

Workshop Meeting of the Lamar County Board of Commissioners
March 12th, 2020
12:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. on March 12th, 2020. Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Horton, Commissioner Heiney, Commissioner Traylor, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson.

Approval of the Agenda

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to add Public Usage of the Courthouse to the agenda. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Usage of the Courthouse

Sheriff White was present for the meeting discussion regarding the public use of the Courthouse. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that one of her constituents had contacted her about the Republican Party using the Courthouse this past Saturday. She said that she had responded back to them and told them that in the past the Republican Party and the Democratic Party had always used the Courthouse and said that the question was raised if other people can use the Courthouse for public events. Sheriff White stated that he had spoken to an Attorney who said that they were not obligated to open the Courthouse beyond the scope of the normal business hours. He said that in other counties the Sheriffs do not allow the Courthouse to be used outside of normal business hours. He said if they do allow them to use their Courthouse there is a process. He said that it must be signed off by two Commissioners plus all the Judges and the Sheriff. Sheriff White said that this would come out of his budget because when the Courthouse is open there is a deputy there when it is open. He said that the deputies are there to make sure that people aren't going into offices that they shouldn't be going into. Commissioner Horton inquired about other people using the Courthouse in the past. Sheriff White said that to his knowledge no one had else had used the Courthouse during normal business hours. County Clerk Davidson stated that in the Code of Law for Lamar County Section 2-5-6 states that the Courthouse can be open for public use so long as the Board of Commissioners approves the use of the Courthouse in writing. Commissioner Thrash stated that she didn't have a problem with it as long as they know that someone is using the Courthouse. Chairman Glass stated that paying overtime is one of his concerns and the cost to the taxpayers to do this. Chairman Glass inquired about charging a fee for the use of the Courthouse. Commissioner Traylor suggested that they table this issue until they can get further information but stated that he agreed with charging a fee. Commissioner Traylor stated that locally there are a lot of organizations that need a place to meet but every weekend could get expensive. Commissioner Horton disagreed and stated that the Courthouse should stay the Courthouse and said that there a lot of other places that people can meet. He said that if they do it for one then you have to do it for all and then you could have problems and conflicts. Commissioner Thrash said that a Courthouse is a place where criminal records and legal documents are filed and if someone was wanting to sabotage something this would be an open venue for them to do it. The board agreed to table the decision to open the Courthouse for public use until they have more information.

Recess for Lunch

The board recessed for lunch at approximately 12:10 a.m.

Resume the Workshop Meeting

The board returned from lunch at approximately 12:33 and resumed the Workshop meeting.

Ag Arena Agreement

Recreation Director Lowe stated that she, Vice-Chair Thrash and Commissioner Horton had met with Alisa Ranew and the Saddle Club about some type of an agreement. Vice-Chair Thrash explained that people were using the Ag Arena without anyone knowing. Recreation Director Lowe said that she had researched how other County Ag Arena's operate and created an Ag Arena Agreement with guidelines to follow. She said that they would leave the Ag Arena open for personal riding use except for the lights. She said if they need the lights, they will need to pay a deposit. She said that any event will need to have liability insurance added to the agreement. Chairman Glass asked how the Ag Arena Agreement relates to the ball fields. Recreation Director Lowe stated that some time ago she had drawn up a ball field agreement. She said that she would like to increase the fees slightly in the Ag Arena Agreement so they could have a staff member on-site. She said there was an issue with the toilets last week, but they got this fixed. She said that it is easier to schedule someone to be onsite rather than having someone called in, on a Sunday at 2:30 p.m., and then she has to try and get someone to go out there. Recreation Director Lowe said that they clean the bathrooms and they keep them stocked. She said that there are things that need to be done at the Ag Arena to spruce the place up and said that there is some cleaning that needs to happen. Commissioner Horton inquired about someone renting the Ag Arena until 10:00 p.m. and when they leave, they don't turn the lights off. He wanted to know if there was someone who goes out and checks to be sure the lights are off and if it is locked up. Recreation Director Lowe stated that they did not, and it was up to whoever was hosting the event to make sure the lights were turned out and everything is locked up. Recreation Director Lowe stated that they had installed locks with combination codes at the Ag Arena. Ms. Ranew stated that she had an issue with the cost of using the Ag Arena. She said that currently the fee is \$150.00 to rent out the Arena but the surrounding counties' fees are higher because they pay someone to drive a tractor and scrape their arena. They also have someone that preps the arena before and after it is used. Ms. Ranew stated that in 2010 she worked for the County and managed the Ag Arena. She said that most counties charge around \$10.00 to use the lights. Ms. Ranew disagreed with charging more for those coming out of County because they already have to pay for gas to come to the Ag Arena in Lamar County. She said if they do this, then they will not want to come. Recreation Director Lowe stated that it was the non-County residents that were leaving the lights on and that is why she had this fee in the agreement. Recreation Director Lowe stated that if the other counties are charging \$150.00 to ride and Lamar is only charging \$20.00 for a light fee then this is why they would rather come to Lamar County and pay the \$20.00 light fee instead of the \$150.00 to ride. Commissioner Traylor inquired about the collection of the fees. Recreation Director Lowe replied that the Recreation Department would collect the fees and she is proposing that they come to the Recreation Department before 3:00 p.m. Ms. Ranew stated that during the summer months people want to come and ride their horses at night because of the heat.

Ms. Burnette stated that it would be hard for someone, that works during the day, to come pay the fee. She said that the cut off time for the Jackpots is 10:00 p.m. but they are usually over by then but all-day horse shows, which involves pleasure horses, have lasted until 3:00 a.m. She said with the different shows you don't know how long they will run. Ms. Burnette said that the Flint River Saddle Club uses the Lamar County Ag Arena as well as some of their sister Saddle Clubs and they book a year in advance.

Recreation Director Lowe said that the light fee in the baseball agreement is \$25.00 per field. The light fee in the Ag Arena agreement is cheaper than what is in the baseball agreement. Ms. Ranew stated that she just doesn't want to discriminate against out of County riders and charge them more than the \$10.00 light fee. Ms. Ranew stated that she wants out of County riders to come to use the Ag Arena because it brings money to the local businesses.

Vice-Chair Thrash stated that her biggest concern is for the liability of the County and knowing who is over there. Chairman Glass asked if the County Attorney had reviewed the contract. Recreation Director Lowe stated that he had not because she needed to know from the Board of Commissioners if they wanted to leave the Ag Arena open for personal riding use. Chairman Glass stated that if the County had a park-like Summers Field, then it would be open for personal use because the park at Summer Fields is available for everyone to use. Chairman Glass stated that the facility is there for anyone to use but they need to lock it up if they want to use it. Chairman Glass inquired about the liability for the spectators at the Ag Arena and requested that County Clerk Davidson speak to ACCG about this. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that she had spoken to ACCG about this and the County's blanket policy would protect anyone that is hurt on County property. County Clerk Davidson stated that when vendors, such as wrestling, are holding events on County property they submit a Certificate of Liability and their insurance carrier covers this. Commissioner Horton suggested that they have a pay online system for the riders to pay the fees. Recreation Director Lowe stated that they do have the ability to do this and they can email them a confirmation. Recreation Director Lowe reported that there is a three-dollar charge at the bank to run a credit card payment. Chairman Glass explained that the charges, in the Ag Arena Agreement, for events would be \$ 75.00 for 1-6 hours, and \$150.00 for 6 hours and over. The charge for an onsite staff member will be \$15.00 an hour and then \$5.00 an hour for an on-call person. Recreation Director Lowe explained that they don't pay over-time but the employee does take comp time. Chairman Glass pointed out that this would be time and a half.

Vice-Chair Thrash stated that she would like to update the announcement booth and the fencing. She said that she would like to see the County put some money into the Ag Arena. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that the 4-H Club could also use the Ag Arena. She said that the goal is not to make money but to have something nice that the community can use but to also cover the County expenses. Recreation Director Lowe stated that the Recreation Department could pressure wash, fix the fences, and bring in some sand. Chairman Glass stated that if this cost more than what is in her maintenance line item, in the Recreation budget, then maybe they could come up with a project to bring back to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Ms. Ranew suggested that they have an event fund that could cover expenses. Ms. Burnette said that in the summertime she goes up to the Ag Arena and spends up to three days watering the arena because the sprinkler system is broken. Ms. Burnette said that she has had to take her personal sprinklers to the Ag Arena and sometimes she has spent all day watering; especially if it is dry. Commissioner Heiney inquired

about how much more money they could get for the events if it was covered. Ms. Ranew said that some of the covered arenas charge as much as \$650.00 but they provide a tractor. Ms. Burnette said that people like to show in different arenas because they don't want their horse to get used to one arena. Ms. Ranew said that the closest covered arena is in Pike County, but they don't host events. Commissioner Heiney inquired about the number of events that are being held. Ms. Burnette said that currently, it is just their Saddle Club but that in other places there are shows on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. She said that right now they are using the Kiwanis Fair Grounds and a covered arena in another County. Ms. Ranew stated that if they had a covered arena in Lamar County, they could get about 15 to 20 shows per year. Recreation Director Lowe stated that Pike County has a covered arena and their fee for events is \$450.00. Chairman Glass stated that this cost could include a tractor and that comparisons of cost need to be apples to apples. Commissioner Heiney inquired about how much is being generated at the Ag Arena. Chairman Glass responded zero dollars are being generated and that is why they are putting a policy into place. Commissioner Heiney inquired about the RV hookups. Ms. Ranew stated that people pull in horse trailers and live in quarter campers. Commissioner Heiney asked about the people that are using the RV hookups that don't have horses. Ms. Ranew said that in the beginning they were supposed to pay \$10.00 to \$20.00, this was a long while back, and she said that it was supposed to be paid through Bruce Akins. Chairman Glass noted that this was when the Ag Authority was in operation. Commissioner Heiney asked if there was electrical and sewer hookup. Commissioner Traylor replied that it was just electrical hookup. Commissioner Heiney asked if anyone can pull in and hook up their RV without paying anyone. Ms. Ranew said that they could and said that they probably should be locked as well. Commissioner Heiney stated that he understood that the charge is \$20.00 for an RV Hookup and said that he understands that the intent is for the people that are bringing horses to the arena but stated that if they go to a campground it will cost \$39.00. Commissioner Traylor stated that those campgrounds that charge \$35.00 to \$45.00 have sewer hookup. Commissioner Heiney stated that you wouldn't want to have people hooked up that aren't involved in the horse events. Recreation Director Lowe stated that they may start having other events where people may start bringing in their RV campers. Commissioner Heiney stated that if they cover the Ag Arena and then charge \$650.00 per event and they have 20 events a year that would generate \$13,000.00 worth of revenue. Ms. Ranew said that if they have 2-day events then you can charge double. Chairman Glass stated that the board would vote on the Ag Arena Agreement at the March Regular business meeting and they should specify an effective date to start charging the fees.

WestCare Georgia Guidance Center

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to add WestCare Ga. Guidance Center to the agenda. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Traylor reported that this is a drug and alcohol facility for men ages 18-26. He said that there are 20-25 beds. He said that they will live there 24-7. Chairman Glass reported that Phase I is for inpatients. He said that Phase II is when and if you complete the Phase I portion then you will be able to come back for counseling as an outpatient. Commissioner Traylor stated that the concern is that it is a free will facility and there could be concerns from the community regarding this. Chairman Glass stated that the facility prior to this was an in-patient facility. Chairman Glass stated that Mr. Cox, the owner, stated that they are working with the City of Barnesville and they hope to be in operation by next month.

Ordinance to Amend the Building Codes

Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that an Ordinance to amend the building codes started with adding fire codes to reflect the State codes. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that Section 2-5-2 is the State mandated codes. She said that the State has mandated codes and they have permissive codes. She said that she is not changing the permissive codes just the standard codes. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that this was brought to the board a few years ago and it got bogged down with the intrusiveness of the property maintenance codes. She said that what is being brought to the boards' attention now is only building and fire codes, life safety, swimming pools, accessibility, and all the things that the State says you must include. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that it doesn't matter if the Board of Commissioners approves it or not. She said that if the Board of Commissioners wants to enforce these rules the Board of Commissioners need to adopt it otherwise all of the construction must follow these rules. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that when researching these codes she saw that the Code of Law for the County shows that in Section 2-5-2, which is the technical codes, and in Section 2-5-3, which is the administration codes and enforcement of the codes, for some reason it states that the County will adopt the codes except for 108.1 thru 108.3. She says these sections are the ones that go over permits, inspections, fees, and enforcements which are the exact things that need to be adopted. She said that when she did the re-write she left out this exception. Building and Zoning Director Buice said it would also do away with the appeals and the R code section for permit fees found in Chapter I of the ICC. She said that in the current code of Article 3 Section 2-55-5, which is ultra-low-flow plumbing fixtures, this is a stand-alone exception. She said that this needs to be cleaned up. Chairman Glass said that this was before the State Standards were cleaned up. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that for Lamar County's standards it muddies things.

Right of Way Application for Ryan Davies

Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that Ryan Davies would like to bore under Forsyth-Yatesville Road and Install a 6' sleeve to run a 4" water main to be pumped from the pond to the tree farm. Building and Zoning Director Buice explained that Mr. Davies wants to supply water from his pond to his trees. Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that Public Works Director Rigdon had given his approval for him to do this.

Increase in Lot Sizes

Vice-Chair Thrash stated that she has had a lot of people in the community who have concerns about people coming in and building 900 square foot homes on half-acre or quarter-acre lots and people are wanting the minimum to be 5 acre lots that they build on. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that she didn't know if they could legally do this. Chairman Glass stated that there is no basis for this and wondered how you could justify it. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that the comments that she is receiving are that Lamar County is turning into Henry County. Chairman Glass suggested that they defer to the Land Use Plan and the Lamar County Comprehensive Plan. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that if you have water then you can build on a one-acre lot. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that she is putting so much emphasis on this because of what happened in Henry County. She said that if they have water, they can build on one acre of land which means you can have a

house, house, house, and house. Commissioner Traylor said that his subdivision is a one-acre lot with a minimum 2500 square foot home. Chairman Glass stated that public feedback and participation is needed. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that the contractor comes in and divides the property into 5 to 20 acre lots. So, a particular citizen bought a seven-acre plot, and now he wants to subdivide the plot and make three acres so that his daughter can build a house. The citizens around that area are calling her to complain. She said that she sympathizes with them. He told them that he was selling a minimum of 5 acres and a maximum of 20 acres and this is why they bought property here. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission is saying that this person can do this and it is not fair to the surrounding homeowners. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that the person that is wanting to divide their seven acres has just as much right to get the full use of their land as the person next door. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that then you have the person who bought 10 acres because they didn't want subdivisions around them. Commissioner Traylor suggested that they get some data from the Board of Elections Supervisor Reid. Chairman Glass suggested that they set up a Town Hall meeting in each district. The board discussed and agreed that setting up Town Hall meetings for each district in Lamar County and having the citizens come and give their feelings about the size of the lot was a good idea. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that they need to discuss the setback from the roads and said that there are several things in the zoning Ordinance and the development regulations that would help meet the goal of Lamar County. Chairman Glass stated that they could have a bulletized list of changes that could make an impact. Commissioner Traylor stated that Pike and Monroe County had done a good job of controlling their zoning and suggested that they recruit some assistance from them. Chairman Glass explained that the Comprehensive Plan can be updated without waiting ten years to do it.

Minor Subdivision App # 2020-01 by Chadwick Parsons

Building and Zoning Director Buice stated that the development regulations in Lamar County states that if you are a lot of record on the day that the development Ordinance is approved administratively without board approval. This particular survey was signed off in February of 2018 and the Development Ordinance was approved in November of 2017. If they had taken the plat to former Building and Zoning Director Gunter just three months earlier, this type of split could have been split one more time before coming to anyone. She emphasized that every single lot could have been split before coming to anyone. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that there is nothing in the Development Ordinance to keep the board from approving this except that it doesn't fit in the area. Chairman Glass stated that the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Plan is what you use for justification that it is not appropriate for this region of the County. Planning and Zoning Director Buice says that it does state large lot subdivisions but it doesn't define 1 to 3 acres or 5 to 7 acres. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that the developer put the minimum requirement of 5 acres so he wouldn't have to go through the zoning process. Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that she had spoken to the developers about this and they have agreed to put this minimum requirement on the survey when they are selling it and that these lots are not supposed to be split. She said that if someone challenges this, she doesn't know if they can uphold this decision. Chairman Glass stated he bought his land in 1982 and there was a stipulation that it not be divided any further. He said that it started as 40 acres originally. Planning and Zoning Director Buice used Needleleaf Subdivision as an example and said that if someone had more than 3 acres and they wanted to split

their 3 acres it wouldn't be no you can't do that it would be that they have to apply to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Planning and Zoning Director Buice stated that she believes that people are really harsh on the Board of Commissioners when they see that it has to be approved and if the intent doesn't fit within the area then the Board of Commissioners are within their rights to say no.

Regular Business Meeting Discussion

The board reviewed the following:

- 1) The board discussed having the new pastor at the Milner Baptist Church give the invocation.
- 2) The board discussed Resolution Application 2020-01 by Emily Hutto. The property for Ms. Hutto is located at 536 Hwy 18 W. Barnesville, Ga. in Land Lot 41 of the 7th Land District. Building and Zoning Director Buice said that Ms. Hutto would like to be allowed to run a beauty salon in an existing home.
- 3) Minor Subdivision App # 2020-01 by Chadwick Parsons requests to subdivide 7.537 acres into one 4.037-acre tract and one 3.5 acres. The property is located at 270 McKenzie Road, Milner, Ga. Chairman Glass stated that as a board they could deny that this application doesn't support the vision of the area. Chairman Glass stated that they have to provide a letter of denial within a certain time frame. He stated that he would get with Attorney Mayfield about this. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that they are also requesting a Flag Lot which means that the parcel lies at the end of a long driveway and it looks like an easement.
- 4) The board reviewed two sets of minutes from February.
 - a. Workshop Meeting-February 12th, 2020
 - b. Regular Business Meeting-February 18th, 2020
- 5) The board reviewed two Proclamations.
 - a. National Donate Life
 - b. National Crime Victim's Rights Week
- 6) The board heard that the 4-H is going to come dressed as Zombies for the National Kick Butts Week which is March 18th, 2020. They will have handouts for the board and the citizens.
- 7) The board reviewed the Three Rivers Regional Transit System Agreement. The agreement is for the transportation buses and the contract amount of \$5,250.00 is the same as last year.
- 8) The board reviewed a Georgia County Internship Program Grant Agreement that was awarded to the County for the purpose of creating a Policy and Procedure Manual for the Recreation Department.
- 9) The board heard from County Administrator Townsend that there were no bids for the Road Striping. The board heard from County Administrator Townsend that C.W. Matthews was the low bid for the Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) and that they could also do an addendum with C.W. Matthews for the Road Striping. C.W. Matthews is currently working on the price. The quote that C.W. Matthews submitted was \$954,301.00.
- 10) The board reviewed a Lease Purchase Agreement with BB&T and the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) for the purchase of vehicles and equipment that was approved at the February Regular Business meeting.

- 11) The board heard an Administrator's Report. The Health Department quote from Central Georgia Heating and Cooling, Inc. to install a Mitsubishi 9000 BTU split system plus install a Honeywell zoning on air handle # 1, # 2, # 3, and # 4 is for a cost of \$7,500.00 and is within the County Administrator's approval level.
- 12) The board heard from Chief Matthews that the Fire Department needs a new set of Jaws for Life because the current set dates back to the 1990s and is no longer usable. They can't get the necessary parts to fix them. The Holatro Rescue tools on fire engine 6 which are stationed at Parker Branch were made in 1999. Chief Matthews said that the set of tools broke last Friday while checking off the engine and they need replacing them. Chief Matthews stated that he has been aware of these issues and they have tried to make them last as long as they could. They received a quote from Georgia Fire and Rescue Supply for \$17,999.00.
- 13) The board heard that Vice-Chair Thrash would like to set up a training with the Fire Department for the Commissioners.
- 14) County Administrator Townsend reported that Chief Matthews is conducting Fire Inspections in the County and has recommended that both the Senior Center and the Fire Department replace the vent hoods on their stove for a cost of \$2,200.00 each. Chief Matthews reported that there have been several violations to date, and they do inspect restaurants, daycares, gas stations, commercial and apartment buildings in the County, and the City of Milner.
- 15) The County Administrator reported that the Public Works Department has accumulated \$154,855.00 worth of road damage during the heavy rains and this has been submitted to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) for reimbursement.
- 16) The County Administrator reported that a part of Johnstonville Road will be shut down in order to install a new pipe. The pipe has been ordered and should come in within the next 7 to 11 days.
- 17) Commissioner Horton reported on broadband and stated that the Three Rivers Regional Commission Taskforce committee has determined that Lamar County is ahead of the other Counties. Chairman Glass stated that this is because it is in the 2020 Lamar County Comprehensive Plan.
- 18) Commissioner Horton reported that the Lamar County "Men on the Move" will host a town hall meeting at Gordon College on March 21st, 2020.
- 19) The board discussed setting up a workshop for the Animal Shelter for the purpose of adopting standards. The board agreed that the emphasis should be placed on an Ordinance for Spay and Neuter.
- 20) Chairman Glass reported that the 2020 Census is this month. He said that they will send paper forms that can be filled out and sent back in, you can fill out the questionnaire online or there is a number that you can call with the information. If you choose not to do any of the three, then there will be someone that will knock on your door. Chairman Glass stated that you are required by law to participate in the 2020 Census. He said that the key component is being counted. Chairman Glass reported that they need to encourage people to vote and that they need to be exposed to the new equipment. He said that the primary in May will be more complicated and there will be more people voting. He said that the new voting machines could slow people down therefore he is encouraging people to come to the Board of Elections office and get familiar with the new process. He said that if people wait until the last day to send in their absentee ballot they may not get counted.

Chairman Glass stated that they are working with the Lamar County Health Department and the Lamar County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) regarding the COVID-19 virus. He reported that two students had been exposed to the COVID-19 virus but that they had tested negative. Chairman Glass reported that the virus could affect the elderly more than the younger people. He said that the plan is to keep the County buildings open and they will review the sick policy for employees. He stated that at this time there are no concrete plans but highly encouraged the Department Heads to communicate with their employees. He said that if people are sick then they need to stay home. Chairman Glass reported that the Blood Drive is scheduled for March 26th, 2020, and that 6 to 8 nursing students from Gordon State College will be assisting with the blood drive. Chairman Glass requested that all guidelines from the Lamar County Health Department and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) be posted on Lamar County's website on the NewsTicker.

- 21) Commissioner Thrash reported that the President is putting 5 million dollars into Mental Health and stated that he recognizes that Mental Health in the jails is costing the counties.
- 22) Chairman Glass reported that the Public Defenders Budget is due by April 1st and that there are plans for Butts County to host the dinner. He said that the circuit usually meets the first week of May.

Adjournment

Commissioner Horton made a motion to adjourn the workshop meeting at approximately 2:56 p.m. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles Glass, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

Bennie Horton, Commissioner

Robert Heiney, Commissioner

Ryran Traylor, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk