

Meeting Summary
Workshop Meeting
Lamar County Board of Commissioners
6/6/2023
10:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on May 11th, 2022. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend and County Clerk Davidson. The meeting was recorded and available via Zoom.

The board heard a presentation from James Daniel, the subdivision developer for Coffee Road. The subdivision was established in 1972 and the County adopted the road as a dirt road. Coffee Road is a County road that has not been maintained in several years. The County paved around 185 ft. and then they stopped. The unpaved portion of the road is dirt and grass. There were originally twenty two lots in the subdivision and six lots were sold. Mr. Daniel has 16 lots, five through twenty, that are available for \$400,000.00 new homes to be built. He explained that the water line comes up Coffee Road and turns down Johnstonville Road and they will need to be extended. The County will need to provide the right of way and water line approval for the extension. The lots are on a septic system. Mr. Daniel addressed the board in regards to whether or not they wanted him to finish paving the road or if they wanted him to donate the money to the County and let them pave the road. The board agreed for Mr. Daniel to finish paving the unfinished road during the subdivision process of building new houses and bring it back to the board for maintenance approval. Mr. Daniel noted that it will be in the best interest of everyone to improve the road and bring it up to standard with nice homes. He stated that houses in Needleleaf subdivision are going for over \$300,000.00. Chairman Traylor said that neighbors in his subdivision were complaining about the property taxes and he explained to them that the influx in growth has led to the increase. The neighbors then turned around and told him that if this was the case, they might sell their house for more money and move to the beach.

The Lamar County Health Department regulate food trucks and they set the fees for food trucks and the Board of Commissioners will need to reaffirm the fees. The fees are \$50.00 and if they go out on inspection it is \$100.00. The Health Department fees will be added to the County fee schedules for the board to approve. The County fees for food trucks will be \$100.00 for every Monday and every day of the year except during festivals. The fee that they had been paying was \$25.00 every two weeks. The license for a brick and mortar is based on population and typically starts at \$100.00. In Transient Selling, Church and Recreation fund raisers are exempt from fees.

County Administrator Townsend presented the Lamar County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Mutual Aid Agreement between Lamar County and Pike County. He noted that in the agreement it has non-emergency instead of emergency so they are working to update it to emergency only.

Vice-Chair Thrash stated that in her opinion the Right of Way Mowing crew is not working. She realizes that they were saving on having employees and equipment but they are not getting the job done. They are not cutting enough so that the citizens are not complaining. This is one of the top three complaints that she gets from the citizens. Vice-Chair Thrash suggested that they hire a crew and purchase more equipment to handle the grass cutting on a full time basis. Vice-Chair Thrash said that when she was first elected the County contracted with the State and the female inmates picked up the trash. This was an economy cut in 2008-09 that was never picked back up. She said that she is not saying that the Right of Way mowing crew is not doing a good job but they are not giving the citizens the services that they deserve. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they cut the North end of the County last

and then the South side of the County needs cutting again. She suggested that they need to put a Public Works crew in place because she understands why people are throwing their bud light out the windows and there is trash everywhere.

Chairman Traylor stated that staffing is the issue. County Administrator Townsend said that the Public Works crew could only cut one or twice a year and the contracted Right of Way mowing crew is mowing and picking up trash three times a year. He stated that the Public Works crew mowed but they did not pick up trash. The cost of the Right of Mowing and Trash pickup is around \$66,000.00 per cut and trash pickup. Vice-Chair Thrash asked if they could put this job under the Maintenance Department. County Administrator Townsend stated that the Maintenance Department handles the mowing for all of the County buildings. Chairman Traylor suggested that County Administrator Townsend create a spreadsheet of employees and equipment cost for inhouse mowing and trash pickup. County Administrator Townsend said that the total cost for the Right of Way Mowing and Trash Pickup is around \$266,000.00 for three times a year.

The Board reviewed the Regular Business meeting agenda.

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation

There was discussion the invocation. Commissioner Fletcher said he would contact the Pastor of the Church close to Eady Creek Road. County Clerk Davidson stated that she would handle contacting them. Commissioner Lovett said that Tax Assessor Haddock should have a list of Churches in Lamar County. He suggested that they send a letter inviting them to do the invocation. Vice-Chair Thrash suggested that the Pastor giving the invocation give a brief history of their church or something that they have going on in their church. County Clerk Davidson stated that the Pastoral Association is where she used to pull from for the invocation but it was suggested that they start inviting other people such as Major Holmes to give the invocation. There is always someone to give the invocation unless they do not show up and then a Commissioner can provide the invocation. Chairman Traylor stated that he would send a letter to the Churches in Lamar County.

4. Chairman Traylor stated that Vulcan is paving on Hwy 36 tonight and tomorrow. They will begin selling rock on June 19th, 2023. They have gotten permission from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the trucks to turn right in and right out of the property. Vulcan contacted the Road Department and GDOT and neither had a map so they are looking for guidance for the trucks to move forward without having a map. They will need a map or guidance of all of the no thru truck roads. They will need guidance that will take them back to I-75. Chairman Traylor said that they would go down to Morgan Dairy and turn on Barnesville Road and circle back around. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the trucks could not go down Morgan Dairy Road if they are loaded. She said that if you are forcing them to turn right then you are forcing them to have an alternative to get back on Hwy 36 to get to I-75. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they are going to turn right on Morgan Dairy Road and then try to make the U-turn and they are going to end up having an accidents or stuck trucks. Public Works Director Rigdon joined the meeting via conference call and said that this has always been an issue. They are going to try to go down Van Buren Road and then Chappell Mill to Hwy 36 if they do not stop them. They usually go down High Falls Park Road but it is currently closed. Public Works Director Rigdon said that he has had no phone calls or communication with Vulcan so he does not know who they spoke too. Van Buren Road has signs that stated No Thru Trucks. He said that in the Lamar County Code Book there is a list of all of the No Thru Truck Roads.

Sheriff White joined the meeting via conference call. Sheriff White stated that the only option they have is to go to Morgan Dairy Road and then take Barnesville Road and come back out left on Hwy 36. Commissioner Lovett said that from a truckers perspective they are killing two roads. He said that from a safety standpoint there is a curve on Barnesville Road. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they could make the trucks go down to the Hwy 36 By-Pass but it will cost the truckers more money. Sheriff White said that they will not do this.

Chairman Traylor requested a cost estimate for Public Works to put signs out saying No Thru Trucks behind the stops signs. He said that they are around \$67.00 per sign. Chairman Traylor said that Vulcan might cover this cost. Public Works Director said that Barnesville Road and Morgan Dairy Road is not on the No Thru Truck Road list. Vice-Chairman Thrash said that trucks cannot travel on Morgan Dairy Road loaded. Public Works Director Rigdon said that this is not in the Lamar County Code book.

Commissioner Lovett said that Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church on Hwy 36 has a large area in the back of the church that the trucks could turn around. He suggested that Vulcan could come in and gravel the area and in turn create a parking lot for the Church in return for the use of their services. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the GDOT Commissioner wanted to put a round about in that location about seven or eight years ago but they could not. Commissioner Lovett said that if they could get a temporary entrance that is not on their gravel parking lot to come in and do a round about behind the Church. Vulcan would make the agreement with the Church.

Chairman Traylor stated that he did not realize how difficult this would become and said he would speak to Public Works Director Rigdon offline. He said that they may end up having to go all the way down to the Hwy 36 By-Pass and they could be subject to tickets and fines if they do not follow the map that Vulcan gives them. Chairman Traylor requested a cost for detour signs and no thru truck traffic signs.

4. Approval of Agenda
5. Minutes Approval
 - i. Workshop Minutes May 11th, 2023
 - ii. Regular Business Meeting May 16th, 2023
 - iii. Special Called Meeting May 23rd, 2023
6. Ordinance 2023-07 Robert and Alice Beachamp-Rezoning from Agriculture-Residential to Residential 2-Tax Map 007, Parcel 124

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Mrs. Buice) said that the Public Hearing prior to the Regular Business Meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. This is a rezoning on Martin Dairy Road for Robert and Alice Beachamp. The original house close to Martin Dairy Road, where they raised their family, was sold to another family when they built their retirement home on the other side of the pond. The family that is in the Beachamp's original home has a family member that wants to build beside them. They are asking to rezone two acres and it is road frontage that goes down to the pond on Martin Dairy Road. They are requesting to rezone from Agriculture-Residential (A-R) to Residential 2 (R-2) so a grandparent can move beside the family. They have a centennial farm where they have been on the property for over 100 years.

7. Ordinance 2023-8 Alphonzo and Mary Watson-Rezoning from Agriculture to Commercial 2-Tax Map 086, Parcel 044

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Mrs. Buice) said that they made this zoning request last year and were not able to make the meeting so they withdrew it. This is on High Falls Road where there is a lot of property already zoned commercial. There is a truck

parking lot beside them and the area is a mix of industrial and commercial zoning. The Watson's do not live in Lamar County and they want to rezone the property to commercial to help sell it. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she did not like cart blanche zoning and would like them to sell the property without rezoning. Commissioner Lovett said that most of the area is commercial and there is so little commercial zoning on the interstate that he would like for anything up there to be zoned commercial. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they could put conditions on the property such as no gas stations. Vice-Chair Thrash withdrew her concerns. Commissioner Lovett said that this would be a great spot for a gas station and they could get fuel tax revenue. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this was an example of a condition.

8. Resolution 2023-06 Ivan Minks-Thousand Hills Cattle Ranch-Special Exception in Agriculture-Agritourism and Retail Sales-Tax Map 027-Parcel 034

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said that for many years the Minks had processed their own organic cattle and they cannot do organic anymore. In Agriculture you are allowed to sell products that are raised on your property without any special permission from the County. They have partnered with other farms and they have already built and stocked a farm store on the property. They have since found out that when they bring in other products from other farms, they are required under the new zoning ordinance to apply for Agritourism under the Large Scale. They have been selling but they want to be in compliance with the code.

Chairman Traylor asked if there were other like this in the County. Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said that Honeywood Farms is like this but the ordinance is different. They actually pulled out a few acres around their farm store and went to commercial zoning. The ordinance is zoned now where you can do that without a rezoning to commercial but with a Special Exception. Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Mrs. Buice) said that this makes more sense because you would not want random commercial zoning in that area. If they sell the farm then it reverts back to Agriculture and the Special Exception goes away. Rezoning never goes away unless you go through the process again. Commissioner Lovett said that he is a huge advocate of farm to table and moving away from industrial food this a good industry for the community. Ms. Buice said that the application fee is \$300.00 for the Special Exception and a Business License is required for anything that is Large Scale Agritourism. That cost is \$125.00 a year.

Commissioner Gilles inquired about the difference between the Small and Large Scale Agritourism. Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said that there are differences but with what the Minks are doing is related to selling products outside of their home and selling products from other farms.

9. Resolution 2023-07 Verizon Wireless-Special Exception in Agriculture-Residential to place wireless telecommunication facility-Lamar County Line Road-016-04210.

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said that this is for a cell tower on County Line Road. Vice-Chair Thrash said that it is on a wooded lot and you will not be able to see much of the cell tower from the Road. Ms. Buice said that years ago cell phones did not like to show you their coverage areas but now they show the coverage area maps. Chairman Traylor said that years ago there was a person who had an issue and they ended up tabling the cell phone tower. Ms. Buice said that it ended up being approved but the cell tower has not been constructed. One of the residents close by said that she picked up interference from a cell tower that was close by with her hearing aids. She had implants and she could not explain why it was happening. Ms. Buice said that FCC has strict regulations on when you can say no to approving a new cell tower but is very limited. There have been no calls or issues with this cell tower request. Vice-Chair Thrash spoke to a neighbor across the street from the cell tower

location on County Line Road and he had no problem with the request. Vice-Chair Thrash said in the past people had issues with radiation from cell towers and there was a lot of research that went into the approval process. They found out that you get more radiation from a microwave oven than you do a cell tower.

Vice-Chair Thrash made a request that they put a repeater on this cell tower because Hog Mountain is the only one in the County. County Administrator Townsend said that there is one on High Falls Park Road. He said that the repeater on the new cell tower is around 280 feet.

10. Administrator's Report

Reported that he has two Right for Proposal (RFP) out for bid; Roofing bid for the Courthouse and the Animal Shelter. He is working with the roofing contractor, Charlie Hearn on the specs for the Jail so that they can bid put it out to bid.

Reported that in the new Administration Building they are installing new glass front windows, and doors. They are scheduled to put the temporary units in by the end of the week so that they can put in floors, cabinets, doors and tile. He will be meeting with the locksmith tomorrow. The new panels will be installed in the back. Received bids for the concrete pads. Waiting on bids for the metal which will be painted black.

Reported that Ameripro has had 272 responses in May with 164 transports. The average time was 8 minutes and 16 seconds.

Working with the City of Barnesville on High Falls Park Road. They have agreed to move the waterline so that they can raise the culvert according to the recommendation from EXP.

Reported that last year they voted to update the County's financial software program. The process for the migration started yesterday. There may be some finances that are late due to the updates.

County Clerk Davidson reported on the Scanning Project with MCCI. The project started last year, during the time when her husband was sick and passed away. The Administration staff went through all of the records and it was a team effort. All of the documents were reviewed before keeping or shredding. Prior to beginning of this project, a summer intern from the ACCG Summer Intern Grant program was hired to create a State of Georgia retention manual so they followed that along with going online checking for updates on retentions with the State. They brought in assistance from the Public Works Department to box up records that were to be kept and to shred documents determined to be past the retention schedule for keeping that record. A record of destruction was recorded and filed. After the shredding process was complete, they put all of the records that they wanted to be kept and scanned into boxes and labeled each one with what was inside the box and whether or not it was to be returned or shredded once scanned. If records were needed from MCCI a request was made and they were able to find the records in the box and email back to the County Clerk. Everyone from the County Administrator's and County Clerk's Office, Finance Department, Human Resource/Payroll, Tax Assessors Office, and the Planning and Community Development Office contributed their records to be scanned. MCCI scans the records in an optical character recognition (OCR) format so that the record can easily be searched. The records are also scanned so that it appears you are looking at the live record. The electronic record is now the original document. To date 176 out of 204 boxes of records have been scanned, uploaded and downloaded into the MCCI scanning program.

Chairman Traylor gave a report on septic system issue at the new Animal Shelter location. Initially the hold up on the animal shelter was that they could not find virgin soil because it was soil that was put there when they were originally going to build a Fire Station in this location. The soil would not perk so they were going to have to purchase a system that was extremely expensive. They went back out and looked at soil closer to the arena. They found soil there but the

environmentalist at the Health Department put the usage at 48000 gallons a day; County Administrator noted that it was not a water park. So, they set up a meeting and they used a committee that gathered information from around the surrounding counties even calling on counter partners. They wanted to split the usage in half but all of the surrounding counties are only using 600 to 700 gallons of water a day in their animal shelters. After much conversation they dropped it down to 600 gallons a day. The book that they used says that a washer uses 500 gallons a water a day and 2 employees uses 250 gallons of water a day. It was not that they were overestimating it was they were using the data that they had been given. They looked at being green with the animal shelter by rinsing and not washing down stalls, picking up heavy poop and they do all of these types of things in order to reduce water. They are determining if they have to have a pump because the water goes up bill.

County Administrator Townsend announced the bid package for the Animal Shelter is on the website, the legal organ, the Georgia Procurement Registry and the Georgia Local Access Market Place through the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG). Chairman Traylor requested that County Administrator Townsend share how local vendors are chosen. He said that in the Financial Policy if they receive a bid and it is within five percent, they can negotiate with the local vendor and they can bring their bid down to the lowest bid. Commissioner Gilles said that they could accept the bid if it is within the five percent range. Chairman Traylor said that this helps the local vendors to put in a bid. He said that that when he became a Commissioner, they did not have any local vendors that were bidding and they were all coming from out of County.

11. Public Comment

Chairman Traylor requested that an agenda item be added to include Commissioners Comments so they have an opportunity to address anyone who spoke during Public Comment. He said that the time limit will now be three minutes instead of four minutes for someone to speak during Public Comment.

12. Round Table

Commissioner Lovett stated that there were some awards for Park and Recreation Grants from the State and Lamar County missed. They were due in November and he wanted to know how the process for Grants works. He said that Upson County received 1.46 million dollars with a \$100,000.00 cash match, Butts County got 4.4 million dollars and Spalding County received 9.35 million dollars. Commissioner Lovett said that he is pro-active about Lamar County's Park and Recreation and he feels very foolish trying to get Elaine Hallada to help him do a fund raiser for several thousand dollars to re-do some bathrooms when all three surrounding counties received multi-million dollar grant packages. He said that our State Representatives, both Beth Camp and David Knight helped Spalding and Upson County with their grants. The Spalding County newspaper congratulated Representative David Knight for helping them to receive the grant. Commissioner Lovett asked if there was a list of grants from the State. He said that as a representative of his district his job is to make sure that as little money as possible flow out of there and then get all of it back as you can. Commissioner Lovett said that this was a huge miss for Lamar County because the County needs that money. Commissioner Lovett said that moving forward if there is Federal and State money that does not have a large cash match, he wants to make sure that we do not miss it. Chairman Traylor said that Departments need to look for these grants but he knows that we do not have an active Grant Writer on staff. He said that he and County Administrator Townsend are meeting with companies that can start looking for grants. Commissioner Lovett said that he is passionate about economics and suggested that they get in contact with these companies. He also wanted to know what to do about the State Representatives that helped the other counties but not Lamar County and to say he is angry is a mild statement.

Vice-Chair Thrash said that David Knight did not carry Lamar County in the last election. County Administrator Townsend suggested that they look at the projects that they want to complete so they can do some engineering and have a plan. He said that on Hwy 36 they have property that they need to work on swapping. When they sell the current Administration Building, he is looking at doing a land swap and he wants to do a lottery with the local real estate agents as to who gets the sale. Commissioner Gilles inquired about ACCG and their involvement with grants. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this is the benefit of having someone serving on the Board of Managers.

Chairman Traylor requesting that everyone send County Clerk Davidson their picture and their biography. He said it bothers him when they took the pictures and did not put them out there. admitted he had not submitted them either. Chairman Traylor requested that they be submitted prior to the next Regular Business meeting.

Chairman Glass stated that he sent out an email regarding the Youth Commission. He said that it is in the talking point stages and they could possibly purchase tee shirts for the group of 10 to 12 students. He said that the goal is to get community sponsors. In Monroe County, Georgia Power is the sponsorship for their Youth Commission. Commissioner Fletcher said that the surrounding counties are giving supplements such as money for transportation, food and snacks. Commissioner Gilles suggested that this could be done through a grant with Give365. Chairman Traylor said that this would be something great to give back and educate the youth of Lamar County and exploit their minds.

Commissioner Lovett inquired about how much the Youth Commission program would cost. Commissioner Fletcher said that surrounding counties give around \$750.00 to \$1,000.00 supplement per year for each student including donations. Commissioner Fletcher said that it should cost less than \$15,000.00 and Chairman Traylor said that he was considering the cost to be less than \$2,000.00 to get it started. Commissioner Lovett requested that they send him a sponsorship letter to his company.

Vice-Chair Thrash congratulated the County Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). They now have a program representing all the kids in 159 counties. Commissioner Lovett inquired about the 2.5 percent, the 50 percent of the 5 percent of the Victim's Advocate Program. The funds will need to be reallocated. County Administrator Townsend said that he has a line item in the budget for this but the Commissioners will need to vote on this in the Regular Business meeting. Chairman Traylor requested that the agenda item be called Reallocation of the Victim's Advocate Funds.

Chairman Traylor announced that there will be a Town Hall meeting for the Republican Party located at Hidden Haven Estate on Van Buren Road on June 8th, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

13. Executive Session

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

14. Adjournment

Commissioner Gilles made a motion at approximately 11:57 a.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Recording Ended.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

Jarrold Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk