

Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Regular Business Meeting
March 16th, 2021

Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chairman Horton, Commissioner Heiney, Commissioner Traylor, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, County Clerk Davidson, and County Attorney Mayfield. The meeting was available 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. The Invocation was given by Pastor Russell Smith with the Georgia District of the Council of Assemblies.

III. Recess for Public Hearing

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to recess for a Public Hearing. Vice-Chairman Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Reconvene the Regular Business Meeting

The board reconvened the Public Hearing at approximately 7:07 p.m. and resumed the Regular Business meeting.

V. Agenda Approval

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve the agenda and Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Minutes Approval

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to approve the following 3 sets of minutes and Vice-Chairman Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. Workshop Minutes-February 11th, 2021
- ii. Public Hearing Minutes-February 16th, 2021
- iii. Regular Business Meeting-February 16th, 2021

VII. Proclamation

Commissioner Thrash presented the Division of Family and Children's Services (DFACS) a Child Abuse Proclamation declaring April as the National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month. This event raises awareness of the role that caring connections play in strengthening

communities. Each year, they encourage local community groups to generate public attention to raise people's awareness of the campaign. There will be 34 Pinwheels on display outside the Lamar County Courthouse this month to represent the number of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in Lamar County in 2020. The purpose of the pinwheels is to remind everyone that child abuse and neglect is a serious issue that is around us every day. The Board of Commissioners of Lamar County declared and proclaimed the month of April 2021, as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Lamar County and urged all citizens to work together to make this year a safer one for children in the community.

VIII. Board of Appeals

Chairman Glass stated that there are three positions to consider for the Board of Appeals.

Board of Appeals

- a. Mildred Merchant-term expires July 1, 2021
- b. Danny Vaughn-term expires January 1, 2024
- c. Dean Gore-term expires January 1, 2023

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve Doug Walker to the Board of Appeals representing District 4 and Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. Commissioner Thrash amended her motion to approve Doug Walker to the Board of Appeals replacing Dean Gore, and representing District 4 and tabled the appointment to the Board of Appeals for District 1, and 2 replacing Mildred Merchant and Danny Vaughn. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Radio Tower-High Falls Park Road

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve a 30-day contract to place a repeater on the radio tower on High Falls Park Road. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Bid for LMIG

Vice-Chairman Horton made a motion to approve the bid for the Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) approving Blount Construction in the amount of \$526,851.03. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Bid for Courthouse Windows

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the bid for the Courthouse Windows approving Ben Fleming Construction in the amount of \$33,600.00. Vice-Chairman Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Bid for Architectural and Engineering Firm

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve the bid for the Architectural and Engineering Firm approving JMA, GMC, and Precision Planning as a standby contract as needed. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Bid for Paver

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the bid for a Paver approving Yancey/Cat in the amount of \$142,386.00. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIV. First Reading Ordinance 2021-03 Timber Harvest

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 2021-03 Timber Harvest. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XV. Ordinance 2021-04 Abbott Woods Subdivision (Rezoning from R2 & A-R to R1)

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve Ordinance 2021-04 Abbott Woods Subdivision (Rezoning R2 and A-R to R-1) with conditions. The conditions for the rezoning include the following:

- One acre lots if served by a public water system.
- 140' minimum lot width.
- 75' minimum setback on exterior lots.
- 60' minimum setback on interior lots (this number will reflect the setbacks on existing homes).
- All new homes must have side or rear-facing garages.

Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XVI. Farm Winery/Tasting Room-The Goth Gardener LLC

Ms. Stephanie Thomas of Cook Road addressed the board regarding a wine license to start a Farm Winery. Ms. Thomas said that she is also known as The Goth Gardener, LLC. She said that she was born in Riverdale, Georgia, and a lifelong resident of Georgia. Ms. Thomas said that she has three children. She said that two children are students in the Lamar County schools and are members of the band, chorus, and soccer teams. Ms. Thomas said that her mission statement is "By Earth for Earth". She said that using local organic fruit grown by herself and her neighbors, she hopes to create a product that not only tastes good but does good for the community. Ms. Thomas said that her landscaping is local and her two caterers of choice are Maxi's family restaurant and the Lamar County Arts; which she is a member of. She said that she plans on having Paint and Sips, Art Gallery, Crafts Days, and Horseback Riding. Ms. Thomas said that her goal is to keep the laws in the highest regard and said that she will do her best to preserve the peace that her neighbors enjoy while still bringing revenue to Lamar County.

Commissioner Thrash asked about the hours of operation. Ms. Thomas responded that for horseback riding that will be noon-type hours. She said that she will be open two days a week in the daytime and open on Saturday and half a day on Sunday. She said that Paint and Sips will be late afternoon. Ms. Thomas said that she will not be doing too much after dark. She

said that the music that she will be playing has a natural sound. Ms. Thomas said that she plans on doing things such as meditation and yoga which is the kind of environment that she will have. Ms. Thomas said that she wants to be relaxed and she wants to share her property and her gift. She said that on Education Day, she wants to teach the kids about where their food comes from. Ms. Thomas said that they do not know that cheese comes from the cow or that sunflower seeds that are roasted come from the sunflower. She said that she would like to have a camp where she can explain about the food products. Ms. Thomas said that the things that she grows, like an ice cream banana tree, come from around the world. She said that she would also like to work with the local farmers who have goats and pigs.

Chairman Glass inquired about the threshold of how much wine can be produced in a Farm Winery. Ms. Thomas said that she does have plans for this and said there are not that many wineries this close to Metro Atlanta and with the different ideas that she has but said that she might be the first woman of color to own a winery in State history. Chairman Glass said that if she exceeds that threshold, she may have to have a different type of license. Ms. Thomas said that she hopes to do this but she wants to stay within the law. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said that exceeding the threshold of wine production would be a wonderful reason to come back to the board.

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to approve a wine license for a Farm Winery/Tasting Room run by Stephanie Thomas and known as the Goth Gardener, LLC. Vice-Chairman Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XVII. Administrator's Report

County Administrator Townsend gave an Administrators Report. He said that at the end of February the revenue over expenditures should be at 16.67 percent but the revenues are actually coming in at 9.08. and the expenditures are 13.22. which is higher than the proposed February projection. He said that more collections from taxes for the prior year are coming into the County and the expenditures continue to be low. County Administrator Townsend stated that they did not hire the new firefighters until the end of March which helped with the expenditures for January and February. He said that he is trying to stay ahead of the forecast.

County Administrator Townsend said that Sheriff White wants approval for a new car for Major Leslie Holmes. He said that the insurance for the car was \$13,000.00 and he is requesting to have another \$20,000.00 from SPLOST to cover the cost of a new car. County Administrator Townsend said that the Sheriff was approved for \$100,000.00 in SPLOST and he came in lower than this amount for the other cars that he purchased. He said that he can probably get a car for around \$23,000.00. County Administrator Townsend said that they forecasted \$33,000.00 for three cars to come out of SPLOST and Sheriff White actually spent around \$23,000.00 for each car.

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve \$20,000.00 from SPLOST for the Sheriff's Office to purchase a new car to replace the car that was totaled in a wreck with Major Holmes. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Public Comments

Kay Pedrotti of 107 Craftsman Way, Milner addressed the board regarding McKenzie Road and wild hogs roaming in her neighborhood. Ms. Pedrotti said that the repair that was made on McKenzie Road is bad and if you go over 25 miles an hour you will beat your shocks to death. Ms. Pedrotti asked if there was a timeline for making McKenzie Road smooth. County Administrator Townsend stated that Michael's Asphalt is scheduled to pave McKenzie Road in the next couple of weeks. He said that Public Works Director Rigdon said that they wanted people to run over it so that it could be packed down. County Administrator Townsend said that they could not pave the road in the wintertime because if the water gets in it and it freezes it will pop it. Commissioner Thrash said that the temperature has to be above 40 degrees so the paving will be done in May.

Ms. Pedrotti said that in the Johnstonville area there are herds of wild hogs that are tearing up property and harassing animals that belong to people. County Administrator Townsend said that if they are destroying personnel property, you can shoot them. Chairman Glass said that if a wild animal comes onto private property, you have the right to do what you want to with that animal. Ms. Pedrotti said that if someone lives alone and they do not own a firearm what do they do. Commissioner Traylor said that they are really bad in that area and a school bus actually hit about four wild hogs. He said that there are people out there that will come and trap them. Chairman Glass said that there is nothing that the County can do about them coming onto private property. Ms. Pedrotti requested that they spread the word that help with wild hogs is needed.

XIX. Round Table

Vice-Chairman Horton thanked Reverend Jimmy Fambro for attending the meeting. He said that he was slated to give the invocation but since he was running a little late to the meeting, we asked Mr. Smith to give the invocation. He gave a shoutout to the young people for getting involved in local government and the COVID. Vice-Chairman Horton thanked the nurses and the doctors and everyone involved. He said that he thinks that we are on the road to getting this behind us. Vice-Chairman Horton said he played his music recently but he did not play any in the year 2020. He addressed Ms. Thomas in regard to her farm and said that he used to milk a cow.

Commissioner Traylor thanked the Planning Commission board for the job they do and, in particular, the recent Public Hearing meeting. He said that they called on each homeowner in the subdivision and asked their opinion. Commissioner Traylor said that they did not show the largest homeowner any more favoritism than the other five homeowners in the subdivision. He said that they have a really close family of neighbors in the subdivision and everyone was proud. Commissioner Traylor said that they had been contacting him and he was hoping that things would work out. He said that he was really proud of the way the system worked, the due process which made him proud to be a Lamar County citizen.

Commissioner Traylor announced that there will be a “Great Day of Service”. He said that in the year 2008 he participated in the Great Day of Service and it was phenomenal.

Commissioner Traylor said that he looked forward to it every year and he still has all three tee-shirts. He said that this is an opportunity where Lamar County citizens get together regardless of their political views, faith, or background to come together and go out into the community and do whatever needs to be done. Commissioner Traylor said that there is a list of projects that people can work on. He said that this event is called the “Great Day of Service” and people that participate will get a free tee-shirt. Commissioner Traylor said that this event was also part of the Lamar County Centennial Celebration. He said that the event will be held on March 20th, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. starting at Summersfield. Commissioner Traylor said that in the past they have had as many as 250 to 300 people to show up. He said that Gordon State College is doing an alternative spring break so their students are highly encouraged to be there.

Commissioner Traylor announced that on March 30th, 2021 Gordon State College is having an inaugural “Day of Giving”. He said that it started out with alumni but now they are asking anyone to donate to the foundation.

Commissioner Thrash announced that Ashley Gilles, Chairman of the local Republican Party, requested that she say, on behalf of her, how much she appreciates the Lamar County Elections board and for the hard work that they put into the previous election.

Commissioner Thrash congratulated the Fire Department who is the Department of the Month. She said that the Fire Department has had a tough job during COVID and said that they have really been out there on the frontline. Commissioner Thrash said that they have expanded and invested in the Fire Department and they are starting to get their return on the investment. She also thanked the Fire Department for all they do and for their leadership.

Commissioner Thrash said that on Sunday she witnessed a horrible accident. The Dublin High School Principal, Jarod Stuckey, his wife, who was 8 months pregnant, and his son were killed in a wreck on I-16. She requested for a moment of silence in their honor.

Chairman Glass announced that there would be a Blood Drive on March 25th, 2021 at the Barnesville First Methodist Church from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. He said that the goal is 53 to 55 pints of blood and requested for everyone to donate if they could. He said that the bad weather in February caused Blood Drives across the United States to be shut down completely. Chairman Glass said that there is a blood shortage nationwide.

Chairman Glass announced that COVID vaccines on March 17th, 2021 would be administered at the Lamar County Transportation Building instead of at Southern Rivers EMC due to inclement weather. He said that the following week the vaccines will be administered at Southern Rivers EMC.

Chairman Glass said that he was excited about the Gordon State College students participating in the Great Day of Service. He said that a few years ago he participated, with students, in the Great Day of Service and they built a handicap ramp. He said that the students did not know a lot about hammers or saws but they learned quickly. Chairman Glass said that the energy they

had was amazing and it was a great memory to be associated with those students. He said that working with the students again will be a great benefit.

Commissioner Traylor thanked Mr. Smith for coming to the meeting and for giving the invocation.

XX. Adjournment

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles Glass, Chairman

Bennie Horton, Vice-Chairman

Robert Heiney, Commissioner

Ryran Traylor, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk