

**Lamar County Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Business Meeting**  
**May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chairman Heiney, Commissioner Horton, 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. Cyndi McDonald of the First Methodist Church gave the invocation.

**III. Recessed for Public Hearing**

Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to recess the Regular Business meeting to go into a Public Hearing. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Reconvened the Public Hearing**

Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to reconvene the Regular Business Meeting at approximately 7:03 p.m. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. Approval of Agenda**

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

**VI. Proclamation-John Perry Walker, Sr.**

Commissioner Horton presented a Proclamation to John Perry Walker, Jr., and his wife and cousins in memory of Mr. John Perry Walker, Sr. Mr. John Perry Walker, Sr was born in Yatesville, Georgia in Upson County to the late Mr. Willie A. and Mrs. Gertrude Walker on March 15, 1929. He was employed by Continental Tire, formerly Aldora for 51 years. He served as a Postal Worker for 4 years in the United States Army during the Korean War. Mr. Walker returned to Yatesville, Georgia, and married Ms. Catherine Johnson of Barnesville on December 21, 1957, and to this union, 4 children were born which now includes 6 granddaughters and 5 great-grandchildren. Mr. Walker was very active in the community, city, and his church where he served as a Deacon and Chairman of the Deacon Board. Mr. Walker's passion was serving God and his family. He was the first Black Bailiff for the Lamar

County Courthouse where he served for over 10 years until his passing on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The Lamar County Board of Commissioners and the Lamar County citizens joined with the Walker family in celebrating the life of Mr. John Perry Walker, Sr.

## **VII. Minutes Approval**

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

- i. Workshop Minutes-April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- ii. Public Hearing Minutes-April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- iii. Regular Scheduled Meeting-April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## **VIII. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Ordinance 2022-01 Development Regulations**

Planning and Community Development Director Buice summarized the changes to the Development Regulations. There have been Workshops, Town Hall meetings, and lots of feedback from the Public. The goal is to address the 1-acre subdivisions that are allowed by application along the waterlines and to fit the needs of Lamar County. The proposals include 1-acre lots or 2 to 5-acre lot minimum requirements for major subdivisions, architectural design such as brick or hardy board versus vinyl siding, and not the same style homes for aesthetic purposes. The First Reading of the Development Regulation Ordinance was approved in February of 2022 but they are not ready to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of the Ordinance.

Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to table the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Ordinance 2022-01 Development Regulations. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board discussed extending the Moratorium which expires June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Attorney Mayfield stated that it would need to be approved by Resolution and Chairman Glass called for a Special Meeting to be set up before the June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Regular Business meeting.

## **IX.. Ordinance 2022-05- Rezoning Application by Clinton Middleton to rezone the property from Agricultural Residential (A-R) to Highway Commercial (C-2) 2889 Hwy 36 East, Jackson, Ga., Tax Map 086, Parcel 043: and recorded in Deed Book 156, Page 676.**

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-05 Rezoning by Clinton Middleton to rezone the property from Agricultural Residential (A-R) to Highway Commercial (C-2) 2889 Hwy 36 East, Jackson, Ga., Tax Map 086, Parcel 043: and recorded in Deed Book 156, Page 676 with the following conditions. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion.

- i. No Club or Lodge
- ii. No Off-Street Parking Lot, or Parking Garage
- iii. No Gas Station
- iv. No Retail Business with outside sales such as Flea Markets

**X. Board Appointments: Region 04 Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council**

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to acknowledge the changes in the bylaws of the Region 04 Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council to change the terms from 2 years to 3 years and to assign Position 1 to Douglas Matthews with an expiration date of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and to assign Position 2 to Dr. Robert Cox with an expiration date of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**XI. Towaliga Circuit Budget**

Chairman Glass explained that the Towaliga Circuit Budget is proposing increases in the budget and they have to coordinate the budget with the other counties in the circuit; Monroe and Butts County. The American Relief Fund (ARP) funds are currently not showing as included in the budget. The total request is \$82,807.25. Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to table the Towaliga Circuit Budget unit there is an agreement with all 3 counties. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**XII. Indigent Defense Services FY 2023 Contract**

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to table the Indigent Defense Services Contract for Fiscal Year 2023 because this is tied to the Towaliga Circuit Budget. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**XIII. Brella Program-NFP**

County Administrator Townsend shared a proposal for a Brella Contract with NFP. Since the Board of Commissioners canceled the Wellness Program with Corporate Health Partners (CHP) for \$58,600.00, Anthem Healthcare Program has added coverage for employee Dental, Vision, and a new Brella Premium with the savings from canceling the Wellness Program. This is like an Aflac Plan and it helps the employees with their deductions. County Administrator Townsend reported that Monroe County has this program and their employees have received around \$21,000.00 in rewards in a 3-month time frame. The total cost for the plan is \$38,333.00 for a period of 6 months. The plan goes to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and then the new plan begins July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, for which he budgeted a 10 percent increase. The board discussed budgeting 25 to 50 percent for family health insurance coverage. County Administrator Townsend reported that it cost around \$400,000.00 annually for family coverage. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the Brella Premium with NFP including Dental and Vision coverage for a cost of \$38,333.00. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**XIV. Right of Way Mowing**

County Administrator Townsend reported that due to the rise in fuel cost, there has been an increase to the Right of Way Mowing contract of \$16,107.00 per cut. If the fuel cost continues to rise, they will charge up to \$25,000.00 per cut. This is for 3 cuts and 3 trash pickups annually. If the fuel cost continues to rise, then the cuts and trash pickups will be cut

to 2 per year. Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the amended Right of Way Mowing and Trash contract with BCLS Contractors for \$261,2612.00. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **XV. Purchase of Fire Engine from SPLOST**

County Administrator Townsend explained that Fire Chief Matthews is requesting to purchase a Fire Truck from HME AHRENS-FOX (HME). with excess dollars from the Special Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) in the amount of \$504,374.00. If they wait to purchase the Fire Truck, the price of the Fire Truck will be higher in June due to annual modifications made to the trucks. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the quote from HME for \$504,374.00. Vice-Chairman Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **XVI. Recreation Gym Bid**

County Administrator Townsend reported that he received quotes for renovating the recreation gym. County Administrator Townsend presented a bid from Blue Bear Restoration for replacing the floors for \$56,970.00, replacing the goals for \$28,847.00, and replacing the old wooden bleachers for \$67,595.00. The bid for the gym and bathroom roof coating for \$40,750.00, the front of the gym roof coating for \$15,00.00, the closed cell foam for the roof for \$48,607.00, the closed cell foam for the walls for \$29,985.00, the insulation removal and haul off for \$8,125.00 and paint foam with thermal fire paint for \$25,562.00. The cost for new LED lights is \$25,000.00 and the bid for new HVAC units from A&B Heating & Cooling was the low bid for \$72,660.00. The total amount for the BA gym renovations is \$419,101.00 and will come from SPLOST. County Administrator Townsend reported that this was the project that was approved by the voters in 2017. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to accept the bids for the renovations to the recreation gym in the amount of \$419,101.00. Vice-Chairman Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **XVII. Administrators Report**

County Administrator Townsend reported the following:

- i. Expenditures for April are running around 31 percent and they should be at 33.33 percent. The expenditures were higher in April because they paid out Worker's Compensation, Retirement, and the Courts which are annual expenses.
- ii. The Sheriff was able to purchase and receive 3 cars out of SPLOST.
- iii. Working on the Recreation Gym renovations.
- iv. Working on the High Falls Park Road Tower.
- v. Working on the Plans for the new Administration building.
- vi. Waiting to hear back about the sewer issue with the location of the Animal Shelter.
- vii. LOST distribution received for April was \$151,640.34.
- viii. SPLOST distribution received for April was \$270,786.43.
- ix. Reported that Pike County has joined the region of Ambulance Services. AmeriPro won the bid. Veterans Ambulance service has canceled their contract with Pike County. Once Pike County joins the region, the ambulances in service will increase from 5 to 7.
- x. Reported that Public Works completed work on 3 roads that were closed.

1. Possum cost around \$18,219.00
2. Brinkley cost around \$8,480.76
3. McCollum cost around \$11,992.01

### **XVIII. Public Comments**

Bill Daniel of 157 Brown Road, Griffin Georgia addressed the board. Mr. Daniel requested that the board work on the zoning based on the recommendations presented by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and within the map of all of the districts. When recommendations were given to the former Building and Zoning Director Dan Gunter, in 2019, they were left vague and they need to have specific plans and input provided from everyone based on what the citizens want.

Elaine Hallada of 131 Steeplechase Lane, Barnesville Georgia addressed the board. Mrs. Hallada stated that she missed the Town Hall meeting. She liked the fact that they tabled the Development Ordinance but suggested that the board extend the Moratorium until after the new Commissioners take office because the candidates running have different opinions than the current Commissioners. Mrs. Hallada said that they bought into a subdivision and said that more attention needs to be made to the developers. They have a 10-acre lot, they found water, and then they decided where to build their house. Then they decided to get a perc test and it took them 2.5 acres out of the 10 acres to find a well for their home. Mrs. Hallada asked what people with 1 acre lots do when they need a septic system because the county does not have sewer service. Mrs. Hallada said that they need to pay more attention to septic systems than lots. Mrs. Hallada said that some of the proposed subdivisions' green space is swamp land where the creek runs through it. The green space should be a percentage of useable land in the community because the goal is to build little communities within Lamar County. Mrs. Hallada said that she plans to attend more meetings because she has her views on developers because of what happened to them in their subdivision. The developers need some type of incentive to finish what they started and if they do not then they should be fined or levied. Mrs. Hallada said that it is tongue in cheek, the good old boy system in Lamar County where you can go to your good old friends, the previous retired Tax Commissioner, and for Tax Purposes only, you are allowed to turn your property into what it was not intended for; property that you subdivided and received a huge break on taxes. This should not be allowed. The taxes should be on the land that they have not sold. Why give them a huge tax break because when you do this you have cheated every taxpayer in Lamar County. Mrs. Hallada said that their community has 42 acres and 20 of them in the community are paying almost \$100,000.00 in taxes. Mrs. Hallada said that for the last 20 years, Lamar County has cheated themselves out of thousands of dollars in taxes by allowing the developers to not do what they should have. You need the tax base to grow from all sides and you need the taxes to buy new fire trucks and to build new infrastructure yet you give the tax breaks to people who do not deserve it.

Melissa Cline of 420 Country Kitchen Road, Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board. Mrs. Cline said that they should have a least a minimum of 2 acre lots in major subdivisions. She spoke to Planning and Community Development Director Buice about the long-term planning committee. The one thing that they can all agree on is that in the meeting the committee was told that had to change x, y, and z and they copied and pasted a, b, and c based on the

information that was given to them from the community. Mrs. Cline said that because they thought they had 16 areas, and descriptions, that were copied and pasted, they assumed that Redbone was Farmland and Agricultural. The committee thought they were protecting Redbone only to be told by Planning and Community Development Director Buice that this was not true. There was some form of misunderstanding or miscommunication with the long-term planning. Mrs. Cline suggested that they re-do the long-term plan by adding more detail and said that she would be the first one to admit that she made a mistake as to what needed to be done. Her biggest concern with the major subdivisions is what happens when they bring in all of these high-valued properties, based on the re-assessments, and then the market stops. She said that in 2008 her property was re-assessed and when the market crashed her value was less than what she paid for it. Mrs. Cline said that they need to be aware of this in case the market crashes again. Mrs. Cline said that they approved the agenda and asked if once the board tabled the Development Ordinance could they have added the Moratorium to the agenda. Chairman Glass stated that the agenda can be modified with the appropriate motions. Mrs. Cline said that if the Resolution had been prepared then they could have extended the Moratorium tonight. She said that she appreciated the fact that they tabled the zoning and that they are holding town hall meetings but it makes them look unprepared because after the town hall meeting last week, they knew that there was a good chance that the Development Ordinance was going to be tabled and they came into this meeting unprepared for what could have happened. Commissioner Thrash stated that it was a moot point because the Moratorium is in place until June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Mrs. Cline said that they would now have to have a Special Called meeting to make sure that it does not lapse. Chairman Glass said that the board intends to not let the Moratorium lapse and stated that it was his fault for not having it ready.

#### **XIX. Round Table**

Commissioner Horton thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting. He encouraged everyone to be involved and to get the facts correct. Commissioner Horton invited the citizens to come to the Commissioners or any of the County offices to find out the correct information. He said that there is no problem that cannot be solved. Commissioner Horton said that they are all Lamar Countians and he wishes the best for Lamar County. He said that small problems can be fixed.

Commissioner Heiney said that he really appreciated County Administrator Townsend for working on the Recreation Gym renovation because it is good for the Community.

Chairman Glass recognized and thanked the entire Walker Family. He thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

#### **XX. Executive Session and Adjournment**

Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting to go into Executive Session at approximately 8:02 p.m. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board came out of Executive Session. Vice-Chairman Heiney made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business meeting at approximately 8:16 p.m. Commissioner

Horton seconded the motion. Commissioner Thrash was absent for the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Glass, Chairman

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Robert Heiney, Vice-Chairman

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Bennie Horton, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk