted via phone calls to the County office or through a Form Builder on the Lamar County website.

- 16) The board discussed the proposed millage increase and the inputs that they have received from constituents who are against an increase. County Administrator Zellner stated that from July to October the County is sweating bullets looking for revenue and said that if they don't raise the millage they will have to cut out the raises and the contingency from the budget and Lamar County will become a third rate County. County Administrator Zellner stated that by not raising the millage they are only bringing the county down and you ruin the perception of the County. Chairman Glass said that he had received a report from Finance Director Townsend that showed that the County has been short by two million dollars since the year 2006. Chairman Glass said that all of the Revenue comes in at the end of the year and the audit report is not received until the next year. Chairman Glass said that the County has come in under budget on expenses most years. We are below what we have projected for our expenses. The revenues were also lower but we didn't recognize the difference until we get the audit report. Chairman Glass said that in 2016 we were \$400,000.00 to the good. Vice-Chairman Horton said that when unexpected things come in that adds up and we try to offset this and we will continue to have this problem unless we go up one mill or a mill and a quarter. Commissioner Thrash stated that this is a problem with revenue and how do you prevent it. You sit back and say that is all the revenue we have and we aren't going to buy anything else. Vice-Chairman Horton stated that he understands the concerns of his constituents and those of the elderly and if you are on a fixed income you don't have it to spend. Vice-Chairman Horton said he understood about the Insurance Premium increase and the \$50,000.00 for the Wellness Program but little things add up. Commissioner Thrash stated that they should think about if any of the constituents have ever said they saw one of the Department Heads broke down on the side of the road and said that the County needs to see about getting them a new vehicle but plenty of constituents say they saw a Department Head in a new truck. Commissioner Thrash said that people coming into this County are going to notice these types of things. County Administrator Zellner stated that these people will notice that you have your people riding around in a piece of junk. Commissioner Heiney stated that he heard from his constituents about people driving around in a 17 year old tractor. County Administrator Zellner stated that you have to have some perception. Commissioner Heiney said that he owns an old lawn mower that he has to keep running and that he too drives an older model truck. County Administrator Zellner stated that if Commissioner Heiney were to sell his house he would cut his shrubs, cut the grass, paint the house but he wouldn't put his old tractor on the front lawn to sell the house. County Administrator Zellner stated that the board and various committees have spent countless hours in planning meetings working on ways to better the county and have a work live community mentality. There is just so much you can cut out. You can do away with services or close up shop but you can't legally do that. Commissioner Thrash stated that she believes that the millage rate is going to have to be increased some whether it is a one mill or a half a mill however as governing officials the board needs to be looking at the Governors Justice Reform regarding fines and the fact that this has decreased revenue for the County. County Administrator Zellner stated that the State does everything they can to make them look good and they put everything back on the County and there is just so much that you can cut out of a County budget. Commissioner Traylor stated that he talked to his constituents

regarding inmates cutting grass and ways to save money. Commissioner Traylor stated that the previous board should have been preparing the current board for obstacles such as buying a new vehicles or equipment. Chairman Glass stated that this is the reason that the County has new trucks and equipment now. They had a plan to purchase these vehicles and they had to replace just about every vehicle because previous Chairmen would buy vehicles from friends for a low cost and high mileage. County Administrator Zellner said that if they board doesn't increase the millage rate they are just going to stay steady and constant and they are never going to put anything in savings. County Administrator Zellner stated that every year Administration worries about where we are going to get money. Chairman Glass stated that there are Counties that have lower millage rates but in the five surrounding counties, Lamar County is still the lowest. In Monroe and Butts County, one mill goes to the hospital but Lamar County also funds a Public Health facility for about \$100,000.00 a year. Commissioner Thrash stated that we don't have a Plant Shear or an Industrial Park like other counties to offset our millage rate. This is like comparing apples and oranges. The board continued discussing population and economic changes that have affected the millage rate over the years. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that the Tax Anticipation Note was less in 2017 than in 2016. Chairman Glass stated that the County is still paying for the 2 million dollars that has been hidden since 2016. Chairman Glass stated that over the last three years the board has gotten better at managing the budget. County Administrator Zellner stated that over the last 15 years the board comes up with the budget, sets the millage rate, in September say you aren't going to go up on taxes, project a certain amount of revenue and set your expenditures. Then you have to have more money so you go over to the courts and think that they will collect a little more money and you increase that line item and then it doesn't. Commissioner Thrash stated that the comment in the Public Hearing about paying for your taxes or your medicine bothered her and they are in the position now where Health Care cost have sky rocketed. Chairman Glass said that his parents didn't worry about providing him with a Skating Park so why should he be worried about covering their medicines. Why should Government make it possible for them to cover their medicine? Commissioner Heiney said that paying for taxes or paying for medicine has nothing to do with Government. The only thing that has to do with Government is someone taking by force money out your pocket. The value here is that medicine could be important. It has nothing to do with the Government, it's like buying food. Commissioner Heiney stated that he would like to look at small increases in taxes every year such as a half mill increase on a yearly basis. County Administrator Zellner stated that this should have been done ten years ago and if you raise the millage by a half a mill then you still have to come up with \$225,000.00 so you have to decide whether or not you going to cut raises or contingency. The board continued discussion about cutting raises and loosing good employees. County Administrator Zellner stated that over the last three years the board has done a good job and the County has grown over the last 10 years and now they are saying don't increase the millage rate and just flow down the river and just let it go. County Administrator Zellner stated that about 10 to 15 people came to complain about the taxes out of 9000 parcels. Chairman Glass stated that you have to justify going up either a quarter of a mill, a half mill or a whole mill and they have the information to do this. Commissioner Heiney stated that he spoke to a lot of people and they are fine with increasing the millage by a half a mill increase but the 1 mill

increase gets them upset. Commissioner Heiney stated that when he ran for office he was fine with going up a small increase each year to match inflation. Vice-Chairman Horton stated that he realizes that the Public Works equipment runs every day and those things can tear up and have to be replaced but the buying new pick-up trucks is a little over board. Commissioner Thrash stated that when she calls the Sheriff's Office or the Public Works Department she doesn't want them broke down on the side of the road. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that in the Public Hearings the board didn't want to engage in a conversation when the Public was speaking but they needed to do a better job of defending themselves as a board because the board has worked hard on this budget and they should tell the Public what all they have done. Commissioner Traylor stated that they shared with the Public that they had worked 15 hours when actually they have really spent more time than just 15 hours on the budget. County Administrator Zellner stated that they provided both a slide show presentation and two handouts showing what has been done on the budget. Chairman Glass said that the two mill difference in the \$500,000.00 house that Kent Kingsley was referring to was approximately \$400.00 a year and for a dollar a day he couldn't sell Barnesville. Vice-Chairman Horton stated that surrounding counties don't take the heat that the Lamar County Board of Commissioners take regarding the budget. Commissioner Traylor stated that the board needs to be more proactive in defending themselves. Chairman Glass said that the contingency equals \$240,000.00 and that the two percent raises equal about \$216,000.00 covered under a one mill increase. County Administrator Zellner stated that they will be sweating bullets for money come July, August and September. Vice-Chairman Horton said that in some jobs employees are expected to pay for their insurance. Commissioner Traylor and Vice-Chairman Horton agreed that the employee could share in the cost of insurance and Commissioner Traylor suggested that the employee pay \$200.00 a month.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m. and Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Charles Glass, Chairman

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Bennie Horton, Vice-Chairman

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Robert Heiney, Commissioner

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Ryran Traylor, Commissioner

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Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk