

WORKSHOP MINUTES
April 12th 2018
12:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 P.M. on April 12th 2018. Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chairman Heiney, Commissioner Horton, Commissioner Traylor, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Zellner and County Clerk Davidson.

Tax Assessor Report

Joe Norman of Norman Appraisal Service and Tax Assessor Haddock gave a report regarding the commercial appraisal audit for Lamar County. Mr. Norman stated that they have completed 95 percent of the commercial property appraisals and they have visited every commercial property in the County. They have four or five industrial properties left to visit before assessment notices go out. Currently, they are expecting at least a 20-million-dollar increase in real property value. This is before any appeals are done. Mr. Norman stated that it has been 17 years since a commercial assessment audit has taken place. During this time, there have been increases in commercial and industrial property values and there have been buildings added and taken away from the digest. Some properties went up a million dollars. Mr. Norman stated that he is going to meet with these property owners to explain why their property value went up and there could be some adjustments made. Mr. Norman stated that they are supposed to be assessing all classes of property every three years and this has not been done. Mr. Norman said that you don't see this big of an increase unless it was valued incorrectly. Tax Assessor Haddock said that the board may receive some calls and to please tell them they have the right to appeal. Mr. Norman went on to say that when they go out to do the appraisals some of the commercial and industrial property owners are going to be upset but they do have the right to appeal. Mr. Norman explained that they may have to request income statements if they appeal their property values. Mr. Norman said that his company has a cost schedule that they setup in each county. Mr. Norman stated that to defend the increase, and this is now State law, and it is a revenue generating property, they must use the income approach. Mr. Norman explained that this is the Department of Revenues (DOR) recommendation. Mr. Norman said that this all started with Strip Malls that have been abandoned. They may be worth \$60.00 a square foot but if you aren't generating any income and they are paying property taxes and you have all of these expenses and no income, what's it's worth? It is to protect the properties that aren't generating any income. Commissioner Traylor inquired about some new buildings on the North end of Lamar County that are not generating any income. Mr. Norman stated that the only time he would prod for income information would be if someone appealed and did not like the cost appraisal. Mr. Norman stated that he wanted to be fair to the tax payers as well but nine times out of ten when they don't turn over the income information it probably means that it is worth more than it is valued at. Mr. Norman stated that the overall increase to the digest is about 20 percent in value. Tax Assessor Haddock said that some of the downtown areas went down because they are only open three days a week. Tax Assessor Haddock stated that increasing commercial and industrial property values will take the burden off of the residential property owner and put it on the commercial property owner. Mr. Norman also addressed low income housing and Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Service's tax code, also known as the low-income housing tax credit and the fact that they can't include tax credits because property appraisal values are

now based on actual rent. Mr. Norman said that just like the timber properties, some of the property owners are getting good rates because they know someone or they own Section 42 housing. Mr. Norman said his opinion is that if the DOR had gotten ahead of the Section 42 properties and said that this is how they are to be appraised then people would have welcomed them in. They have let this get out of hand and counties were appraising them just like they do every other apartment owner. Now the ruling has come down and counties have had to drop millions and millions of dollars off of their digest because the DOR didn't get ahead of this. In a sense you have government housing that you were collecting nothing on over the years and now it's in the private sector where individuals own these properties and they are getting a huge tax break. Mr. Norman said that the problem that counties have with these types of properties is that they weren't prepared to appraise them according to the law and a ton of money has been lost statewide. Mr. Norman stated that Lamar County is okay because Tax Assessor Haddock has had them so low anyway. Mr. Norman stated that they are going to send out a notice to them with a higher value. Mr. Norman said that legally, they may can't collect any more money but they can make it tough on them. Tax Assessor Haddock stated that the owners get these companies to fight their values and they get paid based on how much money they save the tax payer. The more money they get back, the more money they get paid. Tax Assessor Haddock said that it's not fair for some apartment complex owners because it is regular market rent. In conclusion, Chairman Glass stated that the Tax Assessors office should take care of the assessments and the Board of Commissioners would set the millage rate accordingly.

Agenda Discussion

- 1) Reviewed three sets of minutes.
 - i. Workshop Meeting-March 14th, 2018
 - ii. Public Hearing-March 20th, 2018
 - iii. Regular Business March 20th, 2018
- 2) Reviewed 4 Proclamations:
 - Confederate History and Heritage MonthCommissioner Traylor stated that he had concerns regarding an incident that happened in Spalding County when they presented a Confederal History Proclamation. The board discussed the fact that they don't have to allow any citizen to speak during the meeting or during the presentation of the proclamation. If they get out of hand they can be asked to leave the meeting.
 - Child Abuse Month
 - National Nurses Week
 - National Donate Life Month
- 3) Reviewed a Supplemental Lease Agreement for five dodge chargers for the Sheriff's Office. This will be Resolution 2018-07. County Administrator reported that the interest rate is 3.988 but if a third lease is done then the rate will go up to 4.238. The lease agreement for the Dodge Chargers is for \$142,475.00 and the payment will be \$50,788.00 per year for a period of three years.
- 4) Reviewed a third Supplemental Lease Agreement for a T7500 Spray Patcher and a 2010 Volvo Truck (for a total of \$ 92,678.22. The interest rate is 4.238 with a payment of \$33,172.80 per year for a 3-year period. This is for Resolution 2018-08. The County paid \$500.00 to hold the truck.

- 5) The board discussed the wording on the John Mixon/Jordan Forest contract regarding the tree buffer. The old contract stated that the dead trees would be taken out and they were the ones marked with blue paint. The new contract states that the buffer will be left alone. The board agreed that the wording about the tree line buffer did not change the terms of the contract and agreed that County Administrator Zellner could sign the amended contract without having to vote on this change.
- 6) The board reviewed a purchase requisition for fire equipment that was recently stolen from the North Milner Fire Station on Morgan Diary Road. The purchase requisition is for \$12,168.00 and will need to be approved by the board. The insurance deductible is \$2,500.00 and \$15,000.00 was received for the damages. The board discussed putting surveillance cameras at this location.
- 7) County Clerk Davidson reported that a grant for the Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) was awarded to Lamar County in the amount of \$2,173.00 for the Records Retention Intern Project to cover one summer intern. County Clerk Davidson stated that the Sheriff's Office provided several interns last year and assisted with the organization of the records room. This grant will allow for an intern to actually write up a record retention policy for the administration office that will be approved by the board. County Clerk Davidson stated that she applied for this same type of grant last year and was not awarded the grant. The write up of the grant last year was actually more extensive than this one but there was no money contributed from the County. This year the County has agreed to contribute \$400.00 towards this project. County Clerk Davidson feels sure that this contribution was a factor in receiving the grant award. The funding for this grant comes from the Community Foundation of Central Georgia. The contract agreement for the grant will need to be approved by the board and once approved the job can be posted with the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) and the Civic Affairs Foundation.
- 8) Commissioner Thrash announced that County Clerk Davidson was asked to serve on the board of managers for the Georgia County Clerk's Association (GCCA). This is an appointed position. County Clerk Davidson also stated that she will be able to continue to serve as the District 4 director of GCCA representing Lamar County. County Clerk Davidson further announced that ACCG is changing their policies related to certification and training. In order to main certification and to serve on a board the person certified or appointed must attend training classes offered by the ACCG and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government and the University of Georgia. The requirement for the Clerk's in Georgia and for Commissioners requires a certain number of hours each year.

Administrator's Report

County Administrator Zellner reported that he had sent a letter to Ramdout, Inc. which is the owner of T.J. Outfitters. Mr. Vinatkumar Patel is the legal owner of the license. The letter was regarding the drainage problem on Midway Road. County Administrator Zellner stated that he had a meeting with Mr. Patel and his son to discuss this issue. Public Works Director Rigdon is working with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on this. Mr. Patel agreed to purchase the pipe. The County will install the pipe and cover it with gravel. Mr. Patel will be responsible for the asphalt or the concrete. County Administrator stated that the road is crumbling and this will be a better entrance for his business.

County Administrator Zellner reported to the board that he had sent a letter to Betsill Trailer park regarding a legal matter.

Chairman Glass announced that the County had not drawn any money from the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN). County Clerk Davidson reported that the goal was April before any funds were needed but now they anticipate being able to wait until May before funds are needed. County Administrator Zellner interjected that when funds are drawn from TAN that the amount will be large.

The board discussed a Rezoning App. # 2018-03 by Donald R. Haywood to rezone approximately 1.20 acres from R-1(Residential) to C2 (Highway Commercial) to allow a retail store or other C2 use. This property is located at 934 Thomaston Street. The Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on May 7th, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. Commissioner Thrash said that she would like to know what is going to be put on the property.

County Clerk Davidson reported on the Branding Logo project for Lamar County. She stated that the committee had meet a couple of times and that an email had been sent out to all employee department heads regarding submitting a branding logo. The committee heard and discussed inspirational and other ideas regarding what Lamar County stands for and based their goal on this knowledge. The committee decided to base the slogan on what you think of when you think of Lamar County. There was a lot of feedback from Lamar County employees. The original goal was March 29th but was extended until April 6th. County Clerk Davidson shared slogans from other counties in Georgia. DeKalb County's slogan is "Live, Work and Pay to Play Community", Putnam County "Welcome to the Briar Patch", Atkinson County "Come Grow your Future with Us". County Clerk Davidson explained that lots of businesses, counties and other entities use the word "Grow" in their slogan so the committee decided to stay away from the word "Grow". Clinch County's slogan is "Where Progress Meets Heritage", Camden County, "Award Winning Government", Hall County "We Have it All in Hall", Fulton County, "Your County at Your Service", Dalton County, "Where Quality of Life Matters", Bleckley County, "One of the Best Kept Secrets in Middle Georgia" and Douglas County, "Living, Growing, Prospering". County Clerk Davison said that the discussion amongst the committee was really good and everyone had a lot of input. After much discussion, the committee decided on three slogans that could be submitted to the board. The three choices were "Home is Just Better Here", "Where the Future Comes Home" and "Small Town Living, Always Home". Commissioner Thrash asked how warming and inviting these slogans were for businesses. County Clerk Davidson stated that one of the committee members, Industrial Authority Director, Kathy Oxford had a lot of input into the selection. The committee also relied on another committee member, Tammie Merritt because her slogan was selected for the Give 365 campaign. County Clerk Davidson stated that the committee only wanted the three selections to be presented to the board but the committee was aware that the other choices could possibly be presented to the board. The board requested that the other choices be read. County Clerk Davidson stated that the goal is to have a picture logo drawn up once the slogan wording is selected. County Clerk Davidson stated that she met with Andrew Henry, who has drawn the murals on the buildings in downtown Barnesville, in regards to drawing up a slogan and his cost could be as much as \$1200.00. County Clerk Davidson stated that there is talent in Lamar County that will not cost as much or possibly nothing at all. The board decided that they needed more time to review the slogans and could possibly make a decision at the next workshop meeting.

Commissioner Thrash reported that she and the other board members had received a letter from Cynthia Wadsworth regarding the Wadsworth cemetery. Chairman Glass stated that no action from the County is necessary because the judge ordered that Lamar County does not have any authority with the cemetery.

Chairman Glass reported that Sheriff White is working on the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) and the inmate housing contract with the City of Barnesville. Chairman Glass said that the wording is confusing and that it reads that they only charge for the housing of five inmates and they can only charge if they go over 150 inmates per month. Currently, the City of Barnesville is getting free housing for their inmates. Most of the inmates are coming in for two days and the crimes aren't that bad. The new contract will have a separate clause for medical costs. It cost \$2,000.00 a month to house an AIDS patient and this is not covered in the contract. The doctor visits are also not covered. There have been two known cases of Tuberculosis in Lamar County and the patients have to be quarantined. If there is another tuberculosis case, Sheriff White is not sure what he will do because there is nowhere to quarantine the inmate. They may have to purchase a camper or a trailer to house them.

Commissioner Traylor reported that he had recently attended the Georgia Public Health Conference on Jekyll Island and that three of the four board members attended. These members were Bob Taylor, Samantha Bishop and himself. The issues across Georgia that were a topic of concern included Water, Sewer, and Septic Tanks. Also, the Insurance Cost, HIV and Diabetes were all areas of concern.

Commissioner Horton requested that the board meet on May 9th rather than May 10th for the Board of Commissioners monthly workshop. Commissioner Horton agreed to do lunch on that day.

Chairman Glass reported that they would begin looking at the 2019 budget in late May or early June. He reported that there is a Towaliga budget meeting on May 3rd in Monroe County. He also reported that Building and Zoning Director Gunter has a plan for the schedules and various steps related to the Comprehensive Plan. Chairman Glass reported that April 30th, is the first day for early voting.

Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:24 p.m. to go into executive session to discuss personnel. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The board came out of executive session at 2:00 p.m. Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to adjourn the workshop and Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles Glass, Chairman

Robert Heiney, Vice-Chairman

Bennie Horton, Commissioner

Ryran Traylor, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk