

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Budget Workshop Minutes

October 30th, 2019

9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chairman Traylor, Commissioner Horton, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, County Clerk Davidson, and Commissioner Heiney was absent for the meeting.

The board meet with allotted departments to discuss the proposed 2020 budget based on the actuals line items. The proposed budget for 2020 either increased, decreased or remained the same.

Board of Elections

Chairman Glass stated that there would be multiple elections next year. Board of Elections member, Bill Christopher stated that five elections and two runoffs are projected in the 2020 proposed budget and they are pretty sure that there will be a January Federal runoff. Commissioner Thrash stated that the City of Milner could also have three special elections in Milner because two council members and the Mayor for the City of Milner may resign at the end of the year. Mr. Christopher explained that this would fall on the regular election dates but agreed that it was not something that they had planned on in their budget. Mr. Christopher requested that the part time Board of Election employees be included in the 2 percent across the board raise and would like for Board of Elections Supervisor Reid to receive more than the 2 percent raise. Mr. Christopher stated that more poll workers would need to be added to the budget. They would need to have at least two more poll workers at each place. The increased the budget for poll workers from \$17,000.00 to \$35,000.00 to cover this expense. Commissioner Thrash inquired about expenses for the buildings such as electrical outlets or any construction remodeling that will need to be done. Board of Elections member Jimmy Hearn said that they didn't that this would be necessary. Mr. Christopher said that the State has hired contractors to go through all of the polling places checking electrical outlets and security. Mr. Christopher said that they know that security is going to be a problem at several places. He said that the machines at the Senior Center would need to be setup after the Senior Center closes and then the Board of Elections employees would be in the Senior Center before they open. Mr. Christopher said that there was concern for the security at the polling places including Chappel Mill Fire Station, the Redbone Community House, the Lamar County Service Center and the City of Milner Library. He said that the Redbone Community House has agreed to allow pad locks to be put on the doors because everyone has access to a key. Mr. Christopher stated that he isn't sure about the Gym at the Service Center because he knows that the locks have been changed several times. He said that only those sworn in to elections should have secure access to the polling machines. Mr. Christopher gave an overview of the machines and said that the machines can't be locked with a cable and that the scanner is the only thing that has a key and it is electronic. He said the rest of them have seals where the memory cards are but anyone can take a seal off.

Mr. Christopher said that the Printing/ Office Supplies line item did not increase and that they should be in good shape. The State is not positive as to how they are going to handle expendables

such as toner that will be needed. He said that the Board of Election members attended training recently and no one seemed to understand how the machines worked. He said that they have to train the poll workers and most of the poll workers are Senior Citizens. They get tired because of the long days that they have to work. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid said that all of the ballots may have to be counted at the precincts along with the absentee votes. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that they need younger poll workers and they have tried to give student incentives to those at the high school that are honor students or ones that are on a work release program but currently no one is interested. She said that in order to be a poll worker, you must work in the County or be a registered voter in Lamar County.

Commissioner Thrash inquired about the part time employees. She said that last year they budgeted \$20,000.00 and this year they budgeted \$45,000.00. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid explained that when poll workers work in the office, the compensation comes out of the part time line item. In 2018, \$41,000.00 was expensed out of the part-time line item. She said that they are going to be very busy with the new equipment and said that the State is supposed to be coming to pick up the old equipment. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that last week they learned that the Judge doesn't know they are coming to pick up the equipment. Mr. Christopher stated that some of the equipment is sequestered for evidence. Mr. Christopher stated that each of the five elections have three weeks of early voting including Saturday voting. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that the runoff for January 2021 is for Senator Johnny Isakson. There will not be a primary because his race is going to be on the General Election ballot. She said that normally when there is an election for him there has been several candidates that run against him and if there isn't a front runner, there will be a run off election. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that this will need to be budgeted too because the early voting will fall in 2020. She said that they didn't know this until after their budget was submitted. There was discussion about reimbursement from the other municipalities for the elections and Chairman Glass stated that the County had received \$3,000.00 in 2019.

Mr. Christopher stated that the new machine for the voter is going to be the same except for printing out the ballot and then scanning it. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that early voting begins March 2nd, 2020 along with qualifying and the first election is March 24th, 2020. She said that they are supposed to be receiving more training on the poll pads because they are replacing the express polls. They are tablets and more pieces of equipment that they are responsible for. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that they setup their demonstration equipment for the board to review. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that with every marking device there is a printer. They are supposed to get a second demonstration unit by the end of the year. This includes training with a headphone and key pad and said that it is much like playing a video game. She said that this was rather difficult. Everything is color coded and for those that are color blind it may be an issue. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid stated that they are supposed to be getting a new unit to scan multiple paper ballots. She said that they don't know what it is supposed to look like because when they went to training it was not set up. She said that there are several pilot counties for this. Chairman Glass inquired about mail in absentee ballots. She said that the scanner will scan either of the ballots including the hand marked or the regular ballots. It can be scanned upside down or sideways. She said that every location will have a scanner. She said that the scanner will be on a unit that looks like a trash can to her. Mr. Christopher explained that the write-in candidates go to a different part of the box and should the scanner go down during an election, it has a slot where a voter can insert their ballot to be scanned at a later time. Board of

Elections Supervisor Reid said that she is hoping to keep all of the polling places, that they currently have, within the County buildings. Board of Elections Supervisor Reid mentioned that they received an eviction notice from one church, that they had used as a polling place for a number of years, and other churches may not be willing to let them use them as a polling place. Mr. Christopher stated that churches don't always have the right security level needed for the voting machines because usually a number of people have keys to the buildings. Mr. Christopher said that if they are not County employees then it definitely would not be secure. Board Elections member Elaine Williams stated that there are a lot of unknowns that they are going to have including expenses that they aren't aware of at this time and they don't have any answers to the questions. Mr. Christopher said that he put a tic on his paper every time a trainer said "I don't know" to a question. He said that there were 21 tics at the end of the day. Commissioner Thrash stated that she had been to five different meetings about this and the Secretary of State also said "I don't know" to the questions that were asked. Mr. Hearn said that they had even been in conference calls where they would say "I don't know". Board of Elections member Monica Walters said that the Board of Elections would be attending a conference in Savannah in December and she hopes that they will have a lot of answers to their questions.

Commissioner Thrash made a recommendation that Board of Elections Supervisor Reid's salary be increased from \$39,735.00 to \$40,000.00 because many times she comes to the office after hours and she has seen that Board of Elections Supervisor Reid has been working late at night or on the weekends. Commissioner Thrash stated that she sees the elections process changing in the future and continuing to change which will be more demanding of her time and the Board of Elections time. Mr. Hearn said that without Board of Elections Supervisor Reid he doesn't know what they would do. Commissioner Thrash said that this was not a promise but she was putting it on the table. Ms. Williams said that there are many Board of Elections Supervisors in the State that may quit once they see what all they have to go through and said that it was good that they still have Board of Elections Supervisor Reid.

Chairman Glass suggested that they add \$10,000.00 into the Board of Elections budget for unknowns. County Administrator Townsend said that they should keep it in contingencies and if there are some things they need to add, then they can bring it to the board for approval. Chairman Glass addressed the Board of Elections and said that if something comes up unexpectedly, that they warned them about, that is not in the budget, then they can move it from contingencies into their budget. Commissioner Thrash explained that a budget amendment would need to be done if they move money out of contingency.

Sheriff's Office

Sheriff White addressed the board and stated that they need patrol cars and is asking that the new vehicles come out of the General Fund. He said that he will get four more cars out of SPLOST in 2021. Sheriff White said that they bought the first twelve out of SPLOST because the cars were in bad shape. They purchased two cars out of drug forfeiture funds. He said that the cost for each car is about \$30,000.00 and the equipment will come out of drug forfeiture funds. Commissioner Thrash asked if Sheriff White had a vision for a new jail and Sheriff White responded no but said he does have a vision for fixing what they already have. Commissioner Thrash asked if there are things that need to be addressed right away. He said that there is not one true contractor that can come through and look at the entire jail in its entirety. He said that there is plumbing, electrical,

the locks, etc. that need to be addressed and you can't get one person to fix everything in the jail. He said for about \$20,000.00 you can get a contractor to come in and tell you what you need. Sheriff White said that plumbing is an issue that needs to be addressed and it will be costly. He said that with the locks they have been fortunate because with the Criminal Justice Reform they are not housing as many inmates. He said that for a first appearance hearing, you don't have those on misdemeanor probate court tickets, they are bonded out after 48 hours and then they release them. He said that with the new law, with simple battery and possession of marijuana for less than an ounce, they get released automatically. Commissioner Thrash said that the legislators introduced legislation that if someone is incarcerated, they can keep their Medicaid which will cut down the cost for medical. Sheriff White said that two years ago they started giving Medicaid rates but if an inmates Medicaid is cancelled then it falls on the tax payers to pay the bill. Sheriff White said that their first avenue is to make them file their own insurance. Sheriff White said that two years ago they bid the inmate medical care out at a cost of \$120,000.00, for 40 hours a week coverage, but this doesn't cover weekends and nights and if you have to call an ambulance that is an extra charge. He said that about four months ago they had several nurses on call that hit a deer and then they filed Workers Compensation claims against the medical company. Their liability insurance dropped them from being able to be on call. They can't come on call because they don't have insurance. Sheriff White said that a former nurse, that worked for the Sheriff's Office, who went to work for the medical contractor, will come and help them out. Sheriff White stated that they will have to pay her if she gets hurt because the medical contractor will not pay her. Sheriff White stated that they are talking to other medical companies that have 7-day coverage and coverage that includes on call service. He said that the current medical contractor doesn't cover any inmates that are outside of work detail. So, if they are working for the City or the County and they get hurt they won't see them. He said that this company's cost was about \$60,000.00 cheaper than the other companies. Sheriff White stated that at the time they didn't know to look at all of these factors but since they do now, they have started bidding out again for a new medical contractor. He said that you they are looking at a cost of around \$160,000.00 to \$180,000.00 for 7-day coverage. One company that they looked at cost around \$220,000.00 but they covered everything. Sheriff White said that medical is one of their biggest expenses.

Sheriff White said that he asked for a 2 percent raise, a 3 percent raise and a 5 percent raise depending on the employee and he has around 61 employees. Vice-Chairman Traylor inquired about areas of concern that he has going forward. Sheriff White said that 2 cars and a raise for his employees was his biggest concern. He said that he increased the starting base rate for deputies to \$15.00 an hour awhile back and said that people don't leave for money, they leave because of bosses. Sheriff White stated that the call volume is increasing. Sheriff White said that he has to have jailers, a deputy at the Courthouse, and two on patrol. He said that the vehicles that they received two years ago has about 50,000 miles a piece on them because they travel the State nonstop. They also serve civil papers for warrants and evictions. Sheriff White stated that Officer Jett manages the system and helps the other deputies when she can. There are seven investigators which includes the victims advocate and the narcotics investigator. He said that they are solving a lot of crimes in the County and there are no back logs because they are working hard. They have two deputies working the interstate. The fruits of that means getting drugs off the interstate. Sheriff White said that they confiscate close to \$200,00.00 to \$300,000.00 a year in forfeiture funds. Sheriff White said that they have the personnel right now but they will need two more patrol deputies in the next three years. They have two deputies on the day shift and two deputies on the night shift. They also have three deputies on the morning shift and three deputies on the afternoon

shift. Sheriff White said that they were running this same thing in 1999. He said if they get bad calls those deputies come off of the interstate. They have three deputies that are school resource officers and they can leave and come help them but it doesn't help the early morning hour shifts when they are getting beat up.

Commissioner Thrash inquired about the uniforms and Sheriff White stated that the Sheriff's Office provides the deputies uniforms. Sheriff White stated that they haven't changed their uniforms because to do that it would cost about \$100,000.00. The deputies have three uniforms a piece. They have winter and summer uniforms/jackets and if they need pants, they generally buy it and it comes out of drug forfeiture funds.

Commissioner Horton inquired about Sheriff's White's opinion regarding the jail. Sheriff White stated that they had done a good job spending money to patch the jail. He said that the jail is in bad shape and the locks are extinct. He said that ten years ago they went through Dunn Lock and Safe and the locks can't be fixed anymore. He said those locks aren't being made anymore because the company went out of business. The wiring going to the locks are old. Sheriff White said that they don't currently have an emergency situation but he would like a five to seven-year plan. He said not only because they are going to spend a ton of money patching it up but because of the increase in population and growth in the County. Chairman Glass asked about his statement regarding cutting back on jail population. Sheriff White said that they are but that doesn't make the jails condition any better. Sheriff White said that generally when you have more people moving in you have more crime and more people visiting the jail facility. Sheriff White stated that they aren't at capacity but he does have three cells shut down that he can't use because of plumbing, electrical, air conditioner, locks, and security issues. Sheriff White said that they are averaging around 70 inmates and there is a capacity for 135 inmates; given that all of the cells are functioning. He said currently there are 40 inmates that are given away because of the cells that aren't working. The current capacity at the jail is around 95 to 100. Sheriff White stated that he would like to move the jail away from the current location and away from any future metropolis. He said that they are already close to the grocery stores and schools. He said that he would like to acquire some land to build a new jail on.

Chairman Glass asked for some good news and Sheriff White responded that crimes are down and he has good people working for him. Chairman Glass said that the Sheriff's Office is the largest portion of the budget and said he appreciated all of their hard work. Sheriff White said that the Commissioners are a big part of this reason. Commissioner Thrash stated that she would like to add one more deputy for the morning watch. Commissioner Thrash said that when you have one deputy on the north end of the County and one deputy on the south end of the County it takes 20 minutes to get help because one is on the opposite end of the County. Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that when they discuss the millage rate, they never consider this. He said that they vote to go down on the millage rate instead of going up on the millage rate and then when it comes to budget discussion, they wonder why they can't do these types of things. Chairman Glass said that this cost the citizen \$55,000.00 per person. Chairman Glass said that to cover this need it would take three deputies because one can't work seven days a week. Commissioner Thrash said that one more person is a start. Chairman Glass said that the average salary to cover this would be \$55,800.00. To get the average, Chairman Glass explained that he took the total budget for Personal Services and Benefits of \$1,967,440.00 minus the \$70,211.00 divided by the 34 employees with insurance, and this equals \$55,803.80. Sheriff White stated that they are trying to

get the jailers to be police certified. They send them to law enforcement school so they can have arrest powers. If they need extra help, they will pull from the jail and replace them with an entry level jail position. He said that if they sit in the jail for too long, they leave to hit the road. Sheriff White stated that this training doesn't cost anything except for over time. He said that if they fail, the employee has to pay for the training. If they fail twice, then they are done. Sheriff White stated that they have to sign a two-year contract and after the first year of being police certified, they are put on the honor guard. He said currently the honor guard is down to two people. He said that this is an expensive project because the jackets and the pants are all custom made. It takes about four months to get one uniform made. They weigh the cost benefits for this and try to use the drug forfeiture funds for this as well. The jackets are custom fit and cost about \$200.00 apiece.

Public Works

Chairman Glass addressed Public Works Director Rigdon and stated that he noticed an increase in salaries and vehicles. County Administrator Townsend stated that the capital outlay budget for paving is \$1,500,000.00. Public Works Director Rigdon presented a work order from Ken Colado requesting that they asphalt from Highway 36 to approximately one mile down Bottoms Road. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that the property on Bottoms Road had been bought, cleared and fenced in and they would need to go above that lot to pave. He said that this still will not take them to Ken Colado's house. He said that the biggest issue with Bottoms Road is if they go through there and put 2.5 million dollars' worth of paving, they still have the issue with a water line pipe busting and the City of Barnesville coming in and digging the whole road up to fix the busted pipe. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that they had it surveyed so that they could fix the road to go straight up Highway 36 and come out up the hill where you aren't in that bad place on the highway. But then the property was purchased and now this can't be done. Public Works Director Rigdon said that even with doing this you are only fixing the safety issue for pulling out onto Highway 36 and you still aren't correcting the issue with the road. Also, the other mile of the road still has the water lines running under the road. You also have the issue with the swamp. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that when they were putting gravel on the road, Southern Rivers was working on the road and hit a power line and almost caught their dump truck on fire. He said that Southern Rivers determined that the lines weren't up to code so they raised up all of the power lines. Public Works Director Rigdon said that you can't pave Bottoms Road because if they do the City of Barnesville could tear the road up fixing a water line. He said that they tore up an entire lane on Grove Street fixing the water line and said that about 100 feet up the road there is another sink hole where the water line is leaking that needs to be fixed. He said that Suddeth Road needs to be fixed but unless you put a graded aggregate base (GAB) on it is never going to be fixed. Public Works Director Rigdon said he didn't think that Joyce Farmer would give the County her right of way. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that she owns from Alton Kendrick's house to Yatesville Road.

Public Works Director Rigdon stated that the reason for the increase in the M&R Other Equipment line item from \$55,000.00 to \$65,000.00 is because of issues with tractors. He said that they don't build tractors like they used to and the bush hogs need to be replaced where it has broken in half. He said that they have an old bush hog as a backup but it has a bent shaft.

Chairman Glass said that the budget for Roads and Maintenance in SPLOST is 3.2 million for six years. County Administrator Townsend said that there is \$400,000.00 allotted for equipment and

said that a motor grader and a dump truck had already been purchased out of this. Public Works Director Rigdon said that the grader and the dump truck was purchased out of the previous SPLOST II and that they purchased a patching machine and a dump truck out of the current SPLOST III. Public Works Director Rigdon said that he is over budget in his Maintenance line item as of September and he will have to transfer money between line items to cover this. Public Works Director Rigdon said that he spent \$2,000.00 on a tractor this month and he has two trucks, F250's, that they have to put in a quart of oil per week, for each one. He said that the big trucks and the equipment eat up tires and they cost \$300.00 to replace. He said that so far, they haven't had to purchase any tires. He said that a motor grader tire is \$1,000.00. He said that there is six of them on every tractor. He said that they did get a new sprayer this year and they spray twice a year on the guard rails.

County Administrator Townsend said that his salaries include the 2 percent across the board raise plus \$6,000.00 for his animal control stipend. County Administrator Townsend said that he has put everyone at 2 percent across the board. County Administrator Townsend said the Public Works Department has issues with keeping personnel but in the last couple of months people have come out of the woodworks but said that he now has good employees that can drive the motor graders. Public Works Director Rigdon said that he has new employees that are out of Henry County and they are doing an awesome job.

Commissioner Thrash stated that there is an issue with trash in the County and she would like to see the probation inmates on the roads picking up trash. She said that this could be a part of their compensation to the County under their fees and fines. Commissioner Thrash said that someone would need to supervise them. Commissioner Thrash stated that at one time they paid \$30,000 to the female Georgia Department of Corrections and asked if it would benefit the County to contract with them again because the Sheriff's Office doesn't have the staffing to put someone on the road with them. Commissioner Thrash stated that something needs to be done about the trash on the roads in the County. Commissioner Thrash stated that she and Major Holmes, along with two inmates, picked up trash on City Pond Road. Major Holmes sent the person, whose mail was in the garbage they picked up, a bill. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that the trash trucks contracted with the City of Barnesville are responsible for lots of trash that is on the roads. He said that trash blows off of the trucks when they are going to the landfill. Chairman Glass requested that County Administrator Townsend get a quote from the Georgia Department of Corrections as to how much it would cost to have the probation inmate pick up trash.

County Administrator Townsend stated that he put in the budget 1.5 million for paving and tractors but then he took it out of the budget. He said that he spoke to Chairman Glass and the Cities about doing a T-SPLOST and putting it on the ballot. He said that this would generate the County about \$950,000.00. He said that the City of Milner was happy with paving, of a mile of road, that was recently done. Public Works Director Rigdon asked if they are getting Piedmont Paving to bid on the work because they paved Burk Street for \$70,000.00. Chairman Glass stated that Upson County has a T-SPLOST and County Administrator Townsend said that Spalding, Monroe and Meriwether County have it on their ballot.

Commissioner Thrash stated that Sonny Perdue allotted a lot of money for the drought. He gave Spalding and Henry County money but none for the smaller counties. She said that Lamar County

is in the level one draught and should have received money. Chairman Glass stated that it could be based on the opportunity zone. Commissioner Thrash stated that she was going to send him a letter about this. County Administrator Townsend stated that he had spoken with someone recently about the roads and he said that you have to pave everything before they could do anything. Public Works Director Rigdon said that they don't have enough toppings on the road and most of the roads in the County only have an inch to a half inch of asphalt.

Chairman Glass stated that vehicles are the biggest issue for the Public Works Department. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that this is for pickup trucks and tractors. He said that he expects that the purchases will be spaced out and not bought all at one time. It was determined that the last time tractors were purchased was in 2012 and the bush cutter will be five years old in December of 2019. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that it will be bad if the warranty runs out. He said that because they had the hydraulic pump under warranty, John Deere just spent about \$4,000.00 to fix it and it only cost the County \$250.00 because of the extended warranty. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that he had already put clutches in two tractors in 2019 and this cost about \$1,500.00 apiece. County Administrator Townsend stated that he is requesting to purchase two more tractors. Chairman Glass stated that the request of \$100,000.00 for two more tractors is a big cost. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that if they continue to work on the tractors they will continue to run because they are all still operational. Commissioner Thrash asked if it would benefit the County to do lease purchases. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that they will do lease purchases on heavy equipment but they may not do this for right of way tractors. He said that he spoke with a contractor that cuts the grass for Coweta County and they charge \$90,000.00. He said that Bulloch county pays over a half a million dollars for grass cutting. This includes grass cutting, weed eating and trash. He said that the watersheds in the County will still have to be cut even if the board decides to contract out the grass cutting service out; this is 30 to 40 acres that has to be maintained and it takes two days to cut each one. He said that the Public Works Department would still have to fill in holes, cut trees, fix driveways and other stuff. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that this would eliminate three jobs if they do this. He said that Bulloch County pays over a half a million dollars for grass cutting. He said that the goal is to cut three times a year and they may not make it this year. Public Works Director Rigdon stated that if they do decide to contract out the grass cutting services, it would cut out fuel for three tractors. He said that he has five tractors that they run; three right of way tractors, a bush cutter and a side cutter. Commissioner Horton stated that this could balance itself out. Public Works Director Rigdon said that this would also include trash pickup. Commissioner Thrash requested that he look into contracting out the grass cutting services because it could potentially solve a lot of problems. Public Works Director Rigdon said that a good contractor would be necessary. He said that 90 percent of the State employees are contracted out and when the Mexicans were deported in this past summer, the grass cutting stopped.

Chairman Glass summarized the action items for the Public Works Department.

- Contract for grass cutting and trash pickup
- Contract for the Georgia Department of Corrections to pickup trash
- Comparison of the net cost savings for both.
- Putting T-SPLOST on the ballot
- Getting 2 pickup trucks from the General Fund
- Getting 2 pickup trucks from SPLOST III

- Comparison of United Bank and ACCG/BB&T interest rate.

Recreation

Recreation Director Lowe stated that the salaries for the Recreation Department are going down because of the reorganization and there has been a transition with the staff. She said that there is a little bit more added to the part time position. She now has 3 part time employees. Recreation Director Lowe stated that the Lawn Care and Grounds Care Maintenance line item had been left off the budget request. She is keeping the same 2019 budgeted amount at \$7,702.00. They do all of their ground work but they do have inmates that help out but not just for grass. Most of this budgeted amount goes for fertilize, seeds, and dirt for the baseball fields. Recreation Director Lowe explained that the current playground is around 25 years old and the entire playground needs to come down for safety reasons. The equipment is broken in places and the paint is so old that it is razor sharp as it peels off of the different pieces of the equipment, including the slide. She said that it is actually a code violation. She said that the swinging bridge and the slides are so old that replacement parts are not available for purchase. Recreation Director Lowe said that the day care center, at the entrance to the Recreation Park, uses the playground equipment for their children and this is also a liability for the County. Recreation Director Lowe said that the playground is utilized for birthday parties during ball games and after ball games by many children and it is becoming more and more dangerous for them to use. Commissioner Thrash expressed a deep desire to have the playground equipment removed and replaced. Recreation Director Lowe said that she is applying for a grant with Give 365 and she said she is asking for \$5,000.00 for a handicap accessible swing. She stated that she needs about \$25,000.00 to replace the playground equipment. She plans on attending the Georgia Recreation and Park Association (GRPA) conference next week and hopes to learn about Grant opportunities at the conference. Chairman Glass stated that the Rotary Club or Southern Rivers may want to contribute to the playground equipment purchase as well.

County Administrator Townsend stated that he is working with Building and Maintenance Director Beverly and Recreation Director Lowe on the Lawn Care Maintenance for the County and said instead of paying an outside source, since we have the employees and the equipment to do the job, they could potentially save the \$15,000.00 to \$18,000.00. He said that it would cost around \$380.00 for Turf Maintenance to come and trim the bushes at the Administration building so he had the Recreation Department trim the bushes at the Administration building. Commissioner Horton asked if there would be enough employees to handle this job and Recreation Director Lowe stated that when they have a full crew working there would not be an issue. Chairman Glass stated that helping and covering all of the buildings are two different things and asked if an analysis had been done regarding enough employees, equipment, and time for the employees to handle all of the buildings. Recreation Director Lowe said that she had discussed with County Administrator Townsend the fact that this fall on both the Recreation Department and the Public Works Department as well. Recreation Director Lowe said that their busiest time is from February to June. Chairman Glass stated that he would like to see further analysis including hourly commitment, equipment, and days and weeks that they would be at each building and the location that they would be coming from.

Recreation Director Lowe asked if she could move forward with taking down the playground equipment. Chairman Glass stated that the plan didn't need to start today because you have the same liability issues that you had yesterday. Commissioner Thrash was concerned with not taking the playground equipment down immediately because of the liability concerns that they had been made aware of. Vice-Chairman Traylor asked if the board would have to vote on this at a Regular Business meeting or would they be applying for Grants and as a backup plan take the funds out of contingency for new playground equipment since they don't have the funding, so that they could go ahead and take down the playground equipment. Chairman Glass stated that they could close the playground and then say that they are looking for funds and plan on installing new playground equipment in February of 2020. He said that they could state that the funding sources will come from the County, grants, fund raising and other sources. Vice-Chairman Traylor inquired about the time frame for doing this and asked if it would need to come from a motion of approval or disapproval from the Board of Commissioners or would it be that they do this within the Department because he sees the urgency of needing to move forward on removing the playground equipment. Vice-Chairman Traylor said he was just wondering how they would decrease the bureaucratic process. Chairman Glass stated that they could go out there now and put tape around it and say it is closed and condemned. Recreation Director Lowe said that she agrees with Chairman Glass because there has to be a plan for the public. Commissioner Thrash said that she totally disagrees because if something happens and a child is hurt or killed (and this is being told to a defense attorney) and the board was told them in an open meeting that the playground was not safe, then that makes the Board of Commissioners irresponsible and the County would never pay it off. Recreation Director Lowe said that they need some playground rules when they install the new playground equipment. She said that even though there are kids that come to the playground unattended, the liability still falls back on the County. She said that there needs to be some type of signage for the playground to protect the County. Recreation Director Lowe said that no matter where they are budget wise, the playground equipment needs to come down. County Administrator Townsend suggested that they do a press release explaining the condition of the playground and the fact that it needs to come down. He said that they could also include the need for funds to get a new playground. Vice-Chairman Traylor suggested that they state the reason for taking down the playground including the number of years that it has been there. Chairman Glass stated that if they rope it off, it looks like a crime scene, the code changes are nothing new and he doesn't understand why this is a signal for death. He said if the cracked paint is on only on the slide, then just close the slide because it is the immediate issue. Chairman Glass said that he doesn't have kids so he didn't know. He said that since the slides are the major issue, then close the whole thing and say that it will be upgrade. Chairman Glass stated that they don't need the Code Enforcement to condemn it. They just need a press release stating the criteria for closing it along with explanations for the need of funds and the projected date of the new playground equipment being installed. County Clerk Davidson stated that she is working on various grants for playground equipment and stated that some of the grant deadlines had already passed. Recreation Director Lowe said that they are asking for a total of \$25,000.00 and she is planning on trying to get a grant from Give 365. She stated that a suggestion from Give 365 committee member Martha Windle was to do the major structure this year and add on with what Give 365 gives them. Recreation Director Lowe said that she is sending out sponsorship letters that include goals for the Recreation Department and the need for the playground equipment is included. She said that she is also working on fund raiser ideas with the baseball and soccer teams as they go into the new year to help generate revenue. She said that these funds could also help with the playground equipment.

Planning and Zoning

Chairman Glass stated that the Planning and Zoning Department brings in about \$138,000.00 a year with business licenses and fees. This is for the year 2019. The increases are travel and schooling from \$400.00 to \$1500.00. County Administrator Townsend said that in 2017 the budget for the Code Enforcement and Planning and Zoning was \$231,000.00 combined. He said that in 2019, the two departments were combined. Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that they are keeping up with building inspections and the turn around time is less than one day. Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that she didn't see any issues with building licenses because everything is setup in the INCODE system where it will automatically generate the renewal packets. The alcohol license renewals have been sent out to all of the license holders. They have implemented a fee for exempt plats where they weren't charged before and now it is \$10.00 per person. This is part of the building permit fee schedule. She said that there have been no complaints from the surveyors. She said that this is one that doesn't meet subdivision standards where you are taking one parcel and making two or if something is over five acres. They run into one to two of these a week. Commissioner Thrash stated that she received a call regarding zoning verbiage regarding commercial zoning. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that if they don't do it within a certain amount of time then it reverts back to the original zoning. Chairman Glass stated that if it is conditional zoning then you have a year. Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that for straight re-zoning it is not and with this you can do a conditional zoning. Chairman Glass stated that they could put a time frame stipulation on the zoning. Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that if there is a special zoning then they could add on stipulations as conditional zoning.

Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that the only major change in their budget is training and education. They need to add Code Enforcement training. She said that the original request submitted in the budget was for \$1,500.00 but with the four different types of certification she feels like \$3,000.00 would cover this training. She said this would cover her department because each employee has two conferences per year. Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that there was a small increase in the Dues and Fees line item of \$160.00 and she said that this should cover all four employees.

Commissioners

Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that he would need additional training in order to continue with his Specialty Track training. Currently the proposed budget is \$4,800.00. He said that this past year he has not been able to attend the training but one of the requirements of being on the Lifelong Learning Legislature committee is to attend training. County Clerk Davidson stated that 48 hours of training is required to earn a Specialty Track certificate. County Administrator Townsend stated that he increased the Travel line item. He stated that he and County Clerk Davidson are looking at an increase in the per diem for travel because in certain resort areas or other States the meals are higher than what is allowed in the current County per diem of \$40.00. The General Services Website (GSA) website shows an increase in per diem and many counties in Georgia have increased their per diem to \$60.00. Commissioner Thrash stated that meals in Savannah, Atlanta and Washington D.C. cost much more now. Commissioner Thrash also stated that the taxes are

not exempt outside of Georgia. Commissioner Thrash noted that two of her conferences are paid for by the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG). County Administrator Townsend stated that the broker from Shaw Hankins, Jonathan Hankins, stated that he may be able to contribute towards the Christmas luncheon. Chairman Glass stated that there was an increase in the Printing/Office Supplies line item. County Clerk Davidson stated that the only thing that she checks out for the Board of Commissioners would be pens and manila folders and she usually uses recycled folders unless it is official business. County Administrator Townsend stated that business cards are purchased through Vista Print. It cost around \$20.00 for 500 cards. He said that some Departments and Constitutional Officers choose companies that cost \$160.00 for business cards. Chairman Glass stated that they can do this because it comes out of their budget. He said for Department Heads they can control their spending but for Constitutional Officers it is their choice. County Administrator Townsend stated that he would look into the increase in Printing and Office Supplies for the Commissioners.

County Administrator Townsend went over the revenue projections for the 2020 budget. He stated that he has been cautious when inputting everything into his spreadsheet. He said that revenues came up to over 11 million dollars. He said that he has enough covered for the budget recommendations. He said that he is being cautious on the sales tax and the Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT). He said that the Insurance Premium roll back came in higher than budgeted. He said that he is being conservative with a 4 percent increase compared to what was actually received. County Administrator Townsend stated that over the years, he has tried to look at the trends so that is why he does the spreadsheets. He said that the TAVT has come in anywhere from \$78,000.00 to \$93,000.00. Chairman Glass stated that one month it came in at \$63,000.00. County Administrator Townsend stated that he was being cautious by projecting \$80,000.00. Commissioner Thrash inquired about the franchise tax for cable and asked if it was included in 911. County Administrator Townsend stated that this was a different revenue. He explained that this was strictly for Charter internet. He said that there has been a substantial increase in the 911 fees. He said that the revenues went from \$114,000.00 to \$200,000.00. County Administrator Townsend stated that the Probate fees have increased and those are actually trending higher. He said he put \$260,000.00 in the Probate budget instead of the actual collections of \$320,000.00 as a pre-cautious measure. County Administrator Townsend explained that Public Safety are fees received from the schools and those are put into the School Resource salaries which is actually lowering their budget. He said that they move it out when the revenues come into Public Safety and the expenses are shown on a separate line item so they can see the actual numbers. County Administrator Townsend stated that the Congregate Meals are based on trends. He stated that the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) is based on trends. He stated that his trends have been calculated over the last five years. He stated that he adjusts the revenues every month and tries to be cautious.

Chairman Glass stated that there is a broadband meeting on December 5th, at 10:00 a.m. at the Forsyth training center. He said if none of the board members can attend that maybe someone else such as Kathy Oxford, the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) can attend. Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that he may be able to attend, he may be just a little late due to having to teach at Gordon State College.

Chairman Glass shared the sale tax vendors that were on the list from Lamar County and said they can only submit 10 vendors to the State for review. He stated that the board needs to decide which 10 need to be selected for review.

County Administrator Townsend stated that the audit is out for bid and are due to the County by November 12th at 3:00 p.m. It has been advertised in the legal organ, with ACCG and on the website. He stated that auditors such as Mauldin and Jenkins are offering lunch and learn type trainings. Chairman Glass stated that this not only helps the County employees but it also helps them with their audit process.

Adjournment

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the workshop at approximately 12:00 p.m. 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