

Workshop Meeting of the Lamar County Board of Commissioners
June 16th, 2022
12:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. on May 12th, 2022. Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Vice-Chairman Heiney, Commissioner Horton, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson. The meeting was available via Zoom.

Local Legislation to Reform the Board of Elections

Ashley Gilles proposed the following changes to the Board of Elections. Proposal one: Two-year terms, Keep members as is and stagger appointments based on when their term is up; Proposal two: Keep board as is but add an additional representative from each party; total board members would equal seven; keep 4-year terms but stagger 2 new members so every 2 years a party would be appointing a member; Proposal three: Reconstitute the board as two Republicans and two Democrats and the County Commission appointed 5th person; 4-year terms staggered; everyone can finish out their pre-existing terms.

Commissioner Thrash asked why they have “Whoever gets the most vote for Governor”. Board of Elections Chairman Bill Christopher said that this was done to make a way for a third party so that they may become prominent because people were saying that the dominant party in the Governor’s election would get a seat and then the second most dominant would get a seat and if for some reason there was a third party that replaced one of the major parties then that third party would have an opportunity if it became second place. Chairman Glass said that this would prevent them from having to change the law. Ms. Gilles stated that the fairest way to have an Elections board is for two Democrats, two Republicans and a County Commission appointed fifth person because most counties in the State do it this way. Mr. Christopher said that the appointees in the City of Barnesville and the City of Milner would be changed and one of the things that you have to consider is with the upcoming year, the cities are going to increase their support for the Board of Elections and if you eliminate their representation, you eliminate their support. The cities can run their own elections and have their own Election Superintendents if they do not have representation. Elections are complicated and you need a dedicated person that knows the law. Ms. Gilles said that she is waiting on answers from the City of Barnesville and said that the City of Milner is opposed to the change. Chairman Glass said that he does not see the rationale for any type of change. Ms. Gilles suggested that they add two more board members from each party which will create more of a rotation. Commissioner Heiney stated that there are more than two parties. There is the Democratic, the Republican, the Libertarians, and the Constitution parties and he does not agree with the proposals. Chairman Glass said that elections are two-year cycles and anything less than a two-year cycle seems counterproductive for members of the board. Election Superintendent Reid recommended no change because a new board member, during an election year, will not get trained until the next year. If you only want them to serve on the board for two years, the training has been for nothing because they will be off of the Board of Elections. Conferences are usually held early in the year or the year before. It is not an easy job and all of them have had to learn about the new equipment. Elections Superintendent Reid said that the board serves staggered years based on when they were appointed, re-appointed, or if someone re-signed. Currently, the Board of Election members are not appointed to finish out a term but are appointed to serve a full 4-year term.

Cindy Jones-Discussion Regarding Chaining of Dogs Throughout the City and the County

Cindy Jones addressed the board stating that cities and counties have Ordinances for animal cruelty including chained or tethered dogs. Ms. Jones said that dogs can be tethered for several hours but not 24 hours 7 days a week and she is opposed to chaining or tethering dogs. Ms. Jones said that she addressed the City of

Barnesville Council and they told her that some people cannot afford to build a fence to house a dog. Ms. Jones said that dogs should not be chained or tethered and mentioned a dog that is tethered on Brent Road. She said that once we get an animal shelter that will help and said that a dog should be put down rather than tethered because they should not live that kind of life. Ms. Jones said that she would share with the board several Animal Cruelty Ordinances she has received from various counties including Thomasville, and Glynn County. Chairman Glass said that Lamar County's Animal Ordinance is being updated to go along with the Animal Shelter. Ms. Jones said that she intends on contributing to the Animal Shelter and said that she wants to help with the Animal Shelter. Chairman Glass said that they are not ready to break ground for the Animal Shelter because they are depending on the City of Barnesville for the sewer and the lift station behind Continental Tire is not able to handle the additional capacity. Chairman Glass said that the timeline for updating the Animal Control Ordinance is after they finish the major subdivision regulations.

Boys and Girls Club

Chuck Bankston addressed the board regarding funding for the Boys and Girls club. Mr. Bankston gave a history of the Boys and Girls Club stating that about 4 years ago several community leaders felt there was a need for an after-school program because too many kids were going home where there were no parents. Mr. Bankston said he saw this firsthand while coaching Upward Basketball at the First Baptist Church of Barnesville because the minute they opened the doors for practice, kids from all over the community would show up whether they were there for Upward Basketball or not. He said he even found a kid, that went missing after practice, and overdosed on drugs. In 2019, they were told by the Boys and Girls Club that they needed a minimum of \$200,000.00 in the bank to get a club started and they were able to raise over \$350,000.00. The Lamar County School System donated the land, the City of Barnesville built the building and Lamar County pushed up dirt. In 2020 they started a Boys and Girls Club in Lamar County. Then COVID hit and that shut down the program. The Boys and Girls Club is located behind the Lamar County Middle School and this year they had around 45 members that were attending. The cost is \$65.00 to join per year and if they do not have the money they can still come. They have 37 kids this year in Summer Camp and the cost is \$100.00 but there is scholarship money for those that cannot pay. During the school year, they have tutors for the first hour of the after-school program and they help kids with their homework, then they have an hour of recreation. They also have programs where they teach kids how to dress, how to shake hands, and how they should act. The program last until 6:30 p.m. Mr. Bankston said that it cost about \$185,000.00 a year to run the program and they have been able to raise about \$50,000.00 from the community. They have been able to receive another \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 from corporations and another \$50,000.00 from grant funds. They have been able to raise around \$110,000.00 but they cannot seem to make it to the goal of \$185,000.00. Currently, they have around \$126,000.00 left in the bank which will take them to the end of the year. Mr. Bankston requested that the County incorporate some funds in the budget for the Boys and Girls club. Chairman Glass stated that the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds were given to cities and counties for a period of 2 years and part of those funds were to be used for community programs but they have to comply with federal laws. The issue with awarding them funds from ARP would be if they cover the need for funds in these 2 years what would they do for funds 5 years down the road. Chairman Glass said that the board would be reviewing an ARP Community Fund Grant Policy and hopefully the Boys and Girls Club organization would apply once the ARP Community grant is open.

ARP Community Fund Grant Policy

Former Finance Director Colquitt submitted an ARP Community Fund Grant Policy for review. County Administrator Townsend said that a policy was put together several years ago because Departments were applying for grants and they did not know where they were coming from. The grant would require a County match and need to be board-approved. Chairman Glass said that this particular policy is specific to the ARP Community Grants. Because they do not want to risk having to give back all or part of the ARP funds, they

need a policy in place to make sure that both the County and the recipients of the grant comply with the federal laws. There is an application process that will have to be followed. If they give the money to programs such as the Boys and Girls Club, they will need to know how they spent the money. An easy way to audit them would be through the submission of invoices and receipts. Chairman Glass said that they only allocated \$50,000.00 for community operations out of the \$1,800,000.00. County Administrator Townsend stated that some counties are allocating less than this because of the tracking. Some of the counties in the State have given money out to various entities without any way to track it and now they are on the hook to pay it back.

Regular Business Meeting Discussion

The board reviewed the Regular Business Meeting.

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) The invocation will be given by Major Leslie Holmes of the Lamar County Sheriff's Office.
- 4) Recess for Public Hearing
 - i. Special Exception and Variance Application by Redeemer Church to allow for a place of religious worship on property located on Potts Pond Road, Barnesville, Ga. in Land Lot 248 of the 7th Land District as shown on Tax Map 095, Parcel 018A and contains 5 acres.
- 5) Reconvene Regular Business Meeting
- 6) Approval of Agenda
- 7) Minutes Approval
 - i. Workshop Meeting-May 12th, 2022
 - ii. Public Hearing-May 17th, 2022
 - iii. Public Hearing-May 17th, 2022
 - iv. Regular Business Meeting-May 17th, 2022
 - v. Special Called Meeting-May 27th, 2022
- 8) Resolution 2022-11 Special Exception in Agriculture-Residential (Redeemer Church)
- 9) Board Appointments
 - a. Department of Family and Children Services
 - i. Cyndy Roberts- Term Expires-June 30th, 2022
- 10) Three Rivers Regional Transit Agreement for FY July 1, 2022-June 30th, 2023
 - The board discussed the funding request of \$17,900.00 and the usage of the transit buses.
 - The drivers are subcontracted out and Three Rivers covers the cost of the vehicle liability.
- 11) 911 Communication Bids for the Sheriff's Office
 - The Sheriff's Office and Staff recommend Williams Communication for a cost of \$236,091.00.
 - The board discussed the installation cost of moving the equipment to the new Administration building.
 - The board discussed creating a 911 position and pulling it out from the Sheriff's Office and putting it under the Commissioners.
- 12) 2022 Mutual and Agreements between the Lamar County Fire and Rescue.
 - ii. Fire Department of the City of Barnesville
 - iii. Yatesville Fire Department
 - iv. Monroe County Fire Department
 - v. Butts County Fire Department
 - vi. Pike County Fire and Emergency Medical Services
 - vii. Rock Hill Fire Department
 - viii. Wellstar Spalding Regional Hospital EMS
- 13) Administrator's Report

- Reported that expenses are around 39 percent and should be at 41 percent with the forecast right on target.
- Reported that the balance in the General Fund is around \$2,700,000.00.
- Reported that EXP is still in the process of evaluating the roads.
- Explained that the architects have determined that the roof needs to be replaced at the new Administration Building and is working on getting bids.
- Reported that he and Public Works Director Rigdon are meeting with C.W. Matthews in regards to the inadequate paving job that was done on Community House Road.
- Presented a “TextMyGov” flyer to the board.
- Presented an update on the insurance for family coverage for employee plus spouse ranging from \$113.31 to \$302.61 depending on the pay period amount. Presented an increase in salaries ranging from 5 to 10 percent. The current total employee salaries including FICA and Medicare are \$5,208,973.00 and with a 10 percent increase, the employee salaries would be \$5,696,795.95 including FICA and Medicare.
- Commissioner Thrash had concerns about the grass-cutting service because she is getting a lot of complaints from concerned citizens. County Administrator Townsend said he is getting complaints about the bushes on the side of the roadways. This was not included in the Mowing and Trash Pickup contract. Public Works Director Rigdon is in the process of looking at a piece of equipment that can cut the bushes.

14) Round Table

Chairman Glass announced that Early Voting has been going on this week and Elections Day is this coming Tuesday for District 2 Commissioner and a question on the ballot about keeping the County rural.

15) Executive Session

- i. Real Estate
- ii. Litigation
- iii. Personnel

16) Adjournment

Commissioner Horton made a motion to adjourn the Workshop meeting at approximately 2:17 p.m. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles Glass, Chairman

Robert Heiney, Vice-Chairman

Bennie Horton, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk