

**Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Regular Business Meeting
January 19th, 2021**

Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Horton, Commissioner Heiney, 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. Pastor Martin Johnson of East Mt. Sinai Baptist Church gave the invocation.

III. Agenda Approval

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to remove item # 7 Resolution 2021-01 Tax Anticipation Note (TAN). Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Minutes Approval

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

- i. Budget Public Hearing Meeting-December 8th, 2020
- ii. Special Called Meeting-December 8th, 2020
- iii. Public Hearing Meeting-December 15th, 2020
- iv. Regular Business Meeting-December 15th, 2020

V. 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2020-25 Route of Travel Thru Trucks

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2020-25 Route of Travel Thru Trucks adding Crawford and Parker Branch Road. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion Passed unanimously.

VI. Annual Appointments

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to appoint Commissioner Horton as the 2021 Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve Smith, Welch, Webb and White as the County Attorney for 2021 and Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Horton made a motion to approve the following County Physicians for 2021. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- a) Dr. Wilson Woodall and Manley
- b) Dr. Aaron Buice

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve James Butler as the County Surveyor for 2021. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve Attorney Mayfield as the Open Records Custodian for 2021. Vice-Chairman Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Purchase of Vehicles from SPLOST for Sheriff's Office

County Administrator Townsend explained that the vehicles purchased for the Sheriff's Office will total up to around \$100,000.00. He said that they will also need about \$10,000.00 for cameras and lights for each vehicle. County Administrator Townsend requested that the board approve up to \$130,000.00 for the vehicles. Chairman Glass said that the plan is to not to exceed this amount and County Administrator Townsend and Sheriff White will negotiate the best deals. County Administrator Townsend explained that in the past when the Sheriff goes back to acquire the approved vehicle it has already been sold to another County. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to authorize the Sheriff and the County Administrator to purchase the Sheriff's vehicles as approved in SPLOST up to an amount of \$130,000.00. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Contract for Probation Supervision Services

Commissioner Traylor made a motion to approve the contract for Probation Supervision Services. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Community Ambulance Contract

Chairman Glass said that Community Ambulance has been servicing Lamar County for the past 12 years. He said that the County used to pay around \$350,000.00 but somewhere around the year 2015 the contract went to zero dollars and they have been providing the service for free. He said that Community Ambulance charges the people that receive their services. Chairman Glass said that with all that is going on it is difficult for them to staff the ambulance services and to keep the services available for the citizens in the County. He said that there have been some discussions with the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel including the Sheriff, the Fire Chief and the Board of Commissioners. He said that they are proposing that the County Administrator work something out with Community Ambulance and there has been a proposal for some incentive pay which would attract the staff to work some additional hours. Chairman Glass said that there are some conditions and restrictions that go along with this proposal. Chairman Glass said that he would like to propose that the County Administrator work with the EMS to work out some type of incentive that will include some conditions that will affect the County and protect the citizens.

Commissioner Thrash made a motion that they authorize the County Administrator to negotiate

a contract with Community Ambulance to be presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Vice-Chairman Horton seconded the motion. County Attorney Mayfield said that there is already a contract with Community Ambulance and they would need to do an amendment to the contract. Commissioner Thrash asked if the contract was null and void once they pulled the funding. County Attorney Mayfield said that the County would say yes but Community Ambulance would probably say no unless a letter was sent to them terminating the contract. County Attorney Mayfield said that the contract has an auto-renewal in it. He said that it is a valid contract but they are not abiding by it. Commissioner Thrash amended her motion to authorize the County Administrator to re-negotiate the existing contract with Community Ambulance for presentation to the Board of Commissioners for final approval. Commissioner Traylor seconded the amended motion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Administrator's Report

County Administrator Townsend said that they had a pretty good year but a lot of the numbers have still not been finalized. He said that revenues have to be accrued because the system is on a cash basis and at the end of the year, they accrue December's expenditures and revenues back in. He said that they are actually in the process of doing this but it has been a little bit of a slower pace with the new Accountant who is doing some training. He said overall the cashflow is doing pretty well. County Administrator Townsend said that they are currently a million dollars over what was projected. He said that the Department Heads were very good about keeping their expenditures low and they actually watched what they spent. County Administrator Townsend said that COVID-19 stopped a lot of traveling and training. He said that a lot of training was done via Zoom meetings. He said that over all the finances are doing well at the end of the year. County Administrator Townsend said that the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) has been pushed back to February or maybe even March. Chairman Glass said that the biggest increase in revenue is coming from the sales tax collections. He said that the revenues are higher than what was predicted. County Administrator Townsend said that the Tax Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) was higher even though the percentage was changed. Chairman Glass said that the higher sales tax collections was attributed to the new legislation with online sales.

County Administrator Townsend said that he is accepting bids for the back windows on the Courthouse. He said that this includes replacing the wood. He said that he eventually wants to go all the way around the Courthouse and keep the windows similar to the style of the Courthouse. Chairman Glass said that the windows in the back are in the worse shape.

Commissioner Heiney said that the revenues forecasted are at 101.71 percent of the forecast and the expenditures are at 92.53 percent of the forecast. Commissioner Heiney said that this is considerably good work on County Administrator Townsend's part. He said that this is in spite of some areas where expenditures were above the forecast and some areas were below the forecast. Commissioner Heiney noted that the Public Works expenses were above the forecast but recognized the fact that they were providing a valuable service to the citizens. He said that in spite of the areas that were above their expenses he still came in at 92.53 percent. County Administrator Townsend said that this was due to the County Departments. Commissioner Heiney thanked County Administrator Townsend for a great job.

County Administrator Townsend reported that the County had received \$26,000.00 from the

State for McKenzie Road. He said that this will go back into the year 2020 because the check was cut in December and received in January. County Administrator Townsend said that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) was impressed with the job that the Public Works Department had done on McKenzie Road. Commissioner Thrash said that she watched the Public Works crew maneuver the pipe on McKenzie Road and the work that they did was amazing. Commissioner Heiney and Commissioner Thrash said that they were told by GDOT that some counties would not even have attempted to do this job. County Administrator Townsend said that everyone did a great job this year.

XI. Public Comments

Dorothy Carter of 323 Forsyth Street, Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board with her concerns. Ms. Carter thanked God for free speech. She said that many people have stated that those that cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Ms. Carter said that racism exist in America and in Lamar County. She said that she was born and raised here and she remembers the covert racism, discrimination, double standards, that she experienced here, and during her 22 military career and other places that she has lived. She said that America's overt ethnic and racial divide has existed since the first slave ships arrived. Ms. Carter said that during and after the Civil War and during the Jim Crow laws people died for freedom during the Civil rights era. She said that the racial divide escalated in 2008 and skyrocketed in 2016. She said that defensive language, labeling, name calling further widened the racial divide. Ms. Carter said that there is White Supremacy and a Taxed Democracy. She said that our American Georgia history is quite ugly. She said that we have to open our hearts and minds to listen and hear the truth about our history; the good, the bad and the ugly. Ms. Carter said that she does not understand why White America is threatened by the basic liberation of other American ethnic groups and the people that stand up for basic human and civil rights. She said her rights do not take away or deter from anyone's rights or freedom. Ms. Carter said that voting is an American right and duty. She said that when people vote their voice expect things to change. She said that words matter and truth matters. Ms. Carter said please be very careful about repeating lies, false statements, conspiracy theories and misinformation that has been passed on for generations. She said that negative words, toxic words, doubt, suspicion and skepticism create division and cause violent consequences, injury and death. She said that they saw what happened on January 6th, 2021. She said that hateful speech, Confederate Flags, a noose, a guillotine were on the Capital grounds. Ms. Carter asked why so many people are opposed to all Americans having a right to vote. She said that she encouraged and assisted all ages who registered to vote and assured them that their vote would count. Ms. Carter said that during this election Americans exercised their right to vote. She said that the voting system was made and put in place to make the voting process secure and efficient. Ms. Carter said that as a poll worker in November and January, she was appalled by the number of people who made comments about the machines, changing their ballot, and shredding their ballot. She said that they believe the lies about voter fraud. Ms. Carter said that words matter. Ms. Carter said that Georgians and young people participated in their Democratic process to vote their voice for a change of true leadership, unity, decency, civility and respect. She said that there is a reason for term limits. Ms. Carter said that we should all work together to ensure that voter participation, citizen involvement, continues and grows. She said that leaders of true Democracy do not sew division, they build consensus and promote unity.

Ms. Carter said that the COVID virus is not a hoax. She said that it is quite real. Ms. Carter said that they have the numbers to prove it. She said that health experts and scientist have been

begging for us to wear the mask. Ms. Carter said that wearing the mask is only one of the ways to control the COVID pandemic. She said that if not for yourself, please wear the mask for those that are vulnerable and at risk like her.

Ms. Carter said that as an elected official, and a leader, they have an awesome opportunity to share the truth and dispel myths, conspiracies and lies. She said that people, and especially our youth, believe what you say. She said that they share it with others and it goes viral. Ms. Carter said that sadly many will believe a lie rather than the truth. She said that with Democracy they must work to make the government responsive and accountable to all people. Ms. Carter said that elected officials represent all Americans in their district; Republicans, Democrats and Independents. Ms. Carter said that she encourages them to meet and have discussions on beliefs of Republicans, Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals and Socialist. Ms. Carter requested that they talk to them about how government works. Ms. Carter said that this includes, Medicare, Social Security, Government assistance, taxes, capitalism and the economy. She said they should all have the moral courage to tell the truth and restore decency, civility, respect, trust and listen to each other. Ms. Carter said that open, candid communication, hearing and listening will change attitudes and avert further violence. Ms. Carter said that words, tone and mostly truth matters. She said, "As a man thinketh, so is he".

XII. Round Table

Vice-Chairman Horton thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting and being concerned about the community. He asked everyone to pray for our Country. He said that sometimes when people are alone, they talk to themselves and you listen to your self sometimes. He said his wife tells him if he had listened to himself, he would not have made some mistakes that he made. He said that we should always try to remember, "Do unto to others as you would have him do unto you." Vice-Chairman Horton said, "In God We Trust".

Commissioner Heiney said that he wanted to take issue with the mask wearing. He said that Ms. Carter believes that the mask wearing is effective and important but said that it is only fair that he say his piece. Commissioner Heiney said that what he has read from scientist and doctors and other professionals that masks are not effective. He said that it is Science based and not Political Science. Commissioner Heiney said that one of the reasons that masks are not effective is because of the size of the virus particles. He said that they are .1 microns and they are teeny tiny. Commissioner Heiney said that smoke is .7 microns. He asked Ms. Carter if she could smell smoke through her mask. Commissioner Heiney said that he was sure that she could. He said that you could smell smoke through an N-95 mask which is far superior to a cloth mask. He said that the basic consensus today is that cloth mask do not work at all. Commissioner Heiney said that this is well written as science. Commissioner Heiney told Ms. Carter that he would be happy to send her what he has on the subject that has been written by scientist. He said that there is a whole group of medical scientists that have discussed the mask issue. Commissioner Heiney urged Ms. Carter to at least look into it and said for her to please not say what he is saying or characterize what he is saying as spreading lies. He said that this would be very offensive to him. Commissioner Heiney said that what he is telling her is what he has read. He said that there is one group of scientists that say one thing and another group of scientists that say another thing. He said that this is very much like the global warming controversy. Commissioner Heiney urged Ms. Carter to look into this.

Commissioner Traylor thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He said that he had an

opportunity to help at the Health Department giving out vaccines. Commissioner Traylor said that he was so amazed. He said that it was one of those opportunities where he thought he was volunteering to help someone and it ended up that they really blessed him. He said that he had on his old hunting and fishing Carhart jacket and his mask and people often did not recognize him. Commissioner Traylor said that he had someone from Concord, Georgia and someone from Spalding County that came through to get a vaccine and they complimented our community and our Health Department. He said that they did not even know who he was and they did not know that he sits on the board for the Health Department. Commissioner Traylor said that they wanted him to please tell Health Department board that this is phenomenal that your County has their stuff together and is leading the way. He said that it made him proud and he feels like he has to share this with people because you all should feel pride also because you are a part of this community that made this happen. Commissioner Traylor said he had sent someone something in an email earlier this week and when Pastor Johnson spoke about the bridges it dawned on him and made him remember that this is our community. He said that he says this all the time and he stands on the fact that this is our community. Commissioner Traylor said that regardless of what is going on at the Federal and State level this is our community and we should interact with people in the community constantly. He said that we need those bridges and said that we have to personally go in and build those. Commissioner Traylor said that we are living in some unprecedented times and only a few people want to do the work to build and, in some cases, restore the relationships that have been truly keeping our Nation from experiencing the freedoms of Democracy that it should stand for. Commissioner Traylor said that so often people look at anger differently and said that anger is not a color, anger is an energy and it reflects those that carry it. He said that when teams in Lamar County go to State Championships, they reflect that same energy of that red, white and blue Lamar County Trojan. Commissioner Traylor said that the same thing should happen when we encounter a Christian brother or sister or when we encounter someone from our community. He said that we should continue to reflect that positive energy. Commissioner Traylor said that he challenges everyone, even though there is not many here tonight, if we can interact, like the pyramid scheme, if we can share with those around us, we can let our community feel what other people feel about our community.

Chairman Glass thanked everyone for coming. He said that since the mask issue came up, he wanted to share his thoughts on it. Chairman Glass said that he understood that the size of the virus is smaller than the openings of the mask but said that the virus is carried on respiratory droplets. He said that the respiratory droplets is what the mask stops. He said that it is not 100 percent but said that it does reduce the amount of respiratory droplets being transmitted across individuals and across the distance between us. Chairman Glass said that he has read a lot of things that Commissioner Heiney had referenced and said that he has read a lot of other things too. He said that he always wears a mask because he believes that it is stopping the respiratory droplets. Chairman Glass said that he feels that the mask is effective for this purpose and said that he always feels that the vaccine is effective. He said that he did see Commissioner Traylor at the Health Department when he took his mom and her caregiver to get a vaccine and they are looking forward to going back on February 3rd. Chairman Glass said that as soon as the next group opens up to receive the vaccine, he hopes to be in that group himself. Chairman Glass said that it is a new year and he is looking forward to this one. He said he thought he was looking forward to last year but the further he got into it the more depressing it seem to get. He said that this one can only go up. Chairman Glass said that he does have a lot of faith in the community and during this past year he thinks that everyone

has held together well as a community. Chairman Glass said that the financial results are one example. Chairman Glass said that the Health Department had a lot of volunteers and said that some of the volunteers came from Gordon State College. He said that they had staff and students and noted that if people go to the Health Department, he is sure that they will see them again. Chairman Glass said that there are also citizens helping to wave along traffic and making sure that they have the proper paperwork filled out. He said that if anyone wants to get involved with helping out, they can contact the Health Department and volunteer for some of those jobs too.

Commissioner Traylor said that vaccines would be given out on Wednesday. He also said that he wanted to make sure that people understood that as government officials they are not essential. He said that the only requirements or opportunities for people to get the vaccine or those that are of the age of 65 or older or first responders. Commissioner Traylor said that he had that question asked several times. He said that he had not had the vaccine and he plans on taking it when he is offered it and it is not based on being an elected official.

Commissioner Heiney said that he would give up his spot to take the vaccine. Commissioner Thrash said that she would as well.

XIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business meeting at 7:28 p.m. Vice-Chairman Horton 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