

**Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Regular Business Meeting
December 15th, 2020**

Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Horton Commissioner Heiney, Commissioner Traylor, County Administrator Townsend, and County Attorney Mayfield. County Clerk Davidson joined the meeting via Zoom. The meeting was available to the Public via Zoom.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Glass called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

Everyone said the Pledge of Allegiance. Pastor Cindy McDonald of the Barnesville First Methodist Church gave the invocation.

III. Recess for Public Hearing

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to recess for a Public Hearing. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Reconvene After Public Hearing

The board reconvened from the Public Hearing at approximately 7:04 p.m.

V. Agenda Approval

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve the agenda. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Minutes Approval

Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the following three sets of minutes Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. November 5th, 2020-Budget Workshop
- ii. November 12th, 2020-Special Called Meeting
- iii. November 17th, 2020- Regular Commissioner Meeting

VII. Proclamations

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners were presented a Proclamation from a visitor from the past, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, portrayed by Dan Rainey, the namesake of Lamar County which was founded on November 2nd, 1920 by an amendment to the State Constitution. Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, born in Putnam County, Georgia on September 17th, 1825 and died January 23, 1893, in Bibb County, Georgia. He served

multiple terms as a United States Congressman, became a U.S. Senator, Secretary of the Interior under President Grover Cleveland, and Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. The County of Lamar, as proposed, comprised of 182 square miles; 84 of these were taken from the Western Section of Monroe County and, 98 from the Eastern Section of Pike County. Lamar County began its first day of operation on January 1st, 1921 and has promoted economic growth and education opportunities giving strength since the creation of the county. The year 2021 marks the 100th year of the legislative creation of Lamar County. The Lamar County Board of Commissioners recognized the tireless dedication and commitment of the founders of Lamar County, the valiant efforts of the county employees and the citizens to build and constantly improve the reputation and services of the county, and the many notable contributions Lamar Countians have made to the community in the past one hundred years. In commemoration of one hundred years as a County, the Lamar County Board of Commissioners Proclaimed this Centennial Anniversary for Lamar County.

Commissioner Horton read a Proclamation supporting the mission of the Lamar County Schools, "Learning today to succeed tomorrow" and applauded the leadership of the Lamar County Board of Education to ensure this mission is fulfilled to provide all students with an equitable and excellent education that prepares them for college, career, and life. The Proclamation was intended to honor Horace A. Hightower, who began his service with the Board in 1978, and who has worked tirelessly for 42 years to help lead the Board of Education in ensuring the equity and the excellence of staff and students in Lamar County. Horace A. Hightower, the second longest servicing School Board member in the State of Georgia, has promoted the Lamar County System on the local, state, and national level. Horace A. Hightower, a life-long resident of Barnesville, Georgia returned to the City after his service in the United States Navy and with his wife Gwendolyn Hightower of 57 years made their home rearing their four sons, Marcus, Zachary, Horace Duran, and Christopher, all graduates of Lamar County High School. The Lamar County Board of Commissioners recognized the contributions of Horace A. Hightower and Proclaimed February 27, 2021, his 77th Birthday, as Horace A. Hightower Day in Lamar County and urged all our citizens to use this day to support the value of education and to seek ways to support the students of Lamar County in honor of the service of Horace A. Hightower to education.

Vice-Chair Thrash read a Proclamation recognizing the service of Jim F. Smith as the Lamar County Coroner. Jim F. Smith began his public service as Coroner with Lamar County on February 11th, 1987 and, served the citizens from 1987 to 2020. Jim F. Smith was born on June 1st, 1947 in Coeburn Virginia, and is 10 out of 13 children. He graduated from Coeburn High School in 1965 and, served his Country in the United States Army from 1967 to 1970, and in 1968 he graduated from the United States Army Chemical School. Jim F. Smith worked for the Virginia State Police and, the Florida Highway Patrol from 1970 to 1975. Jim F. Smith worked for Williams Brothers Building Supply, (Balamo) from 1975 to 1985 and, from 1985 to 2005 he worked for the Town and Country Hardware Store. Jim F. Smith completed over 500 hours of training with the Georgia Public Safety Training. Jim F. Smith, as the Lamar County Coroner, responded to many unattended and, attended deaths in Lamar County including delayed deaths, traffic fatalities and suicides, homicides, and deaths occurring under suspicious and uncertain circumstances. Jim F. Smith worked with local law enforcement and forensic psychologists during autopsies and in the last 10 years has seen the number of death investigations increase as Lamar County continues to grow. The Lamar County Board of

Commissioners and staff thanked Jim F. Smith for his service as the Coroner for Lamar County and its citizens.

VIII. Greg O'Neal-Property Taxes

Mr. Greg O'Neal of 278 Yatesville Road addressed the board. Mr. O'Neal said that he owns G&R Rock Climbing Adventures. He said that everyone benefits from paying taxes and said that he has never had an issue with paying his taxes. He said that there is a little bit of a struggle for small businesses. Mr. O'Neal said that he got a tax bill for the property he was not allowed to use. He said that there is a value for tax purposes but said that it has no value for him if he cannot use his property. He said that this is not his land or his home but equipment that he was told he could not use by a government entity. Mr. O'Neal said that he originally spoke to the Tax Commissioner and she told him that she could not change the tax bill and sent him to the Tax Assessor. He said that he was told that you are taxed for the property you own as of January 1st. He said that if he owned it on April 1st then he had a right to appeal those taxes. He said this year he was not allowed to leave his house. Mr. O'Neal said that he has a tax bill for more than he made in sales this year and said that he was told that he is required to pay this tax bill. Mr. O'Neal said that he had spoken to the Tax Commissioner, the Tax Assessor, and Commissioner Traylor about this matter. He said that everyone is sensitive to what is going on yet he still has a tax bill. Mr. O'Neal said that he always pays his bills and his taxes but he cannot get anyone to explain how he owes a bill where the Government told him he could not use his equipment. He said that this killed his business this year yet they want him to pay taxes on it. He said that his business is inspected every year, usually in March, and this year they did not come until May. He said that his income taxes were not due until July 15th, 2020, and they were not late. Mr. O'Neal said that the Government knew there was a problem.

Mr. O'Neal said that he spoke to the Tax Commissioner, and the Tax Assessor a couple of months ago. He said that his birthday is in March so that is when he got his tag. He said that he could not go in and get his tag so he had to go through the drive-thru to get his tag. He said he bought tags for seven trailers and only three of them have left his yard; one time each. He said he paid taxes on them and he cannot use them. Mr. O'Neal said that he is a little frustrated. He said that he does not usually ask for a refund on his taxes; he said that he pays them. Mr. O'Neal said that no one can give him an answer. Mr. O'Neal said that the Tax Assessor's example of a house burning down and her saying that he knew that this was going to happen aggravated him. Mr. O'Neal said he is not mad at the Tax Assessor but he wants to know why he has to pay these taxes when the Government said that he cannot use it. Mr. O'Neal said that no one can answer this question and asked how valuable is his equipment if he cannot use it. He said that if his house is condemned the value is zero.

Mr. O'Neal said that this has been a bad year for him. He said that he lost his father and he lost his business to COVID. Mr. O'Neal said that he looks at numbers and usually he doesn't want to argue unless it is worth arguing for. He said that anyone that has lived in Lamar County for a long time would have known that for years he lived at the Recreation Department. He said that he volunteered his time and he coached. He said that he was one of three parents where their track team won a region championship back in the early 2000s. He said his wife drove the bus and Laura Huggins, another parent, was also the girl's track coach. He said that he was the only parent that showed up to support the kids.

Mr. O'Neal said that G&R Rock Climbing is based on a kid's entertainment. He said that he is for a profit but said that he has donated his time and equipment over the years. He said that this year he has earned hardly any money, has not left the house, and cannot get any answers this year, and said that he does not know about next year. He said that the Tax Assessor told him that on January 1st, of next year, he is going to owe taxes again and said that they will fix it next year. Mr. O'Neal said that he paid his business insurance in November of 2019 and they kept his entire premium. He said that they did not insure anything and next year he will not be in business. He said that taxing someone and then telling them that they cannot do your job makes him hot and heavy.

Mr. O'Neal said that the Tax Commissioner said that the bill came from the Federal Government. Mr. O'Neal said that this bill did not come from the Federal Government and the Federal Government did not close down. He said that the State Government closed down and President Trump gave the States the right to close down or not. He said that there are some States he cannot even travel to right now. Mr. O'Neal said that this was not his doing. He said that as a government entity you cannot tell him you cannot do something but then tell him that he has to pay these taxes. Mr. O'Neal said that he addressed the Tax Commissioner before the tax bill was due. He said that he did not ask her to make it disappear. He said that he went to the Tax Assessor and she told him if that if he had known this was going to happen in April, he could have had the tax bill appealed. Mr. O'Neal said that this year is a different year than other years. He said he had spoken about this with different people and asked them if he is supposed to just give them the tax-dollar and then do what; quit eating? Mr. O'Neal said that he did not really want to be at this meeting. He said that he had listened to all the scare tactics that were used about COVID. Mr. O'Neal said that COVID has put him out of business. He said that the Government wants to scare everyone and said that he is frustrated about something that does not exist.

Mr. O'Neal said that he is a numbers guy. He said that 3000 people died the other day of COVID and asked how many people in all died that day. He said that statistics show that everyday 7700 die from COVID. Mr. O'Neal said that they should all buy stock in funeral homes if this is the case because this is not happening. Mr. O'Neal said that he does feel bad for those that actually died from COVID. He said that he feels bad for those that died of dementia like what his father died from. He said that he had to look through a window to see him. Mr. O'Neal said that they did get lucky enough to have a regular funeral for him. He said that they wore masks and not that many people showed up for the funeral. Mr. O'Neal said he still does not think that this COVID is real but said that he is out of business because of COVID.

Mr. O'Neal said that he lost 80 percent of his life savings in March. He said that he is really happy that he got a tax bill, at the end of the year, stating that he had that property on January 1st but then tell him that they do not want him to use it and that he cannot use it and there is nowhere to take it but they want their tax dollars. Mr. O'Neal said that he does not know what else to do. Mr. O'Neal said that the tax bill states that if he does not pay it by a certain day, they will put a lean on it and said that it goes against your credit for seven years. Mr. O'Neal asked why he was subject to a penalty for something that is wrong. He said that it is wrong to tax someone that does not have the ability to pay the tax because he cannot use their property. Mr. O'Neal requested that someone give him an answer.

Mr. O'Neal asked if it was the Commissioners job to set the millage rate every year. Vice-Chair Thrash replied that it was. Mr. O'Neal said that he was confused. He said that he budgets things and he was set up for the rest of his life in March. Mr. O'Neal said that he will not go hungry because he is getting close to Social Security age; if it continues. He said that if all of these people are dying, he said that he should get more money. Mr. O'Neal said that this is not how it really works. He said that he gets to pay taxes that help the County. Mr. O'Neal said that he paid his house taxes. He said that if he pays the property tax bill and then if it is not corrected next year then he owes the property taxes again on January 1st. Mr. O'Neal said that this will probably not go away by April. Mr. O'Neal said that he thought for sure he would start to work again each week and watch kids have fun. He said event after event after event was canceled. Mr. O'Neal said that he normally spends 140 days at Callaway Gardens but not this year. He said that they did about 1.5 percent of their normal sales and not enough to pay the property tax bill. Mr. O'Neal asked if he was supposed to borrow money to pay the property tax bill because no one can give him an answer, explain it to him, or fix the problem. Mr. O'Neal said that it sounds like that no one can fix the problem by next year. He said that January 1st is two weeks away and asked the Commissioners if they had talked about what small businesses were going to do.

Mr. O'Neal said that he was in the National Guard. He said that you follow the chain of command. He said that he spoke to the Tax Commissioner, did not help, he spoke to the Tax Assessor, gave him some names to contact, but that did not help. Mr. O'Neal said that he did not want to come before the Commissioners, to complain. He said that he is not opposed to paying taxes, in a normal year. Mr. O'Neal said that according to the Tax Assessor, come January 1st, he is going to owe these property taxes again and on April 1st, he will be able to appeal and he hopes that his business is not dead completely. Mr. O'Neal said that it may be beyond repair. Mr. O'Neal said that he has to purchase insurance before he can take the equipment back out again. He said that he has to have another State inspection for equipment that never was used this year. He said that he has to do certain things to run a business legally. He said that he has to purchase a business license. Mr. O'Neal said that he is paying property taxes on equipment that he is not allowed to use.

Commissioner Traylor asked Mr. O'Neal what type of business he was in. Mr. O'Neal replied that he has inflatables, bungee jumps, and rock walls. He said that everything that was in the kid section at Buggy Day's is what he owns. Mr. O'Neal said that he still disagrees with the example of a house burning down and his business equipment not being used. He said that he had until April 1st to appeal the property taxes but he could not leave his house. He said that around May 17th, 2020 he could not even walk into the Tax Commissioners Office and he had to go through the drive-thru. He said he bought tags for seven trailers and three trucks. He said that the Tax Assessor made the statement that they were open. Mr. O'Neal asked if they were breaking the law. He asked if he was supposed to go into the Tax Assessors' building when he was not supposed to leave his house except to get groceries. Mr. O'Neal said he did not leave the house for groceries. He said he sent his wife because he had a quadruple bypass surgery six years ago. He said that he is overweight and he has diabetes. He said he has a lot of health problems.

Commissioner Heiney asked Mr. O'Neal who told him he could not leave his house. Commissioner Heiney asked if the Commissioners said that. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the

Governor did. Commissioner Heiney said that the Board of Commissioners did not say this. Mr. O'Neal asked if they allowed Buggy Days this year. Commissioner Heiney said that they had no control over that event either. Mr. O'Neal asked if his equipment still had value to it even though the State of Georgia put him out of business. Commissioner Heiney said that he was very sympathetic but said that Mr. O'Neal was speaking to the choir. Commissioner Heiney said that he was outraged by the treatment that the Government has given to small businesses. Commissioner Heiney said again that they do not have any control over this. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the legislators have control over this; the Department of Revenue. Commissioner Heiney said that they are just collectors for the Department of Revenue. Mr. O'Neal said that these are local taxes. Commissioner Heiney said that the Commissioners did not have the authority to tell him that he did not have to pay his taxes. Mr. O'Neal said that the millage rate will have to go up next year because of all the people going out of business. He said that they will have to make up the shortfall somewhere.

Tax Assessor Haddock said Mr. O'Neal was not very nice to her. She said that "All property shall be returned by the taxpayers for taxation to the tax commissioner or tax receiver as provided by law. Each return by a taxpayer shall be for property held and subject to taxation on January 1 next preceding each return." Tax Assessor Haddock said that her office was closed in March. She said that Mr. O'Neal received an assessment notice on June 12th, 2020. Mr. O'Neal said that this was after April. Tax Assessor Haddock said that April is when you are to return your personal property return. She said that they mail these out every year and Mr. O'Neal did not return it. Mr. O'Neal said that he spoke to Holly Patel with the Tax Assessors' office about this. He said that he did not return it because she told him to come to the office. He said that he went to the office and she was not there.

Chairman Glass said that April 1st is the time that you can list your return which is the list of property that he owns. He said that State laws say that by April 1st you are supposed to file a return on the property to be assessed. He said that you can request or put a value on there that you think that it is worth. Chairman Glass said that he understood that this year, with all that went on, whatever value that was put on there was probably out the window. Chairman Glass said that the Tax Assessor will still require a value on all of the property. Tax Assessor Haddock said that in 2019 they audited him. Mr. O'Neal said that in 2019 he did not change his value. Mr. O'Neal said that he sold it and asked if he was supposed to still retain it. Tax Assessor Haddock said that they sent him a letter and he didn't give them the information that they needed to audit him. Mr. O'Neal said he called up to the office to speak to Ms. Patel about this. Tax Assessor Haddock said that in 2020 the value was still the same so by April 1st he should have filed a tax return. She said that Mr. O'Neal should have come into their office and said that he no longer had this property. Tax Assessor Haddock said that he did not do this. Tax Assessor said that an assessment notice was sent to him in June and he had 45 days to appeal it and then the Governor extended the date until August 27th. Tax Assessor Haddock said that he had two different times to talk to her office about this. Tax Assessor Haddock said that she did tell Mr. O'Neal, in January to give her proof that you are no longer in business. Mr. O'Neal asked why he had to be out of business when the property still has value. Tax Assessor Haddock said that Georgia law says that all property is subject to taxation. Mr. O'Neal asked if he had to say he was out of business, but he still owns the property, then he doesn't have to pay the taxes. Tax Assessor Haddock replied that he can still own it but he isn't able to use it. Tax Assessor Haddock said that he still owns the piece of property. Chairman

Glass said that this is State law. Tax Assessor Haddock said that a taxpayer from whom a tax license was collected illegally or erroneously may file a claim for a refund but the taxpayer has to pay it first.

Tax Assessor said that were other businesses that went out of business too and if you do this for one, you would have to do it for everyone. Tax Assessor Haddock said that she is following the Georgia law. She said that she spoke to Georgia Representative David Knight and he said that there is nothing that they can do at the State level. He said that they would be speaking about this at the upcoming legislative session. Chairman Glass said that Mr. O'Neal needed to understand that even though there was no revenue, the taxes are still due. He said that this is a local responsibility to assess the value of the property and then set a millage rate. Chairman Glass said a millage rate is applied to every piece of property; real and personal property.

Mr. O'Neal said that business property has to be an ongoing business. He said that the Government did not allow them to be in business therefore they made the value of the property zero. Mr. O'Neal said that because he owns it and cannot use it, it has no value. Chairman Glass said that there is not a provision in the law that says if you cannot use your property you do not owe taxes. Mr. O'Neal said that if he does not honor a contract and takes someone's money and does not bungee jump their kids but just takes their money. He said he did not do anything to earn the money and asked if still gets to keep the money. Mr. O'Neal said that this equipment does not do anything unless he can work it. He says if the State does not allow him to work it then the taxes are still owed. Mr. O'Neal said if he takes other people's money then this is borderlines stealing. Mr. O'Neal says that this is wrong and he does not do this.

Chairman Glass asked Mr. O'Neal what he thought the remedy should be. Mr. O'Neal said that the tax bill shows County M&O, School M&O, and School Bond and there is nothing that says that the State is getting this money. He said that this means that the Commissioners set all of the millage rates to make sure that you get this money to pay for the things that the citizens need. Chairman Glass said that the School Board sets their own millage rate. Chairman Glass again asked Mr. O'Neal what they should do.

Vice-Chair Thrash asked Mr. O'Neal where his equipment was located. Mr. O'Neal said that most of it was located at 278 Yatesville Road. Vice-Chair Thrash asked Mr. O'Neal if the equipment had caught on fire would he have called the Fire Department. Mr. O'Neal said that he would not have called the Fire Department. Mr. O'Neal said not for this equipment. He said that metal doesn't burn but if a tornado blew it all over then he would call the Fire Department. He said that he did not call the Fire Department the night the tornado went through town and there was a fire next door that brought up enough suction that it reignited someone else's brush fire. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she was in agreement with Mr. O'Neal and she understood where he was coming from. She said that Tax Assessor Haddock said that Mr. O'Neal did not fulfill his portion where he could have at least received a 50 percent reduction in property taxes. Mr. O'Neal said that he has had almost 100 percent loss in revenue but they are going to give him a 50 percent reduction in property taxes. Commissioner Heiney said that the Commissioners are not responsible for this loss and they are not the ones that have caused this to happen. Commissioner Heiney said that they did not shut his business down but rather this is a State level issue. Commissioner Heiney said that he needed to contact his State Legislators. Mr. O'Neal said that he was following the chain of command. Mr. O'Neal said that when he bills someone, he usually settles it. Chairman Glass again asked what he suggested that they

do. Mr. O'Neal said that he has to pay property taxes next year or give all of his equipment away or pay 50 percent when it is a dead business. Mr. O'Neal asked what he was supposed to do. Chairman Glass said he did not think that Mr. O'Neal wanted the Government to tell him what to do. Mr. O'Neal said that the Government is telling him that he is delinquent and they are going to file a FIFA and according to the Tax Commissioner they are going to take his equipment but they did not let him use his equipment. Chairman Glass asked Mr. O'Neal if they wanted them to zero this out. Mr. O'Neal said that he was asking about next year. He said that he is out of business but he still owes 50 percent. He said that he is dead as a business and he cannot work.

Commissioner Traylor said that he still owns the property and said that if he stood before the Commissioners and said that he had to sell his property to pay his insurance then it creates a point of discussion. Commissioner Traylor said that he still has an opportunity to earn money next year. Mr. O'Neal said that they cannot guarantee him he can use his equipment by April 1st and asked what happens if they extend it again until August 27th and he does not meet this deadline. He said that he then owes 100 percent because of a bunch of "I don't knows". Commissioner Traylor said that he was on the phone with Bankston Lumber and they told him that they were having a record month. He said that they do not know what June will look like next year. Commissioner Traylor said that the point he was trying to make is that for the Commissioners to provide leadership in the Community, and to be smart with the taxpayer's money, and the citizen's money, that they have responsibility for, they can only forecast so far in advance. Mr. O'Neal said that the unknown is that he still owes 50 percent of the property taxes. Chairman Glass said that next year they are planning to do the same thing that they did this year and follow the State law and the County code. Mr. O'Neal said that the State is what breaks the law and the State did this. Mr. O'Neal asked if he was supposed to call the State. He asked if they would do anything. Mr. O'Neal said he cannot get the Department of Labor on the phone and said that he has tried to get unemployment for a self-employed business. He said that he applied for this months ago. Mr. O'Neal said that he was taken off the roll for the election on November 3rd because he was not a registered voter. He said that he was not allowed to vote. Mr. O'Neal said that he was called up for jury duty a few years ago and said that he got an exemption because of his health. He said that he is not on the role and they did a Statewide search. He said that in Dekalb or Decatur, there is a Gregory O'Neal born in 1900 that is still on the roll. Mr. O'Neal said that he called the Secretary of State's office and he left his number twice for them to call him back. He said that this was two months ago. Mr. O'Neal said that he is supposed to get answers for questions he cannot answer. He said that the Tax Commissioner cannot help him, the Tax Assessor blames him and the Commissioners cannot help him. Chairman Glass said that the Commissioners are following State law and County codes this year and next year. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they cannot predict whether or not he will be able to use his equipment next year. Chairman Glass said that by April 1st he was supposed to have submitted his list of equipment to the Tax Assessors office. Mr. O'Neal said that he could not leave the house. Chairman Glass said that this was not the Commissioners fault. Chairman Glass said that he sympathized with Mr. O'Neal but said that there was nothing that the Commissioners could do to help him. Mr. O'Neal said that he spoke to the Tax Assessors Office and they wanted him to figure out values. He said he is not supposed to be outside and he cannot go to Church even if he wanted to go to Church. He said that he cannot get people out to his house to help him. Mr. O'Neal said that he was not supposed to be in the Tax Assessors Office in April. Chairman Glass said he understood his frustration but said that

the Commissioners could not address his concerns and they could not fix it for him. Mr. O'Neal said that he is a taxpayer and said that he could tell the Commissioners what to do. He said that they can go ahead and raise the millage rate because they will not be able to make it up with all of the lost revenue because they would not help people that are hurting. Chairman Glass said that they wrestle with this every year. Mr. O'Neal said that this year they may need to wrestle a little harder. He said that businesses are not going to be able to increase their expenses. Mr. O'Neal said that this is a slippery slope and they are actually blaming the State Government. Chairman Glass said that he was sorry they could not resolve the issue but suggested that Mr. O'Neal come and speak to him about this issue personally tomorrow or any other day in the week. He said that he would help him contact the State. Mr. O'Neal said that if he cannot help him and he does not pay the property taxes, and you come to his yard and get the equipment, that the bank will not loan money on, because no one is going to buy it. Mr. O'Neal asked the Commissioners what they gained by not taking care of this situation. Mr. O'Neal said that you will not get paid the taxes but yet you will penalize him. He said that he has been paying the taxes and carrying the load for everyone and he has worked most of his life and paid his taxes. He said he used to get people to go wink, wink, and they paid all cash. He said I am getting no cash, wink wink back. He said that he paid his taxes and he is an honest person. He said that he works hard. He said that he is supposed to pay these taxes because he owns the equipment but he cannot use it. Chairman Glass said that he hears him but said they could not resolve this for him.

IX. Beer and Wine License

New Beer and Wine License-Name Change

- 1) Commissioner Heiney made a motion to approve The Rendezvous Goodwood LLC.
 - a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
 - b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- 2) Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve Honeywood Gardens LLC.
 - a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
 - b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Beer and Wine Renewals

- 1) Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to approve Deer Trail Country Club.
 - a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
- 2) Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to approve Sky Seven LLC-DBA T.J Outfitters.
 - a) Malt Beverage Package-\$500.00
 - b) Wine Package-\$500.00

Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- 3) Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to approve VFW Post 6542.
 - a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
 - b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- 4) Commissioner Heiney made a motion to approve C&B 2015, Inc
 - a) Malt Beverage Pouring-\$750.00
 - b) Wine Pouring-\$750.00

Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Board Appointments

Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the following Board Appointments. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. Re-Appointment of Irvin Trice-Non-Public Member of the Council of the Three Rivers Regional Commission
- ii. Re-Appointment of Three Rivers Regional Commission-County-Bennie Horton
- iii. E911 Committee- County-Robert Heiney
- iv. Board of Appeals-Danny Vaughn
- v. Lamar County Solid Waste Authority-Nancy Thrash
- vi. Lamar County Industrial Development Authority
 - Charles Glass
 - Sandra Puckett

XI. Budget Resolution 2020-22

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-22 Budget for 2021 in the amount of \$11,619,980.00. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Resolution 2020-24 BST Minor Subdivision

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-24 BST Minor Subdivision removing the paragraph that there be no conditions added. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. First Reading of Ordinance 2020-25

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 2020-25 proposing to amend the Lamar County Chapter 2-16 Roads and Bridges; Article V Road Use and Regulation, Sec 82 Route of Travel Through Trucks with the addition of Parker Branch Road and Crawford Road. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that Google maps routes the trucks off the interstate and suggested that they be contacted to alert them to the No Thru Trucks for this Route of Travel. Commissioner Traylor suggested that they have visible signage for the Route of Travel.

XIV. Support of Green Leaf Facility in Lamar County

Chairman Glass stated that a potential medical cannabis producer had requested to speak to the Commissioners. Philip Goldberg of 14117 Tattershall Place, Germantown Maryland addressed the board and stated that he was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Greenleaf Medical, LLC. He said that Greenleaf Medical, LLC is applying for a license for a medical cannabis production license in Georgia. He said that he hoped to be able to locate their facility in Barnesville, Georgia adjacent to the water treatment facility off of Gordon Road. He said that he is anticipating that there will be 100 to 150 jobs available. Mr. Goldberg said that his company pays 90 percent health care coverage, a matching 401-K, competitive wages, and salaried positions. He said that they have serious security measures including fencing, and controlled access doors where employees wear badges to get into the different areas of the facility. He said that they will keep certain employees alone in various areas. Mr. Goldberg said that they have seed to sale tracking on every plant to make sure that nothing is diverted outside of the facility. He said that everything is accounted for.

Mr. Goldberg gave some background history and stated that Greenleaf Medical, LLC operates medical cannabis facilities in Mid-Atlantic regions including Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Virginia. He said that they have been in business since 2014 and employs over 450 people. They operate 400,000 square feet of industrial space and have licenses for 10 retail locations. Mr. Goldberg said that his company is on track to produce over 75 million dollars in sales this year. He said that they are expected to double this number over the next 12 to 18 months.

Mr. Goldberg said that when seeking a location for their facilities, they make an effort to locate in Counties and Cities that meet their needs. He said a good example of this is the 275,000-foot facility that they operate in Saxton, Pennsylvania. He said that Saxton, Pennsylvania is a small community and was economically distressed. He said that they had only one major industrial complex in their town that was left and this was a leather manufacturing facility. He said that they went out of business about 10 years ago and it put a strain on the community. Mr. Goldberg said that they bought the facility and re-built it. He said that they work closely with the Mayor, Economic Development, the School Systems, and local Fire Departments. He said that they provide these organizations with donations every year. He said last year they donated more than \$50,000.00 to the local community. He said that last year was their first year in operation and there was not a lot of revenue in Pennsylvania. Mr. Goldberg said that this year they anticipate donations to be above \$400,000.00. He said that the majority of these donations go to the local school systems and then the rest goes to Economic Development, the Fire Departments, the Senior Centers, and scholarships in Colleges for students graduating in the local High Schools.

Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about how long they had been in business. Mr. Goldberg replied that they had been in business since April of 2014 with the Greenleaf entities in the various States mentioned. He said that the entity that will be established in Georgia is Greenleaf Medical of Georgia, LLC.

Chairman Glass asked if they were growing the seeds for the medicinal oils. Mr. Goldberg replied that all of the States have different regulations that govern what products they are allowed to make which includes low concentrations of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and the

Cannabidiol (CBD) in the oils. He said that in Virginia they are much more like Georgia with the restrictions that they have in place. He said that Maryland and Pennsylvania have similar restrictions. He said that in Virginia they are governed by the Board of Pharmacy and in Maryland, they have a special Commission appointed by the Governor. He said that in Pennsylvania they are governed by the Department of Health and in Ohio, they are governed by the Board of Pharmacy. Mr. Goldberg said that they have a robust compliance and legal team that navigates all of the different regulations for each State. Mr. Goldberg said that in Georgia it is a wholesale production facility where they will grow the plants. He said that they will have an extraction lab where they will extract the oil out of the plants and then make them into other products such as capsules, oil tinctures, syringes of oil, that people place under their tongue, or in between the lip and the gum. Mr. Goldberg said that he anticipates that they will be serving patients with seizure disorders, muscle disorders, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Post Traumatic Syndrome (PTSD), and a variety of other conditions. He said that most of the patients that they are seeing, including the 14,000 registered patients in Georgia, are patients that have exhausted all of the therapeutic options offered to them. He said that they have been either insufficient or outright failed them. He said that this is an alternative treatment option for them. Commissioner Horton asked if they could sell this product in other States. Mr. Goldberg said that they cannot sell it in the other States that they operate in because they have a rule that they cannot move between the States.

Industrial Development Authority Director Kathy Oxford stated that there is a Federal law that prevents them from moving from State to State which is why these patients in the State of Georgia need this product. She said that not only do they have to have a license to manufacture the product they have to have a license to sell the product. She said that in 2019, they sent out an RFP where companies can apply for this type of license. Industrial Development Authority Director Oxford said that the State is driving all of the regulations. She said that she sat in on some of the cannabis condition meetings with the State and they do like the States that Greenleaf Medical of Georgia, LLC are located in based on how it has worked. She said that they are limited on what they can manufacture in that facility and they have to have certain things in place just like with other pharmaceutical companies. Industrial Development Authority Director Oxford said that they cannot make anything that could be smoked or baked. She said that everything is in a low THC format. She said that the State tells them what they can and cannot do and yes, they will have horticulture inside the building along with the extraction of the compound in the building. She said that what leaves the building will be transported in smaller vehicles rather than by an 18-wheeler.

Commissioner Heiney inquired about zoning. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that it is her understanding that there are already properties zoned for manufacturers. Industrial Development Authority Director Oxford said that the challenge for any of these companies is that you have to have property that is 3000 feet from a school or a church and that has been a real challenge. She said that they have identified a property in Barnesville that meets the requirements and development is not an issue. She said that they had other people call about putting a company in the middle of nowhere and she said that she is not interested in putting a manufacturing facility out in the middle of a farm. Industrial Development Authority Director Oxford said that this company is not the first company that they have spoken with but they are the first manufacturer that she has spoken with. She said that she did speak to other consultants but she never knew anything about the manufacturer.

She said that she has exchanged a lot of good information with Greenleaf Medical, LLC and she feels like this company knows what they are doing because this is not their first rodeo and they understand the rules and regulations. Industrial Development Authority Director Oxford said that there will only be six companies and six sites because no one company will have more than one site, that will get approved by the State. She explained that once they are licensed, they have a year from the time they are licensed to get up and running which is another challenge and the reason that they had to find a piece of property that was available and ready.

Vice-Chair Thrash asked if there had been any security issues at the other locations in the other States. Mr. Goldberg replied that they had never had that problem. He said that they have security fencing and security cameras. He said that the 42,000 square foot facility in Maryland has about 120 cameras and the facility in Saxton, Pennsylvania has over 200 cameras. He said that they have had no attempted break-ins in these facilities. He said that the retail facilities have had no break-ins. Mr. Goldberg said that for the record that are not planning on putting in a retail facility in Lamar County and said that this is not a part of this application process. He said that as far as Security is concerned, they have had issues at the retail locations such as hostile customers or issues where someone bumps the fender of someone's car in the parking lot and they have an altercation but no one has ever tried to break into any of the facilities. He said that this is not to say that this is not a concern because they think about this all of the time. He said that they have extensive operating procedures. Mr. Goldberg said that background and drug tests are done on every single employee. Industrial Development Authority Director Oxford said that these are 10-to-20-million-dollar facilities so they stand to lose a lot if there is a security issue. Mr. Goldberg said that they spend about \$200.00 a foot on their facilities. He said that they are looking at facilities that are anywhere from 50,000 to 125,000 square feet. He said to date they have raised \$27,000,000.00 from investors and they have also secured \$63,000,000.00 of sale-leasebacks, which is where you buy a property and you retrofit it or build it out and then you sell that property to a real estate investment trust who then leases the property back to you but it frees up capital so you can build the next location. Mr. Goldberg said that they have put \$90,000,000.00 into all of their projects to date.

Mr. Goldberg said that the Mayor, the School Superintendent, the Director of Economic Development, and the Fire Chief of Saxton are all writing letters of support. He said that these letters are on the way to the Commissioners and they speak to what they have tried to do in the community and the support that they have tried to provide.

Chairman Glass called for a letter of support for the Greenleaf Medical, LLC facility in Lamar County. Commissioner Heiney made a motion that they supply a letter of support for the Greenleaf Medical, LLC facility in Lamar County. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XV. Administrator's Report

County Administrator Townsend reported that the finances are still doing well. He said that right now the expenses should be running at 91.67 and they are actually at 86.21. He said that they were able to pay off the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) last month. County Administrator Townsend said that they still had money in the bank. He said that the cash flow is running pretty well. He said that he is able to keep the forecast pretty close for years and this year the

revenues for the sales taxes have been higher. He said that this is attributed to the new law that came out with the State.

County Administrator Townsend reported that they sent a letter to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on December 2nd, 2020 regarding the waiver of the penalty owed. He said that they will not receive any information back from the IRS until January.

County Administrator Townsend reported that Todayshia Colquitt had accepted the position as the new Accountant and she starts to work on December 28th, 2020. He said that she graduated from Lamar County with the class of 2007

XVI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

XVII. Round Table

Commissioner Horton wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Commissioner Traylor wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He thanked everyone in the room that helped and worked on the Christmas Parade and the 100 Year Celebration. He said that it was phenomenal to be in the parking lot and see the camaraderie, the competition, and the creativity. He said that it was a highlight of the Christmas season. He said that he prays that they can build on those relationships and take advantage of the new skills that they found where people can paint on paper plates. He thanked all of the employees and the departments. Commissioner Traylor said he had spoken to Interim City Manager Tim Turner and he said that he felt initially that he was being requested to help the County and, in the end, it helped the whole community. He said he was really impressed with the opportunity for the City and the County to work together. Commissioner Traylor said that everyone has responded that this was the top event of the year and he thanked everyone for their hard work.

Vice-Chair Thrash said that next year the Commissioners are going after First Place for the float competition. Vice-Chair Thrash wished everyone a Merry Christmas

County Administrator Townsend wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chairman Glass announced that early voting is in process for the January runoff. He also announced that there would be a dedication for the Centennial Monument on December 29th, 2020 at noon. He said that the Rotary Club would join in to help with the celebration.

XVIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Horton made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business meeting at 8:28 p.m. Vice-Chair Thrash 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