

Meeting Summary  
Workshop Meeting of the Lamar County Board of Commissioners  
12/12/2019  
1:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chairman Traylor, Commissioner Horton, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson. Commissioner Heiney was absent for the meeting.

**Barnesville-Lamar County Library**

The board heard comments from the Barnesville-Lamar County Library Manager Kelly Hughes and several library board members regarding their request for a two percent increase. The board received a letter from the Barnesville-Lamar County Board of Trustees Chairman Britt Lifsey regarding his support for the 2 percent increase to their budget as originally requested. He stated that the increase was not to offset reductions in the state budget. The original request reflects the addition of Catina Carter's insurance that was split between years, and an increase in the Teacher Retirement employer percentage (21.14%), Social Security and the 2% State approved COLA for 2020. The difference between the 2019 budget and the 2020 budget is \$7154.00.

**Old Jail Museum**

County Administrator Townsend addressed paying a part-time employee for the Old Jail Museum because Shanna English, who runs the Old Jail Museum, is wanting to scale back on her duties at the Old Jail Museum. Ms. English currently works at the Old Jail Museum for free. County Administrator Townsend stated that the total salary request including FICA and Medicare is \$7,837.00. Commissioner Thrash asked if the County had anyone to operate or maintain the Old Jail Museum. She said that everyone goes to Lenora Ginn with questions. Chairman Glass stated that they usually go to Ms. English or Tim Turner. Chairman Glass stated that without a person physically present at the Old Jail Museum they will not be able to gather any more records but they might be able to preserve what is already there. He said that Ms. English has built up the Old Jail Museum over a long period of time. Chairman Glass stated that there is no requirement for the County to maintain the operations of the Old Jail Museum and they aren't required to archive any of the things at the Old Jail Museum. County Administrator Townsend stated that in the future, the hotel motel tax will help to fund the Old Jail Museum. Chairman Glass pointed out that the hotel motel tax has to be used for tourism related things and if they don't use it for the Old Jail Museum, they would have to find something else to use it for. Commissioner Thrash asked if there were any other options for not hiring this person. Chairman Glass stated that they could let the Old Jail Museum sit there and try not to let it flood. County Administrator Townsend stated that Ms. English told him that they do have tours that come to the Old Jail Museum. He said that schools come and tour the Old Jail Museum. Vice-Chairman Traylor inquired about when the hotel/motel tax would be received. County Administrator Townsend and Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that there are two hotels in the County including the Country Court motel and the Barnesville motel. County Clerk Davidson stated that the County/Old Jail Museum was awarded a Historical Grant in the amount of \$750.00 and if they don't keep the Old Jail Museum in operation, then they run the risk of losing the Historical Grant. Commissioner Thrash asked if this was an annual grant and County Clerk Davidson stated that this was the first time they had been selected to apply for the Historical Grant. Chairman Glass stated that since the Grant had been awarded it wouldn't matter if the Old Jail Museum stayed in operation as long as they use the funds for the intended purpose. Chairman Glass said that there is a Lamar County Historical Society but they are struggling. He said that Ms. English has used their 501c3 membership for other Grant applications. He also said that Ms. English had asked him if the Lamar County Historical Society is dissolved does the Old Jail Museum need to take over the 501c3 membership or do they need to continue to operate under the County. He said that under the County's Employer Identification Number (EIN), they can't operate as a nonprofit. He said that he isn't sure that all of the granting authorities or companies would see it the same way because they are tax protected under the County's EIN and they don't have to have a 501c3 designation to be considered a tax-exempt organization. Commissioner Thrash stated that she is not in favor of paying someone \$7,000.00 a

year but she appreciated everything that Ms. English has done. Commissioner Horton asked County Administrator Townsend if he had an employee in the County that could maintain the Old Jail Museum on a part time basis. County Clerk Davidson reported that Ms. English plans to continue to run the Old Jail Museum for a long while but she doesn't want to do as much as she has previously been doing at the Old Jail Museum. Ms. English will never not work at the Old Jail Museum because this is her life. Commissioner Thrash asked if they could open the Old Jail Museum one time a day and then ask Ms. English to stay. Commissioner Thrash inquired if they had asked anyone in the County to step up and help run the Old Jail Museum. County Administrator Townsend stated that the person that Ms. English would like to see hired, as a part time employee, has been working with Ms. English and learning about the Old Jail Museum, for over a year, for free, but Ms. English would like her to be paid something for doing the job. Vice-Chairman Traylor suggested that they keep the Old Jail Museum open one time a week or twice a month and reduce the part-time salary request by half. County Administrator Townsend stated that he had reached out to Three Rivers Regional Commission regarding getting some help to run the Old Jail Museum but it would probably be next year before they could do anything. The board agreed to 14 hours for a part-time employee at \$3,918.50. Chairman Glass stated that when the hotel/motel tax is received this could offset the \$ 3,918.50. Vice-Chairman Traylor said that he likes this amount for the part time employee and said that he doesn't want to tell Ms. English how to run the Old Jail Museum.

County Administrator Townsend reported that with the Barnesville Lamar County Library and the Old Jail Museum increase in salaries, the budget is now \$11,209,567.00 which is lower than the budget that was advertised at \$11,212,887.00.

### **Probate Court**

Chairman Glass stated that County Administrator Townsend has been working on a wage salary study. He said that some of the salaries in the Clerk of Superior Court's Office is within the scale and some of the salaries are not. This is the same with the Probate Court salaries. County Administrator Townsend stated that they brought the Deputy Clerk's salary, Bill Hewitt, once he retires, down to \$13.00 an hour which is in line with the salary wage study. Chairman Glass stated that there is a 5 percent increase for employees that complete certifications and that Probate Judge Martin may need to work with her employees on receiving certifications which could lead to a 5 percent increase in their wages. County Administrator Townsend stated that he is working on mid-year raises based on the wage salary study. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that if they are going to implement this, then they will need to do it for every department. Chairman Glass stated that County Administrator Townsend had included all departments in the wage salary study. Chairman Glass stated that this could be implemented mid-year 2020 or early 2021. Chairman Glass stated that Probate Judge Martin had worked hard to balance her budget but said that for years the Clerk of Superior Court had moved money out of another line item within his budget into the salary line item so he could increase his employee's wages. Commissioner Horton suggested that they increase the millage rate for salary increases like the Lamar County School System did this past year. Chairman Glass stated that this is one option that they discuss in the planning session for 2020 and possibly implement it in 2021. County Administrator Townsend stated that in 2021 the Constitutional Officers will receive a 10 percent increase in salary. Chairman Glass pointed out that if they don't get re-elected then the increase is 5 percent.

### **Milner Library**

Commissioner Thrash inquired about funding from Lamar County Board of Commissioners. Chairman Glass stated that the board had decided not to give the Milner Library any funds.

### **Building and Zoning**

The board heard comments from Building and Zoning Director Buice regarding the minimum lot size for A/R zoning. She stated that there had been a lot of discussion about the A/R lot sizes due to the subdivision that will be built on Five Points Road. She said that large land owners like to stay large land owners until they are ready to split up their own land and then they want less restrictions. She said that the surrounding counties

have a minimum 3-acre requirement in place except for Upson County. She said that in Lamar County over half of the total parcels are 2.99 acres and up. She said that this surprised her because she thought it would be a larger percentage. She said that half of the land in Lamar County is 1 to 2 acres or below. She said that if developers are going to put in water lines, in a road, then they want 1 acre lots. Chairman Glass said that if they change the minimum requirement for A/R to 3 acres then it might not change the developer's actions and they may need to apply for re-zoning. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that she was concerned with the 1 acre minimum allowed in Agriculture zoning. She said in the definition of Agriculture zoning, if you have a farming type of operation, you are required to have 3 acres. Chairman Glass requested that Building and Zoning Director Buice work with Attorney Mayfield to change the minimum lot size requirement in A/R to 3 acres. Chairman Glass inquired about the re-zoning that former Building and Zoning Director Gunter had done. He changed them over to R1, R2 or R3 based on the house size. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that from what she has seen, he did capture everything that was Agriculture Residential zoning or A/R that was 1 to 2 acres and he turned it into R1 or R2 on the zoning map. In the code, for development standards for A/R, you are still allowed to go down to 1 acre in A/R instead of changing it to 2 or 3 acres in A/R. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that by changing it to a 3 acre minimum requirement, if a developer wants to develop 50 acres that is A/R and they want 1 acre lots, then they will have to go through a re-zoning and a subdivision approval. Building and Zoning Director Buice gave an example where the current zoning ordinance is a minimum of 1 acre with a half-acre lot, and if it has been a half acre lot for 50 years, she said that you can still develop it if it meets all of the other requirements. She said that you can't take someone's use of their property. If there is an existing 1.5-acre lot that is currently zoned A/R, they can still build on it. She said that it really comes into play when you are splitting land. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that in her 20 years she once saw where if you have a legal non-conforming lot, which would be a quarter of an acre or a half acre, and buy, purchase or own a half-acre beside it, you now have to legally join that acreage together. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that she has never enforced this because then you are encroaching into people's property rights. She said that this may help with subdivisions because you have one owner that is being taxed as one large parcel. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that she would have to check with Attorney Mayfield about this. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that she has an issue now, where the lots have been with one owner and now, they want to open up a private road so that they can develop the land. The road is dirt and they want to split it into 1 acre lots and they want the County to take over the road and maintain it. This would be an extension of Coffey Road. Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that in the code, if you want to develop a dirt road you have to pave the dirt road. The code also says that if you are on an existing paved County road then you have to re-surface the County road up to the entire frontage of the subdivision. She said that Public Works Director Rigdon is not happy with the 1.5-inch requirement in the development ordinance.

Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that every week someone from Henry County is coming into the office to get a building permit. Commissioner Thrash agreed that Henry County is moving into Lamar, Pike and Upson County. Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that David Aldridge, who does large lot subdivisions, has built at least three subdivisions and Bowen Jones does smaller subdivisions. She said that she has calls from developers every week because they are looking at Lamar County.

County Clerk Davidson stated that Mike O'Quinn with ACCG visited her office in regards to an online system that they are looking at for loggers. ACCG is working with engineers from the State and a new software system where loggers can complete an application online. Everything will be connected with their logging application, their bond, and the location of where they are logging. Commissioner Thrash stated that this is another way of taking away home rule. County Clerk Davidson stated that Mr. O'Quinn was asking if Lamar County used a GIS system and it was determined that Lamar County doesn't utilize a GIS system. The online system will be implemented in 2021 with a two-phase implementation. Commissioner Thrash stated that this allows them to circumvent the counties. County Clerk Davidson stated that they would work with the Road Superintendents in the Counties to determine approval and they would also know at all times where they would be logging. Mr. O'Quinn said that Counties are upset about the weight limits and the fact that the

loggers are tearing up the roads. Chairman Glass stated that they are interested in this type of system and said that the board would like to hear more about this.

### **Regular Meeting Discussion**

- A. The board reviewed the subdivision application for Bowen Jones. Commissioner Thrash stated that this will be a nice subdivision and it will contribute to the tax digest for Lamar County. The lots will be sodded and the setback requirement is 100 feet but he is going to do 125 feet. All of the utilities will be underground. He will be concreting the driveways and leaving tree buffers. There will be 11 houses. Commissioner Thrash stated that the complaints that she has been receiving, from the homeowners in this area, is that they want the board to require 5 acre lots. Commissioner Thrash stated that they can't do that because this is not what the current zoning requires. Currently there is a minimum requirement of a 1-acre lot. Commissioner Thrash stated that she understands people are complaining and she understands their passion but said that you can't put gates up at the County line that says you can't come to Lamar County and build. Commissioner Thrash said that the only thing that the board can do is to watch their planning and maintain the zoning. She reported that the houses will be anywhere from 1800 to 2200 square feet. Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that they need to consider increasing house sizes as well as lot sizes. Chairman Glass stated that he would pull together some information about tax revenues generated by the value of the house, related to square footage, considering the school taxes too. He said that residential properties in general do not cover the cost of their services but increasing the value of the house covers their services.
- B. The board reviewed two sets of minutes in November.
- C. The board reviewed two Proclamations.
  - a) 2020 Census Complete County Committee
  - b) Literacy Month in Lamar County, the LG4A Reading Grant with the school where they are trying to improve literacy across the State.

Commissioner Thrash stated that she would like to add a Proclamation for Mayor Joe Bostick who is retiring from the City of Milner. She stated that a representative from the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) will present the proclamation.

- D. The board discussed adding a presentation where Joe Dan Thompson from ACCG will present the County with a check for a Worker's Compensation Safety Refund.
- E. The board discussed and reviewed adding the subdivision application for Bowen Jones.
- F. The board reviewed Beer and Wine Licenses for Lamar County.

Horton's Rendezvous.

- a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
- b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

Honeywood Gardens.

- a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
- b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

Deer Trail Country Club.

- a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00

Sky Seven LLC-DBA T.J Outfitters.

- a) Malt Beverage Package-\$500.00
- b) Wine Package-\$500.00

VFW Post 6542.

- a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
- b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

C&B 2015, Inc

- a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00

b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

County Clerk Davidson reported that someone from the VFW Post 6542 would like to come to the meeting and make public comments about selling liquor at their establishment. Chairman Glass pointed out that liquor is not sold in the County. County Clerk Davidson reported that C&B had not paid their taxes but said that they were scheduled to pay these prior to her sending the agenda to the paper on Friday; by noon. County Clerk Davidson stated that there was an issue with the Tax ID number and the name for Horton's Rendevous. Since, Administrative Assistant Martha Windle handles the Beer and Wine Licenses Commissioner Thrash suggested that Commissioner Horton defer to her for clarification. County Clerk Davidson also reported that Mama's Kitchen did not renew their beer and wine application for 2020.

G. The board reviewed several board appointments.

- a) County Re-Appointment of Irvin Trice-Non-Public Member of the Council of the Three Rivers Regional Commission
- b) County Re-Appointment of Bennie Horton to the Three Rivers Regional Commission
- c) County Re-Appointment of Robert Heiney to the E911 Committee
- d) Re-Appointment of Andy Bush to the Tax Assessors Board
- e) Re-Appointment of Monica Walters to the Elections Board
- f) Re-Appointment of Ryran Traylor to the Lamar County Health Board
- g) Re-Appointment of Ryran Traylor to the Lamar County Solid Waste Authority Board

The board removed Kathy Oxford from the board appointment to the Southern Crescent Board. She replaced Missy Kendrick in 2015 but she actually is serving on the Foundation Board for Southern Crescent. Erin Cook serves on the Southern Crescent Board for Lamar County and her term doesn't expire until 2021.

H. The board added and reviewed the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement renewal that will need to be signed by Elected Officials, Managers, Administrators and Clerk's in the County. Chairman Glass explained that this qualifies the County for receiving assistance from FEMA and GEMA in the case of a dangerous storm, such as tornados and winter storms.

I. The board added and reviewed Resolution 2019-15 Qualifying Fees.

J. The board added and reviewed Resolution 2019-16 Budget Approval.

K. The board added and reviewed Resolution 2019-17 Tax Assessors Board-Andy Bush

L. The board added and reviewed Resolution 2019-18 Appointment of County Legislative Coordinator (CLC) -Nancy Thrash.

M. The board added and reviewed Resolution 2019-19 opposing the support of Locally-Established Building Design Standards for Residential Dwellings. He said that the bill was defeated last year and they are requesting that Counties approve this resolution. Chairman Glass stated that he would like to get this to ACCG before the legislative session begins in 2020.

N. The board reviewed a Road Striping report presented by County Administrator Townsend. He said that he had spoken to Public Works Director Rigdon and the total miles for roads that need to be striped is 65.27. The last time that the striping was done was by C.W. Matthews and striping was done for \$3000.00 per mile. County Administrator Townsend reported that the total cost for striping is \$95,810.00 and after all the projects are complete there should be about \$93,000.00 left at the end. County Administrator Townsend said that the revenues for SPLOST are higher than the budgeted amount but the projection for 4 years down the road may be different. He said currently the County is \$538,689.11 ahead of what was projected. He said that if they break it down by percentages then there is \$307,000.00 in SPLOST. Chairman Glass stated that this money is in the bank, but there is still a chance that things could tank and at the end of the six year time frame, for the current SPLOST, if all \$9.33 million is not collected, he would hate to have to spend all of the \$307,000.00 now not knowing what could happen over the next

four years. If they stay level over the next 4 years this would be okay. He said that the only other source to make it up if they spend it all and need it, is out of the General Fund and a millage rate increase. Chairman Glass stated that all of the projects still have to be completed. Chairman Glass stated that when they started SPLOST III in 2017, they paid one percent to the Town of Aldora first, then they paid the next four percent to the City of Milner and now the County splits the collections with the City of Barnesville. Lamar County gets 61 percent of the collections each month. Chairman Glass stated that once they collect the \$9.33 million then they are obligated to splitting it four ways between each municipality each month. This would be 1 percent to the Town of Aldora, 4 percent to the City of Milner, and the rest to the City of Barnesville and Lamar County. Chairman Glass stated that only \$307,000.00 is really Lamar County's. Chairman Glass stated that the collections are still up even after the new Lamar County High School has been built. The continued construction may be a factor in the continued increase in revenues. Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that his last meeting, with the SDS/LOST task force, was this past week and he truly believes that taxes are based on site delivery or the location of the product is what is driving up some of the revenue. He said that revenues could be coming from those construction companies that are not utilizing Bankston Lumber or Balamo Building Supply and are instead using Home Depot from McDonough, Georgia in Henry County.

Vice-Chairman Traylor inquired about the next step for T-SPLOST and asked when could they begin collecting revenues. Chairman Glass replied that the next primary is in May. Chairman Glass stated that this is a discussion for the planning session in January of 2020. Commissioner Thrash pointed out that the T-SPLOST would have to be sold to the citizens of Lamar County. Chairman Glass stated that the T-SPLOST would also have to be split between the municipalities and it is usually a ten-year time frame. He said that Upson County bonded theirs so that they could borrow money against future revenues and they are taking on a lot of projects.

### **Administrator's report.**

County Administrator reported that the SPLOST III Fund account has a balance of \$1,268,913.15. He said that the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) has been paid off and currently the General Fund account has a balance of \$1,722,289.59 without the TAN. County Clerk Davidson stated that it could hit \$ 2 million by the end of the month. County Administrator Townsend reported that the cash flow is \$428,000.00 above what was forecasted and the County is looking really good financially. He said that the Departments and the Constitutional Officers have done a good job managing their budgets. Vice-Chairman Traylor suggested that they be thanked at the annual Christmas Party on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Commissioner Thrash gave kudos to Chairman Glass because he works with the Administrative Staff regarding the cash flow and she appreciates that. Chairman Glass stated that he believes that the staff recognizes the boards interest in it and they jointly are the heartbeat of the County to deliver services and meet the needs of the citizens. He said that they are doing all of the work. Commissioner Thrash stated that they have a great staff in place in this entire County and she is glad to be a part of it.

Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that it is also a mindset because when you look at businesses and companies, when they have changes from top down, it takes on the resemblance of what is important from top down. He said that they are lucky to have someone like Chairman Glass that focuses on it and County Clerk Davidson that is focusing on ordering IPADS so that they don't have to use the paper board meeting packages and said that he really thinks that is where it starts. Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that he was talking to someone recently who couldn't believe that he didn't apply for the County Administrator's job but he said that he can truly tell you that they have the right person in that role. He said that in this particular time, where we are, they didn't need the most touchy-feely person, they needed the person who could get them to the next level. He was so afraid that when County Administrator Townsend got into this role, that he would have to push this over to someone else. Vice-Chairman Traylor said that County Administrator

Townsend is keeping it in his wheel house and is continuing to train and take on other responsibilities. Vice-Chairman Traylor said he thinks that this is as big as focusing on the finances.

County Administrator Townsend reported that Maintenance Director Beverly is going around to the other Fire Stations and getting them cleaned up and painted. They are installing a split unit at the Redbone Fire Station. He said that Johnstonville Fire Station is the next one on the list.

### **Round Table**

Vice-Chairman Traylor stated that in the SDS/LOST taskforce meeting held this past Monday, they all were stressed and all of the staff from Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) put in so much time, including the Councilmen and the Commissioners. He said like cooking a turkey or a pie they had cooked or dealt with the outside but they had not cooked the middle and they were stuck in the middle. He said that around 1:45 p.m. they got it all resolved and the documents are being finalized. He said they struggled with words such as “relevant” versus “and” and “shall” versus “should”. He said that they debated those two words for about an hour and in the end, everyone will be proud of their work.

Commissioner Thrash reported that Vice-Chairman Traylor is reading the Christmas Story at the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony in the City of Milner.

Chairman Glass stated that he attended the Rural Broadband workshop last week and said that it was boring. He said that it was a four-hour workshop. He said that there wasn't much new. The Fed's have allocated money for broadband grants but the people that have applied for them have not heard anything. He said that he heard the application process was difficult. He said that there are limits, if they do get the grant, with the time they spend on it and then implement it. He said all of this has been heard by the USDA. They are trying to get the rules changed so that you have 24 months instead of 12 months to get this implemented. This was the first year and a learning experience and changes are coming. They aren't sure that this is accomplishing what they were hoping for it to do, which is to get broadband out into the rural areas. He said that they have learned that there are more efficient ways to do it and those changes are coming in the next 18 months. He said that he is concerned that if they adopt the Broadband Resolution that all infrastructure related to broadband will compromise the County's right of way. He said one of the big drawbacks, even if you are going with a local wireless network, is you have to have fiber. Fiber is the key to everything. He said that the thought pattern was to go from the current provider to where that delivery is and they still have no support. He said that there is no need to put 5G network in Redbone if there is nowhere to connect it. He said that this may be where one of the changes is coming; looking for those middle providers. He said that Drew Ferguson spoke about it at the Development Forum they had two days before over at Northridge Church in Thomaston, Georgia. He is working on some legislation to bring in private funding to help incentivize some low interest loans and some tax incentives to get the providers interested instead of having the communities ask for it. He said that communities are not experts in this. He said that those that did submit the applications spent from \$17,000.00 to \$35,000.00 on consulting fees and this is not refundable through the Grant. He said a lot of places don't have this kind of money to take a chance on it.

County Clerk Davidson reported that there would be a Public Hearing for the Hazard Mitigation Plan on Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Glass reported that he would be attending the Army/Navy game and he would be leaving on Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and returning on Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the workshop at 3:10 p.m. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

\_\_\_\_\_

Charles Glass, Chairman

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Ryan Traylor, Vice-Chairman

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Bennie Horton, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_

Robert Heiney, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

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