

Lamar County Commissioners Special Called Meeting  
May 24th, 2017  
3:00 P.M.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Present for the meeting were Vice-Chairman Horton, Commissioner Heiney, Commissioner Traylor, Commissioner Thrash, County Clerk Carlette Davidson, and County Administrator Robert Zellner. Absent for the meeting was Chairman Glass.

**I. Call to Order**

Vice-Chairman Horton called the special called meeting to order at approximately 3:20 p.m.

**II. Administration and Board Updates**

County Administrator Zellner updated the board with news regarding House Bill 559 which is the creation of the Lamar County Public Facilities Authority. County Administrator Zellner said, “We are at the point now where the board decides if and when they want to get the Authority activated. Lamar County is not obligated because the Authority is solely responsible.” County Administrator Zellner read from House Bill 559 that revenue bonds of the authority shall not be deemed to constitute a debt of Lamar County nor a pledge of the faith and credit of such county, but such revenue bonds shall be payable solely from the fund hereinafter provided for.”

Commissioner Heiney asked what happens if they can't pay it back and County Administrator Zellner said that it comes from the revenues that they generate. They borrow the money on the collateral or the entity that borrows the money. They will make the payments to pay the bond back and the county backs the bonds. There was then discussion about the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) loan for the Solid Waste Authority and Lamar County being responsible for that loan. Commissioner Thrash explained that the county gave the ok for the loan but the county is not responsible for the loan. The board guaranteed the loan and gave them their blessing. County Administrator read Section 7 from House Bill 559 that the issuance of such revenue bonds shall not directly, indirectly or contingently obligate such county to levy or to pledge any form of taxation whatsoever for payment of such revenue bonds or to make any appropriation for their payment and all such revenue bonds shall contain recital on their face covering substantially the foregoing provision of this section. Vice-Chairman Horton stated that when the county was involved with the Water Authority that it fell on the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that this was different because the Board of Commissioners signed off guaranteeing that loan. Commissioner Heiney inquired if the Board guaranteed the loan for GEFA. Commissioner Thrash and County Administrator Zellner stated that this was not the case and that the Board of Commissioners didn't sign anything on that. County Administrator Zellner clarified that with this facility the Board has to create the Authority and there needs to be 5 members. He went on to say that only elected officials on the

Authority will have voting rights. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that Section 7 with Credit Not Pledged was included in this bill.

County Administrator Zellner announced that on Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 representatives from Cawood, Goodwyn and Mills will present their report to the facility committee their building footprint plans.

Commissioner Thrash announced that on June 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. the Proclamation for Rock Springs will be presented.

County Administrator Zellner reported that Building and Zoning Director Gunter gave him a copy of the burial disturbance permit so that the graveyard off of Old Milner could be moved. The City of Barnesville is going to move the graves to Greenwood Cemetery. The permit approval will have to go before the Board of Commissioners. There is an application fee that the City of Barnesville will have to pay. Commissioner Thrash stated that they would probably waive this application fee.

### **III. ShawHankins Insurance Approval**

Commissioner Thrash stated that she had requested that the Board of Commissioners not vote on the Insurance Plan at the last meeting until she had a chance to research some things.

Commissioner Thrash stated that she had a meeting with Ben Pittarelli, Health Program and Insurance Marketing Director with the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG), and he told her that United Health Care had submitted some appealing rates. Mr. Pittarelli was able to speak to Blue Cross Blue Shield and got a 2 percent reduction in the rates that was quoted to ShawHankins. Commissioner Thrash said that if the county left Blue Cross Blue Shield and went with United Health Care the county would not be able to go back with Blue Cross Blue Shield/ACCG for 2 years. Blue Cross Blue Shield who partners with ACCG shows that Lamar County has over \$100,000.00 worth of pooled claims. The quote from Blue Cross Blue Shield includes \$211,142.00 worth of pooled claims. Commissioner Thrash stated that the conversation with Mr. Pittarelli and Mr. Shaw was that the presentation from United Health Care may be artificially low. Commissioner Thrash stated that she doesn't want to get into a position where the pooling is about 20% savings and without that pooling that will put the county at 100 percent payout verses premium. Commissioner Thrash stated that she doesn't want the county to get into a situation where no one will underwrite them and if they go with United Health Care she is afraid that this will happen. Commissioner Thrash said that she would do whatever the board wants to do but they have to consider both options. Commissioner Thrash stated that on paper it might look like a better plan, but it probably is not. The board discussed the fact that with Blue Cross Blue Shield, it will be a 4.3 percent increase. Commissioner Traylor stated that a few years ago the State switched from Blue Cross Blue Shield to United Health Care. This was with School System employees and they thought that it would force Blue Cross Blue Shield to lower their rates but that it did not. Commissioner Thrash said with Lamar County

has paid off and Blue Cross Blue Shield has reduced rates by 2 percent. Commissioner Heiney stated that this could have to do with the fact that State is a larger pool. County Administrator Zellner said that if the county stays with Blue Cross Blue Shield, we are in the county pool but if we go with United Health we are not in a pool and we are on our own. Commissioner Thrash said that in this situation, Blue Cross Blue Shield is the best option.

The board discussed the issues with having a Wellness Program. Commissioner Traylor stated that he was leaning towards United Health Care because it freed up dollars for a Wellness Program. Commissioner Traylor added that if we have a full fledged Wellness Program the claims will go up at first because health issues that employees didn't know about will be treated. But over time, the claims will go down because of a change in culture and behavior. County Administrator pointed out that the county can come up with our own Wellness Program but with United Health Care the county was going to have to pay out \$45,000.00 for their aggressive type of Wellness Program. Commissioner Traylor stated that if we stay with Blue Cross Blue Shield we will have an increase plus the cost of a Wellness Program. Commissioner Heiney pointed out that there is the threat of an increase. Commissioner Thrash stated that very few employees used the benefit of getting a wellness checkup and if we don't have a wellness program in place the loss ratios will continue to go up. Commissioner Traylor stated that you see the bang for the buck with the Wellness Program when you provide incentives. Commissioner Traylor said that he once had a \$500.00 incentive with his previous employer. Commissioner Thrash stated that if you give an employee \$100.00 gift card then the employee pays taxes on this amount. Commissioner Traylor stated that he received discounts on his premiums for opting into a Wellness Program. There was discussion about claims going up in the beginning as health issues are identified but in the long run prevention for these health issues will bring the cost down. Commissioner Traylor stated that at the hospital where he previously worked, it took about five years to get the Wellness Program up and running and then the lines were wrapped around the building with employees participating in the Wellness Program. Commissioner Heiney stated that you have to look at your overall health spending. Commissioner Thrash stated that every single year we are looking at a 17 to 30 percent increase and something has to be done. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that not all employees are going to take advantage of a Wellness Program but in the long run the potential for lower claims in the work force will lead to a healthier workplace. Human Resource Officer Kilchris stated that she had sent out a Wellness Program survey to the county employees and a lot of them were not interested unless there was some type of incentive. Commissioner Thrash stated that the incentive could be that the employee pays more of a percentage for the health insurance. Human Resource Officer Kilchris asked if the county goes with Blue Cross Blue Shield are they still going to have to pay the \$45,000.00 for a wellness program. Commissioner Thrash stated that they would not and that the county would come up with their own type of Wellness Program. Vice-Chairman Horton stated that something has got to be in place and if you don't participate you pay a higher premium. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that if you don't go and have yearly check-ups then you are a risk to the county. Human Resource Director Kilchris pointed out that the Wellness Program that cost \$45,000.00

is a year round type of program where they come ten times a year to coach the employee's about their health issues. Human Resource Director Kilchriss stated that if the county does their own Wellness Program you will not have those coaches to assist the employee. Commissioner Thrash stated that the county would because they will have doctors that are a part of it and the Health Department. This will be in-house. County Administrator Zellner stated that you are going to have to have someone spear head this program because there is no one in the office to do this. Commissioner Traylor stated that when he worked at the hospital and was the Director of Rehab and he went to a company and setup a stretching program and the employees participated but before when they had tried to do it on their own it didn't work. Commissioner Traylor stated that everyone has to be on board here at the county. Commissioner Thrash and County Administrator Zellner stated that if they don't participate then it will cost you \$100.00. County Administrator Zellner stated that they don't have anyone in house that can head this up. Commissioner Heiney stated that if you pay a company \$45,000.00 they can do the whole thing. Commissioner Thrash stated if you do this aggressive type of Wellness Program that cost \$45,000.00 the employees would have to understand that if you don't participate in the Wellness Program your premium is going to go up. County Administrator Zellner stated that there is a reward for participating. Vice-Chairman Horton stated that reward is that the county pays for their insurance. Human Resource Officer Kilchriss said that this is what the survey showed that they would get a gift card or something for participation. Vice-Chairman Horton stated that the employees must understand that the county is paying for their insurance and participating in a Wellness Program is not a hard thing. Commissioner Thrash stated that this is especially true if you allow the employee to do this during business hours. Commissioner Traylor stated that if they could truly make this work and create some baseline data from the initial offset and make a big push, then show the Industry that is coming to Lamar County the results and they look at this data then this is great. Human Resource Officer stated that Mr. Shaw said this company could provide this type of data. Commissioner Thrash stated that there are probably other companies out there that could do this. County Administrator Zellner shared with the board that if they go with Blue Cross Blue Shield they will have to increase the budget by 4.3 percent because they calculated the budget on choosing United Health Care. Human Resource Director Kilchriss stated that the deductions with United Health Care is \$2,000.00 cheaper for the employee plus the office visits with the buy-up plan is better too. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that with the Blue Cross Blue Shield the offices visits are unlimited with a \$40.00 co-pay. Human Resource Director Kilchriss stated that with United Health Care it is \$25.00 a visit for the base plan. Commissioner Thrash stated that with United Health Care many of the doctors and hospitals are not on the provider list. Human Resource Director Kilchriss stated that she went through the list and there wasn't a lot of difference. Commissioner Thrash stated that there are drugs on the prescription plan that will not be covered if they stay with United Health Care. Commissioner Traylor stated that this did not make sense to him. Commissioner Heiney wondered if they shouldn't re-consider the United Health Care option with the wellness program of \$45,000.00. Commissioner Thrash stated that you would have a much high rate because of the number of claims that have been pulled out of

the pool with ACCG. Commissioner Heiney stated that with United Health Care there would be a reduction of \$32,400.00. Commissioner Heiney stated that there are some who would lose their prescription benefits but the savings is something to think about. County Administrator Zellner stated that you may could do some type of supplemental insurance to cover the prescription drugs that are not covered. Commissioner Thrash said that you still have to remember the pooled claims of \$211,000.00 and that next year there will be a problem if you go away from Blue Cross Blue Shield. Commissioner Thrash stated that once a Wellness Program is implemented claims will go down and she feels that Blue Cross Blue Shield will work with the county. Commissioner Traylor stated that it is disappointing to him that Blue Cross Blue Shield is now going back and lowering the rate and they didn't before with the initial quote. Commissioner Traylor stated that he is fine with Blue Cross Blue Shield as long as they can figure out how to implement a Wellness Program. Commissioner Thrash volunteered to speak to ACCG about getting a Wellness Program and said that the renewal is not based on getting a Wellness Program. Commissioner Thrash cautioned everyone to think about what could happen if they don't go back with Blue Cross Blue Shield. Human Resource Director Kilchris pointed out that the county could possibly lose grant money for a Wellness Program and all of the training that Administration receives from ACCG.

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to go with Blue Cross Blue Shield as the 2018 Health Provider. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Thrash updated the board on her recent trip to Washington D.C. for a National Association of Counties (NACO) board meeting. Commissioner Thrash announced that while in Washington she had breakfast at the White House and the President of the United States appointed her to serve on a committee that is made up of locally elected officials who will have input on helping local counties. They also meet with the USDA and discussed getting help from the Federal Government for Broad Band assistance for rural areas. Commissioner Thrash reported that 40 percent of rural counties don't have internet access.

County Administrator Zellner encouraged the board to implement some type of Wellness Program for the county. Commissioner Traylor made a motion to implement a Wellness Program in the County and Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Thrash stated that she would get with Mr. Pittarelli on the various Wellness Programs that are available.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m. 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