

Workshop Meeting of the Lamar County Board of Commissioners
November 12th, 2020
12:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. on November 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.

Lamar County Zoning and Development Regulations Update

The board discussed the following items that would need to be updated in the Zoning and Development Regulations Ordinance.

- Allow or ban fueling stations
- Maximum size of Home Occupation Outbuildings (Currently no outbuildings are allowed) The model is based on acreage to have outbuildings.

Commissioner Horton made a motion to recess for lunch at approximately 12:05 p.m. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board reconvened the meeting at 12:25 p.m. and resumed the meeting.

Home Occupation

The board continued the discussion on Home Occupation. Chairman Glass suggested that restrictions be placed on acreage and where an outbuilding could go on the property. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that for all accessory buildings if you have less than three acres it must be to the side or behind the home. Chairman Glass suggested that they not exceed 25 percent of the size of the home. Vice-Chair Thrash asked how this would affect the farmer. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that farming is not Home Occupation. She said that people are building large garages that are bigger than that now, in line with what the Ordinance already reads, and now they are going back to a Code Enforcement issue of knowing what people are doing within the walls of their personal property and this would be hard to enforce. She said whether they are storing clothes for their online boutique or storing cars does this matter to the board; if the size of the structure is the same.

Commissioner Heiney said that they have to remember that if someone buys a place in the Country, and they have in mind that they want to run a business on their property, then they have to look at the density of the property. He said that the less dense the property is then the less restrictive it should be with the zoning. Commissioner Heiney said that this does not address the issue with new people moving into Lamar County and large plots being sold off to create subdivisions. He said that the more rural the area the less restrictive the zoning should be.

Commissioner Horton said he read about a place with the same similarities where as long as the business is not causing problems in the community then they should let it alone. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that proposed in the ordinance is that for residential districts, accessory buildings would not be allowed. She said that it goes to a narrower definition

where it is inside the home only and no more than 25 percent of your home can be used for that. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that this is for Agricultural Residential (A-R) zoning. Chairman Glass asked if someone had a garage, separate from his house, and they have a big woodworking shop in the back would this be allowed. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that a woodworking shop would be allowed. Chairman Glass asked what would happen if he decided to sell his woodworking products on eBay. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that in A-R this would be allowed. Chairman Glass asked if this would be allowed in a residential area. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that this would not be allowed with the proposed ordinance changes. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she is concerned about not infringing on people's rights to use their property but said on the other hand the board has a responsibility to protect the surrounding neighbors. Chairman Glass said that if he was trying to defend this, the detached garage is where he does his hobbies and he sells the products from his house, online, so the business is still in the house. He said that he is manufacturing in the back yard but the business is still in the house. He said that he can go out in the back yard and do woodworking and there is nothing illegal about him turning wood. He said that the commercial aspect is where he brings it into the house, takes a picture of it, then posts it online, and then someone buys it on eBay which happens in his home office. Chairman Glass said that he does not want to codify the ordinance where it causes neighborhood disputes. Commissioner Heiney stated that there is a lot to be said about not wanting to see a home business next door to you. He said that there are a lot of things that people do not want to see. He said that some people may not want to see dove shoots or cows. Commissioner Traylor said that most Home Occupations are for single usage. He said that hobbies and people working are two different things. Chairman Glass inquired about having family members working in the home under Home Occupation. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that you could have three non-family members working in a home. Chairman Glass stated that they needed to keep this requirement for residential zoning instead of A-R zoning. He said that the purpose of this limit was because of the number of people parking at the home. Chairman Glass said that if he had a 2000 square foot home then he could have a 500 square foot outbuilding associated with the business in an R-1 zoned area. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that this would not be allowed in R-1 zoning. Chairman Glass said that if you have a 3-car garage and part of that is used for the business then he could use the 500 square feet outbuilding. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that in the residential districts having this ratio is too much. Chairman Glass said that they could not have an outside employee but they could have a family member working. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that there are several accounting businesses in the County where an Accountant hired a Secretary and an Assistant Accountant and a part-time Accountant and said does this warrant forcing them to move to a store and at this point or you helping or hurting small businesses. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that they have a costume maker in the County and they have someone that comes into the home to assist them with making the costumes. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that in the current ordinance this is not allowed. Commissioner Traylor said that unless they are violating some type of tax law, he does not see why there would be an issue with this unless they built a large outbuilding and started hiring people to work in the business. He said that this is when it could be a concern with the neighbors.

Planning and Community Development Director Buice requested that they define the word "big" in A-R and all the residential zonings. She said that currently, the code states that for A-R zoning the size of an outbuilding is a maximum of 1200 square feet and no bigger than a 3-car garage.

Vice-Chair Thrash suggested that they hold off on this issue and watch the growth of the County and have Planning and Community Development Director Buice get a little more direction on how the County is growing and make a decision next year. Commissioner Heiney asked if there was a compelling need to do this now. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that she has a compelling Code Enforcement issue. She said that as of right now, in the code, no heavy equipment is allowed at your home anywhere in the County and several businesses operate in this manner. She said that if this is approved then she has one issue that she can handle, because the first thing they are going to say is why aren't you going after the other ones who are violating the code, and this way they will have a legitimate reason. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that if this is passed where the acreage ratios to the number of heavy equipment are defined then these people are way outside of these bounds. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that the business that she is referring to is growing so much that they have moved onto another piece of property.

Chairman Glass said that on the outbuilding issue in residential zoning they are not allowed except for accessory buildings and the Home Occupation is defined to the residence. He clarified that you could have your home occupation business inside the residence. He said that you can have outbuildings but they cannot be associated with the home occupation business. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that she has had someone looking for property in A-R zoning. This person is a productive artist and wanted to use the outbuildings on the property that he was planning to buy. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that this is not permissible based on the current Home Occupation definition in the code. She said that there are a lot of businesses in the County that use their outbuildings as a part of their business. Chairman Glass asked if they set a 25 percent limit does that cover a majority of those situations. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that her suggestion, in A-R zoning, would be to keep it to no more than the 3-car garage and a 1200 square-foot maximum. She said that in the residential zonings they could have the maximum set at 25 percent of the home size. Vice-Chair Thrash asked why they were including the residential zoning along with the A-R zoning. Commissioner Heiney said that you should include both A-R zoning and residential zoning for Home Occupation. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that for all of the residential zonings, R-1 through R-4, they should be for inside the home only and no outside buildings. Chairman Glass said that currently, it says no more than 25 percent of the residence can be devoted to the home occupation business. Vice-Chair Thrash said that there can be no accessory buildings in R-1 through R-4 zoning and the home business is restricted to the residence. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that it reads that "only 1 accessory building may be used in connection with the home occupation business. This is allowed in A-R zoning only and no other residential districts".

Kennels

Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that the current ordinance just says commercial and a dog is a dog. She said that what was originally proposed said that if they wanted

to maximize the number of dogs that can be in a kennel/rescue if you are a breeder. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that was removed. Vice-Chair Thrash asked if a Kennel was supposed to have an Agricultural license because on McNeely Road there is someone who has 18 runs and he is raising Rottweilers and selling them. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that this is against State and Local code.

Commissioner Horton said he read that in the code you can have four dogs. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that this code is not for personal pets. She said that this is only if you are making money by selling pets or if you are a rescue and you have new pets coming in and out. Chairman Glass inquired about having puppies or kittens. He asked if he agrees to foster a female dog and they have nine puppies is he in violation of the code. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that there is no County code that is current or proposed that limits the number of personal pets that you can have. She said that if someone is a licensed foster then there is no proposed limit on the number of animals that you can have. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that this is not about the license, this is about the zoning of a Kennel. She said that if you were a licensed rescue but you only took in two dogs at a time then through zoning you would not have to ask for a Special Exception to be allowed to have those dogs on your property. Chairman Glass said that he only has one female dog and now he has nine puppies because the local foster did not have room. Chairman Glass asked if he was now in violation because of this situation. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that he probably would be in violation but by the time Code Enforcement made you apply for the Special Exception, to be a Kennel, the puppies would be gone. Chairman Glass suggested that they modify the code to say that more than four pets are permissible if they are not weaned, and you cannot continue to house them once they are weaned unless you are a Kennel. Chairman Glass said that they could put a caveat on this that says more than four is permissible if they are not weaned. He said that the exception to the four pets would be if they are not weaned. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this could be a caveat in the code where the County reserves the right to look at each individual situation. Chairman Glass said that you cannot enforce this because you have to define the rules. Chairman Glass said to leave it as it currently states in the proposal: "The housing for four (4) or more dogs, cats, or other domestic animals for the purpose of providing an income or revenue. This includes breeders, trainers, and the fostering of rescue animals".

Allow Home Occupation in R-1 to R-4 zones

Chairman Glass said that this is different than in A-R zoning. The Home Occupation must be contained in the residence and no more than 25 percent of the residence. Chairman Glass asked if they were going to allow three family members to work in the home business. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that in A-R zoning they could have three non-family members but in the residential districts they could only have one non-family member working in the home business. Chairman Glass said that he was thinking about the parking issues. He said that one person going in and out of the house would not be a disruption to the neighbors. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she was thinking about high school students and helpers. She said that these types of small jobs are a niche that needs to be filled by someone. She said for people that are needing jobs this would be a way that you could hire someone for small type things. So, in residential zoning, R-1 to R-4, they would only be allowed to hire one person. Chairman Glass said that the rationale is to protect the neighbors.

Commercial Trucks per Acre

Vice-Chair Thrash said that word got out that they were not going to let people park their commercial trucks on their property. She said that in her Town Hall meetings everyone was okay with the ratio. Chairman Glass said that they should leave it the way it is written in the code. Commissioner Heiney said that only a 1-ton truck is allowed. Chairman Glass said that what is in the code gives them the ability to address the ones that are causing a problem. He said that you can do what you need to do based on the size of the property that you have but when you become a burden to the neighbors they have the ability to stop it.

Spectator Sports vs. Agritourism

Commissioner Horton asked if a concert or an event got out of hand, who would have the authority to make decisions about this. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this would be handled through Code Enforcement. Commissioner Horton stated that he was referring to the noise level and disrupting the neighborhood. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that with the current code, there is a very broad and vague definition of Agritourism. She said that if someone wanted to have a wedding venue, the request has been for it to come under Agritourism, even though they are not on a working farm which is what Agritourism is supposed to be. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that you are supposed to have the farm first and then everything else is incidental to it. She said that for the past several years people are having a business that should not be in an Industrial Park or a Commercial area because it should be out in the country. She said that they have a business but they call it Agritourism and it is not. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she did a re-write where you have your Agritourism, separated into small and large scale. She said that you then have the other class of businesses such as go-cart tracks, concert venues, big wedding venues, and shooting ranges. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that these are things that draw large crowds that are not appropriate in Commercial or Industrial zoning. She said that she recognizes that they need the space because it is an outdoor activity but it could have a very large impact on the neighbors. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she pulled these things out and called it Outdoor Concentrated Commercial zoning. She said that these would also have to be board approved. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that each one is based on its own plan, parking, and noise regulation so when it comes before the board it would be an entire package. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that in the past week she had been asked by two different people for two different areas and these are businesses that are interested in coming to Lamar County. She said that two shooting ranges have called in the last several months but in the past weeks she has had calls about having All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) trails. She said that these businesses bring a lot of money into an area along with a lot of spectators and maybe a lot of noise. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that they pay someone privately to watch over these things. She said that if they come to her about this, she will start asking other counties that have venues like this and see what issues they have had. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that the original park in Culloden was a 4-wheeler trail and it did not go through any type of formal approval but when they sold out to the Motor Cross people it became a training facility for Motor Cross riders. She said that this went through zoning where they set hours of operation and the number of people that could be there at one time. She says that this type of venue brings in a lot of money. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this is like a place

in the County that was doing time trials and picking blueberries. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she does not remember receiving a lot of complaints when it was a 4-Wheeler place. Vice-Chair Thrash said that High Falls has a place with a huge 4-wheeler venue. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that they stayed out of the business long enough where they are not allowed to start back up again. She said that this venue was in Monroe County. Commissioner Traylor inquired about a go-cart track falling under the Spector Sport zoning. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that if a new go-cart track opened it would fall under the Spector Sport zoning.

Chairman Glass asked why they limited hunting and fishing to just 25 people under Small Scale Agritourism. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that Small Scale Agritourism is permitted by right and these are things that you can just start doing. Chairman Glass said that if he has a 40-acre field and he wants to invite 40 hunters, and he wants to raise money for the Chamber of Commerce, and charge the hunters \$100.00 each for Opening Day of Dove Season, how does he make this legal. He said that if it were 25 hunters then he could just do it. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that he would ask for a Conditional Usage or a Special Event permit. Chairman Glass said that if Floyd Moye is having 100 hunters on Opening Day of Dove Season, and 60 hunters every other weekend, how then does he handle this. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that this is a good point and said that when this was being written, they did not consider Dove Shoots. She said that she was thinking of Deer Hunting where you are spaced out and you do not want a lot of people crowding you. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she is open to suggestions on how to handle Dove Shoots and any other type of shoots where you have a crowd of people together with guns. She asked if there should be a limit as to the number of people you can have. Chairman Glass said that there is not a limit on Wildlife Management Area's (WMA's) unless they lock the gates. He said he has never seen them do this. Chairman Glass said that overcrowding is a problem in WMA's Dove Shoots.

Vice-Chairman Thrash asked why they needed all of these stipulations. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that there are some things that you should be able to do on your property. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that they are looking at two different things in Agritourism vs Spector Sports. She said that the first part of the zoning is Concentrated Outdoor Commercial and that has absolutely nothing to do with Agritourism. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that in Agritourism they separated this into Small and Large Scales. She said that Small Scale is permitted and Large Scale is a Special Exception. Vice-Chairman Thrash asked how this would affect people who lease their land to hunters. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that this is not a part of Agritourism but in A-R zoning under permitted uses in the current zoning, for things such as a Deer Camp, requires a Special Exception permit. She said that she moved this over to permitted usage. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she checked with some deer hunters and the feedback that she received was that for deer camps it is one hunter per 20 acres. Chairman Glass said that if someone is leasing their land out to deer hunt without a deer camp there is no restriction. He said that this is also legal under Conservation. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that technically she would think that you could have as many leaseholders as you wanted to on your property but through Capitalism, if you lease to too many people they may not want to lease from you anymore therefore you let the market decide.

Chairman Glass inquired about the Home Occupation for Mr. Moyer's hunting operation. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that the property that Mr. Moyer is operating on currently was re-zoned to Estate Residential (E-R). She said that in E-R zoning, Home Occupations are not allowed. Chairman Glass stated that the company that handles the Dove Shoots goes around the County and into other counties and asked if they going to have to get a Tax permit or a Special Exception permit. Chairman Glass said that with Mr. Moyer's situation, the Home Occupation happens in his house and he keeps the records in his house and he collects the money in his house or his barn. Chairman Glass said that the actual activity is the Dove Shoots and it is not in his house or the barn. He said that sometimes it is on the property that he owns that is zoned A-R and sometimes it is on the property that is zoned E-R, and sometimes it is on the property that he leases or has permission to hunt on. Chairman Glass said that it may not even be in the County. He said that he always has more than 25 hunters. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that with that particular piece of property that the hunters are hunting now, she would strongly recommend having it re-zoned back to A-R. She said that it was re-zoned to E-R during the mass rezoning. Chairman Glass said that this happened when it was set up as an E-R subdivision. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that the particular piece of property, that she is referencing, has him as the sole owner. Chairman Glass said that this was all put into E-R zoning because Mr. Moyer's vision was to sell it all off into 10-acre plots as a central use area. Chairman Glass said that he is not saying that it is an E-R issue. He is saying that because it is called Small Scale Agritourism with a limit of 25 visitors, he always has more than this, he will never be Small Scale Agritourism so legally what are they requiring him to do. He asked if it needed to be changed to a Commercial Enterprise. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that the real question is do they feel like the number 25 is too small or is a crowd over 25 too big. Chairman Glass said that for Hunting and Fishing and Educational Demonstrations the number 25 is too small. Commissioner Heiney said that he agreed. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice asked if she needed to change Small Scale Agritourism to 50 or 100 for these two events. Chairman Glass said that there did not need to be a number set at all for Hunting and Fishing and Educational Demonstrations. He said that they could say that the check-in number could be set to 25 at a time. Commissioner Traylor said he also did not see a rationale for this number. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that the number was set for wedding venues and renting out a farm. She said that this is the only reason that set the number to 25.

Fire Chief Matthews said that for large gatherings he needs to be aware of the number upfront because when you have 1000 people at an event the Fire Department needs to be able to plan for this. He said that if it is 10,000 people then it is nice to know this. Vice-Chair Thrash said if they did not set a number at all what would happen. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that you would have a wedding venue with spaces for 250 people that did not have to have board approval. Commissioner Heiney asked if this was an issue now. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she has a wedding venue request in process on Van Buren Road. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that they are building the place to be a Wedding Venue. She said that it will be nice and she explained to the owners that it cannot be a Wedding Venue until they get board approval. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that they are building it anyway for their personal use. Chairman Glass said that the way it is written now if they do one of the listed venues in the code and they have 25 visitors no permission is needed but if they have more than 25 visitors they will have to get a Special Event permit. Vice-

Chair Thrash said that she agreed with this. Chairman Glass said that if Mr. Moyer is going to have Dove Shooting in a season then he needs to get a Business License and a Special Exception. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this way Public Safety knows what is going on. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that she wanted to check the code for provisions of those that want to have something big, once, and not continually. She said that it makes sense to do that one-time event if they could shorten the application period and the requirements and do a Special Event permit. She said that it would still need board approval but outside of the code regulations.

Chairman Glass said that for fundraisers, the approval should be approved by the District Commissioner and the Zoning Administrator. He said that for a fundraiser, they would not have to come to a board meeting. He said that if the District Commissioner was not available then it could default to the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman. Chairman Glass said that they would not want to hold up the fundraiser until the next board meeting. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that this is not addressed anywhere and now was the time to choose where to insert this regulation and make these changes. Chairman Glass said that for approving a Special Event permit, for a one-time event, he is proposing that they have two signatures on the permit. The Planning and Community Develop Director and the District Commissioner for that District. Fire Chief Matthews said that if the event is outside then it would be nice to know about the event. He said that if it is inside it may be questionable. He said he would need to check the size of the barn or the building. Chairman Glass suggested that the Fire Chief be included in the distribution of the Special Event Permit. Chairman Glass said that if the District Commissioner or the Planning and Community Develop Director is not in agreement with the Special Event permit then it would need to go before the entire Board of Commissioners.

Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that one of the changes for Guest Homes was that you have to have at least two acres that way you will not have issues with septic tanks. She said one of the changes was that the owner has to live onsite. She said that the reason for this change was because you could potentially have two homes on two acres and both of them are rental houses. The board agreed with these changes.

Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about the re-zoning on Barnesville Avenue. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that it is not a re-zoning. Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about the size of the houses. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that it is zoned R-4 with an 800 square foot minimum and the owner is proposing a 1200 square foot minimum for duplexes. She said that it is already zoned R-4. Chairman Glass explained that Barnesville Avenue is located off of Grove Street. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that they are really pretty and nice. She said that the owner is a local person and they are splitting the property into six parcels. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that the board would need to vote on the square footage. She said that these duplexes will be rentals. Planning and Community Develop Director Buice said that the owner said that this is their retirement.

CPR Equipment for the Fire Department

Fire Chief Matthews addressed the board. He said that he is bringing in three new firemen on the North end of the County. He said that they are looking at bringing in a second Lucas device which is a Chest Compression system used for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The cost for the

device from Stryker is \$14,215.52. Fire Chief Matthews said that this will come from the Special Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds where he currently has \$21,454.00. He said that it does CPR from inside the house to the backboard and then all the way to the hospital so that they do not have employees standing up in an ambulance giving CPR for 30 to 60 minutes. Fire Chief Matthews said that the device is battery operated. Fire Chief Matthews reported that there are two styles of devices that are available but this company is cheaper when it comes to replacing equipment parts such as velcro patient straps. He said that the upfront cost is about the same so he would prefer to go with the Stryker.

Commissioner Thrash inquired about other ambulances in other counties having this type of equipment. Fire Chief Matthews said that the current company does not own this type of device. He said that in Lamar County, the Fire Department employees ride with the patient to the hospital on the ambulance performing manual CPR. He said that manual CPR is only good for 10 minutes. Fire Chief Matthews said that he knows that this is a big expense and he may wait and see how the North end of the County works with the device that they have but he wanted to go ahead and get it approved in case he needs to go ahead and purchase it. Fire Chief Matthews said that if another ambulance service comes into Lamar County, they may already have a Chest Compression system on their truck therefore this new device would not be utilized. He said that this is the risk that he takes when requesting to have this device approved. Commissioner Traylor said that he does think that Lamar County needs the second device but he wanted to know if the other counties would be willing to split the bill.

Chairman Glass pointed out that the current ambulance service, Community Ambulance, has been providing the ambulance service to the County, for the last five years, at no cost. He said that purchasing this device would also help to keep the patient alive. Chairman Glass said that the ambulance service could be an impact on the budget since there is nothing slated in the budget for the contract. He said that they used to pay around \$355,00.00 per year for the ambulance service contract. Chairman Glass said that the competition was with Grady ambulance service and they were undercutting Community Ambulance. Community Ambulance volunteered to provide the ambulance service for free. Fire Chief Matthews said that Pike County is paying around \$450,000.00 for ambulance service and this is for two ambulances. Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about what happened with Grady ambulance service. County Administrator Townsend said that the rural grant ended. Fire Chief Matthews said that they need three ambulances for Lamar County. He said that there was a wreck last Saturday where he was out for over an hour waiting on a driver for an ambulance. He said that he had a man back boarded and he had to wait on an ambulance for over an hour. Chairman Glass said that there had been some staffing issues with COVID-19 and employees being hired for other things and this may be one reason that Community Ambulance may have to start charging the County again.

Fire Chief Matthews inquired about the cost of having a third ambulance. He said that the response was \$500,000.00 for one more truck therefore he never brought that request to the board. Commissioner Traylor asked what Pike County is receiving for the \$450,000.00 cost. Fire Chief Matthews responded that they are getting two Advance Life Support (ALS) ambulances. Region 4 requires that it be an ALS transport. He said that this includes one Paramedic and an Emergency Medical technician. Fire Chief Matthews said that Community Ambulance holds Lamar County's 911 zoning license.

Chairman Glass requested that they review the cost for ambulance service in other counties with this similar type of service. He suggested that they approve the budget without the ambulance service cost and then early next year they take funds from contingency to support this. Chairman Glass said he recognizes the fact that they are going to get to a point where the ambulance service is no longer free. Fire Chief Matthews is warning the board that this is coming and if they do not take action then Community Ambulance may back out entirely.

County Administrator Townsend inquired about the number of new firemen that the board is willing to approve in the year 2021. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she understood that the total number was nine; three new firemen now and six new firemen next year. Fire Chief Matthews said that there are three current firemen, three new firemen, and six requested to be hired next year which means a total of 12 firemen. He said that the question is do they want three firemen per day or four firemen per day. County Administrator Townsend said that they went ahead and brought on three new firemen this year. Vice-Chair Thrash and Commissioner Horton both said they understood it to be a total of nine firemen. Fire Chief Matthews said that they already have three firemen and then they hired three new firemen that will begin work on November 13th, 2020. He said that the request is to hire three more firemen in January of 2021 and then there were to be three more firemen hired if they had received the Safer grant. He said that this would make it a total of 12 firemen. Fire Chief Matthews said that there was money put into contingency in case they did not receive the Safer grant based on board approval. He said that 12 firemen would give them four per day. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she understood this and said that the question is whether or not they want to approve the money from contingency to make it a total of 12 firemen. Fire Chief Matthews agreed with this. County Administrator Townsend said that he put \$129,000.00 into contingency based on board approval of where the funds were to be disbursed.

Fire Chief Matthews said that where they are headed with the Fire Department is a huge step forward and well needed. He said that he is very thankful. Fire Chief Matthews said that he is looking at how much help they have per day because they had a fire near Parker Branch Fire Station. He said that there was himself and one volunteer fighting the fire. He said that finally, a fireman driving Engine One arrived on the scene to help with the water. He said that just to fight a car fire alone is hard which is why he is asking for a total of 12 firemen; a total of four firemen per day, two on the North end of the County and two on the South end of the County. Fire Chief Matthews said that he is looking at the manpower. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this includes the growth in Lamar County. Fire Chief Matthews said that currently there are no firemen on the North end of the County but on Friday, November 13th, 2020 there will be one fireman on the North end of the County and one on the South end of the County which means there will be two firemen per day. Fire Chief Matthews said that he is trying to have two firemen per truck so that he could at least fight a car fire or run a cardiac arrest. He said that the second firemen would jump on the ambulance and ride in and then Fire Chief Matthews would run to the hospital and pick them back up and put them back on the fire truck. He said that for now they send volunteers on the ambulance and he still goes to the hospital to pick them up. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the firemen, the deputies, and police officers are like having an insurance policy. He said that you do not want to pay that premium but when something happens, and it is at your home, it matters. She said that with the growth on the North end of the County they are going to have to invest money into the

Fire Department. Chairman Glass said that currently there is only one paid fireman per day, the Fire Chief, and volunteers if they show up.

Chairman Glass said that the Public Defender is asking for another attorney and Lamar County's portion is around \$22,000.00. He said that he has requested some information from the Public Defenders council regarding similar circuits and caseloads. Chairman Glass said they did not have this information and that he should ask for an Open Records request. He said that he did this so he should know something by next week.

Chairman Glass said that with the County pension funding, the new auditor recommended that they increase the County pension funding to 80 percent since they are currently at 75 percent. County Administrator Townsend said that they will end up catching it up to where it should be. He said that for some reason this year they said that there was too much in there. Chairman Glass said that in this case, they will defer this action to the pension broker, GebCorp to handle.

Chairman Glass said that the new Coroner's, Clay Tillery, budget will exceed the current budget. He said that he has been speaking with the Coroner in Pike County and he has been talking to Sheriff White about getting a vehicle. He said that he might be able to get someone to donate a vehicle. County Administrator Townsend said that he is also requesting office space. He said that the current Coroner, Jim Smith has a file cabinet in his home. Mr. Tillery wants to keep his office space separate from his home. Vice-Chair Thrash said that he will probably request more money for body bags. Commissioner Heiney said that he may ask for a higher salary. County Administrator Townsend said that he has requested a two-body freezer.

Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about the number of firemen that the board is willing to approve. Chairman Glass said that they had previously decided on 12 firemen at the last meeting. Commissioner Traylor said that he thought that they had decided on nine firemen. Chairman Glass and Vice-Chair Thrash agreed that the number of firemen that the board had agreed to approve as 12 total firemen; four firemen per day.

Regular Meeting Discussion

- 1) County Clerk Davidson stated that she would be requesting that Pastor Kevin Thomas give the invocation at the Regular Business Meeting.
- 2) The board reviewed 3 sets of minutes.
- 3) The board reviewed the Second Reading 2020-07 Zoning Ordinance.
- 4) The board reviewed the Second Reading 2020-08 Development Regulations.
- 5) The board reviewed Resolution 2020-21 Budget Amendment to account for the sale of equipment and the dump truck liability reimbursement for a total of \$197,600.00.
- 6) The board reviewed a request to purchase a new dump truck for around \$150,000.00. Public Works Director Rigdon recommended that they purchase the dump truck from Peterbilt for a quote of \$148,773.06 over the Mack truck from Nextran for a quote of \$153,448.50. Public Works Director Rigdon said that the dump truck at Peterbilt is on the lot ready to be purchased. He said that if they wait on the dump truck from Nextran it will not be ready until February.

Public Works Director Rigdon reported that on McKenzie Road that got all the dirt back in the road and next week they will dig about a foot in the travel lane and open the road back up. He said that they are not going to pave it right now because he wants to make sure the ground is dry. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she watched the Public Works crew work on McKenzie Road and said that the citizens have no idea how hard they work. She said that they did a great job. County Administrator Townsend said that Pike County said that if it had been them, they would have outsourced the job.

Chairman Glass said that the Public Works crew did a great job on Johnstonville Road where the fiber optic cable went through the culvert. Public Works Director Rigdon said that he was worried about McKenzie Road because they had just run the fiber optic cable down that road. He said that they went on top of the cable.

Public Works Director Rigdon reported that they are logging on Old Alabama Road. He said that they have a permit but he was not aware of it because it was not sent to him.

Administrator's Report

County Administrator Townsend reported that the cash flow is doing good so there should be a carryover balance. He said that he also provided to the board a report of the Constitutional Officers disbursements to the County. County Administrator Townsend said that he was going to include VoIP on the agenda but he and County Clerk Davidson are still working on this. He said that they are currently paying \$36,862.48 to the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) for phone service. He said that they are paying AT&T for the maintenance agreement at the Courthouse and the Sheriff's Office. County Administrator Townsend reported that County Clerk Davidson and himself had been speaking to Spectrum VoIP regarding switching the fax to email with no charge. He said that the phones would be brand new. County Administrator Townsend reported that the bill is around \$3,071.00 to GTA and the quote from Spectrum VoIP is around \$1,600.00 a month. He said that he and Accountant Burkett had been speaking with Ring Central and also discussing having Mi-Fi's for a backup in case the phone system goes down. Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about the reliability of this service. County Administrator Townsend said that they are asking these questions. Commissioner Heiney said that the reliability is also with the Charter cable system and if the cable goes down the phone service goes down. Chairman Glass said that the phones themselves are reliable, it is the system and the internet backbone that is the issue. He said that if you lose the internet connection you cannot do anything and if you go to this you not only lose emails but the phone system as well. County Administrator Townsend said that they have to make sure they have a backup plan which means having the Mi-Fi's tied into the system so that if the internet does go down it switches over to Verizon and you at least have phones. He said that they will not have the internet but at least you will have phone service. Commissioner Traylor asked if they would be able to transfer the phone calls. County Administrator Townsend said that employees will be able to transfer the phone to their cell phone. He said that the reason that he wants to do the Mi-Fi's is that it cost \$25.00 per building for the service and there are seven locations. He said that if buys every Department Head a cellphone that would be \$50.00 a month for

each phone and that is 19 Department Heads. Chairman Glass said that most of the phones can be transferred to the cellphone. He said that if you are out of the office then you can ask for it to transfer to another phone. He said that if the internet is down then that is not going to work and they will not be able to transfer the phone but they may be able to transfer the phone with the Mi-Fi service. Commissioner Traylor asked if the Mi-Fi service would connect the entire system and not just the transferability of one phone. Chairman Glass said that it is not one transfer per phone, it is one switch per location. County Administrator Townsend said that he needed to do some more research on this before it goes before the board for approval. He said that one company is offering 5 months free and another one is offering 3 months free. Chairman Glass requested that they check to see if the quotes expire before the end of the year. County Administrator Townsend said that the thought that one quote may expire and said that he would check on this. County Clerk Davidson stated that they would need to work with GTA regarding the cancellation of the current phone system. She said that switching phone systems would be a big task.

County Administrator Townsend said that he and Accountant Burkett have been working on an IT maintenance agreement. He said that he is getting prices from Infinity, Liberty, and Wireless Technology. County Administrator Townsend said that there needs to be an upgrade to the infrastructure so they are working on plans for this.

TSPLOST

Chairman Glass stated that he had spoken to the City of Barnesville and the Lamar County School System about having a TSPLOST. He said that the school system is going to handle their ESPLOST referendum in March that will renew their current 5-year plan. Chairman Glass said that it was not smart to put an ESPLOST and a TSPLOST on the same ballot. He said that the next date to put the TSPLOST on a ballot is in July. Chairman Glass said that this would not conflict with the school systems ESPLOST if they wait until after March. He said that he spoke to the City of Barnesville and they said they had not thought that much about it. Chairman Glass reported that the City Manager is having a lot of health issues. He said that he spoke to the Mayor and he did not see any reason why they would not be on board with a TSPLOST but he had not spoken to the City Manager or the City Council about this.

Chairman Glass said that ACCG reported that there were seven County TSPLOST referendums on the ballot for November. He said that four of them passed and three of them did not. He said that Monroe County was one of them that did not. Chairman Glass reported that Upson County is the only surrounding County with a TSPLOST. He said that Spalding County talked about doing one in 2017 or 2018 but it did not pass. Vice-Chair Thrash said that it should be all about how they sell it and how they market it. Chairman Glass said that they have a good business case for it and they have to make sure how they present it.

Chairman Glass said that they need to continue to speak to the City of Barnesville about the TSPLOST and they needed to agree on the split. He said that the Town of Aldora will

be entitled to some of these funds. He said that he did not speak to the City of Milner or the Town of Aldora about being included in the TSPLOST.

Commissioner Traylor asked if the school system had spoken to Chairman Glass before they decided to put the ESPLOST on a ballot. Chairman Glass said that Superintendent Wilson had mentioned it to him. He said that they sent a letter to Elections Supervisor Reid stating that the Lamar County School Board had called for a Special Election. Chairman Glass said that Elections Supervisor Reid knows that they are going to have this ESPLOST election in March.

Georgia Restaurant Association

Commissioner Heiney stated that he had received a letter from the Georgia Restaurant Association regarding the huge hit that they took with COVID-19. He said that they are requesting the lowering of alcohol license fees for the year 2021. He said that they also wanted to know if they could have a payment plan. Commissioner Heiney said that if it was possible to do so, then they needed to at least give it some consideration because they were really hit hard. He said that they could not open up for over half of the year and they had to pay for their alcohol license in the year 2020. Commissioner Heiney said that it seems unfair that they had to pay the alcohol license fees and then they were denied the use of that license for the period of time that they were shut down. Chairman Glass said that they resorted part of the time to take out service. County Clerk Davidson stated that Lamar County does not have alcohol licenses for restaurants. Chairman Glass said that Lamar County only has sales by the package. County Administrator Townsend said that most of the alcohol licenses in Lamar County are convenience stores. County Clerk Davidson stated that Deer Trail Country Club has an alcohol license. The board all agreed that they should contact the City of Barnesville for this issue.

Chairman Glass stated that the Department of Revenue is working on streamlining the alcohol licenses for the State so they are setting up a portal. The portal will be for both the State and the Local licenses and will be in effect by January 1, 2021. Chairman Glass stated that this needed to be deferred until at least July of 2021. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the ACCG board told them that it was not going to work. Chairman Glass said that this is all up in the air so the County would proceed with the current alcohol license procedures. He said that the intent was to make it easier on the counties and the applicants. Chairman Glass said that this would be a one-stop-shop.

Commissioner Horton said that the local bars were completely shut down. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this letter was regarding the restaurants. Chairman Glass said that the restaurants with the bars were affected. Commissioner Horton said that the Rendezvous and the VFW club were both County and they were both affected by the COVID-19 because they too were shut down. County Clerk Davidson stated that some of the restaurants with bars, doing take-out, offered alcoholic beverages in to-go cups. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that they could give them a payment plan in three increments but still pay the full amount.

Commissioner Traylor that he has a constituent that has an inflatable business and he is trying not to have to pay his taxes. He said that Tax Assessor Haddock has spoken to Representative David Knight about this issue. He said that this is not a State issue but a County issue. Commissioner Traylor said that technically they could say that the bill be reduced. Chairman Glass asked where they were going to draw the line. Commissioner Traylor said he told this gentleman that they had not done anything for anyone else in the County. Vice-Chair Thrash said that with her business, as an investigator, the Courts were shut down and she was not able to work, so should she ask that she be allowed not to pay her taxes. Commissioner Traylor said that this is about the equipment on his property. He said that the Tax Commissioner is saying that there is a value to the equipment. Commissioner Traylor said that he is saying that because of COVID-19 it was not of value because he could not use it.

Commissioner Heiney said that this is like with the restaurants, where they had to pay for a license that they could not even use. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she had to continue to pay for her license. She said that she also had to do her re-current training. She said that COVID-19 was none of their faults but everyone has suffered from this and everyone is doing the best that they can. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they are opening pandora's box if they do this. Commissioner Traylor said that he said that he may have to file bankruptcy. He said that Tax Assessor Haddock told him to change the way he had things set up in January. Vice-Chair Thrash said that he can file a loss depreciation on his taxes. Chairman Glass said that the Tax Commissioner cannot forgive the taxes but she could set up a payment plan for him.

Executive Session

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to go into an executive session for personnel and real estate. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board came out of executive session and resumed the business meeting.

Centennial Celebration and Christmas Parade

Commissioner Horton said that he has several constituents asking him about the Centennial Celebration and the Christmas Parade and the number of people that would be participating. Vice-Chair Thrash said that hundreds of people go to Ingles so what is the difference. She said that maybe they should issue an order where everyone stays home for the next month and you have to wear a mask in your house. Commissioner Horton said that when eating at a restaurant you take off your mask to eat dinner. Commissioner Traylor said that he had also received a phone call about this and he heard that there is a campaign launch to reach out to their Commissioner regarding not having this event. He said that he thinks that everyone will start calling and emailing their Commissioner. Commissioner Traylor said that he had received about four to five calls and three of the four people held an office in town or are in charge of something in town. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the events are outside. She said that they can encourage people to social distance. She said that people can wear their masks if they want to and if they are not comfortable coming then they do not have to come and they understand. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they agreed to

not throw out the candy even though the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not agree. Vice-Chair Thrash said that Nurse Manager Farr said that COVID-19 can be transferred through candy wrappers. Chairman Glass said that he was more concerned with the kids rushing the vehicles.

Chairman Glass said that they need to give a consistent message. He said that he has spoken to several people and he said that he understands their COVID-19 concerns but they are taking precautions with it being outside by social distancing and wearing masks if they want to. He said that this is a once in a lifetime event being that it is the 100th anniversary. Chairman Glass said that there is a cultural thing here being in a small town. He said that people like to come together. He said that they would love to have a celebration where the roads are packed but they are doing what they can to keep it safe. Chairman Glass said that there are risks with anything that you do whether it is COVID-19 or trucks plowing into a car. He said that they will take extreme precautions but the thought is that they still want to proceed with all of the Centennial Celebration events. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this was a very good statement and that they needed to stay consistent in their message. Commissioner Traylor said that the City of Barnesville and the Barnesville Lamar County Chamber are still having the Illumination Ceremony. Chairman Glass said that there is always a large crowd packed together and the Illumination Ceremony is riskier than anything that they are proposing. Vice-Chair Thrash said that if you look at some of these events, people are starting to do their own thing. She said that this is no different than the grocery store where they are saying no more than 425 people at a time. She said that it is the same difference. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they are having Church on Sundays. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she did not understand why this particular program is being singled out. Chairman Glass said that if people are uncomfortable with this event then they need to suggest some measures of safety that might help.

Round Table

County Administrator Townsend said that to approve the budget it will need to be advertised in the paper by December 1, 2020, so that the Public Hearing can be held on December 8, 2020. He said that the Regular Business meeting to approve the budget will be held on December 15th, 2020. The board agreed to hold the Public Hearing on December 8th, at 9:00 a.m. at the Lamar County Courthouse. The board also agreed to hold the Regular Workshop meeting on December 8th, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. due to the Centennial Celebration that will be held on December 10th, 2020.

Vice-Chair Thrash reported that the unveiling of the Lamar County Centennial Monument would be held on December 29th, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to adjourn the workshop at 3:10 p.m. Commissioner Heiney 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