

**Lamar County Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Business Meeting**  
**May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend, County Clerk Davidson, and County Attorney Mayfield. The meeting was available via Zoom.

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Traylor called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Everyone said the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Minutes Approval**

Commissioner Fletcher made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. Workshop Minutes April 23rd, 2023
- ii. Public Hearing April 18th, 2023
- iii. Regular Business Meeting April 18th, 2023
- iv. Special Called Meeting April 24th, 2023
- v. Special Called Meeting May 2nd, 2023

**V. Lamar County 4-H Tech Changemakers -UGA Extension Octavia Jackson**

County Extension Agent and 4-H Director Octavia Jackson has been with the program for the last 23 years, working with 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> students in Lamar County.

The board heard a presentation from Riley Cunningham with the Lamar County 4-H Tech Changemakers. They help communities realize the potential of technology, empower teens as teachers and target adult audiences in rural communities to help with digital literacy deficiencies. They empower community members to adopt and use technology and raise the visibility of 4-H Tech Changemakers. The work that 4-H Teen Changemakers have participated in include attending the LCES College and Career Fair, Educational sessions, regarding scams and password safety, at the Barnesville Lamar County Library; they arranged for a professional photographer to take professional headshots to be used on Facebook pages. They also manned an information table at the BBQ& Blues festival, and at the 4-H award program, they gathered data from adults to be used for their project. Their future plan involves submitting Grants for 2023-2024, which focuses on

teaching adult audiences about Microsoft Suite and other Social Media platforms. They should know the results of the grant award sometime before the end of May.

## **VI. Invocation**

Pastor Marable with Bethel Baptist Church gave the invocation. He was delayed due to traffic and gave the invocation later in the meeting.

## **VII. Ordinance 2023-06 1st Reader-Transient Selling**

Planning and Community Development Buice gave an overview of the Transient Selling Ordinance. Currently, there are no regulations on food trucks in Lamar County. It was a hot topic with the City of Barnesville and where the food trucks could be set up outside the city limits. The food trucks are not brick-and-mortar and have a specific license type. Recently the State took out the Peddler's permit wording, and everything is listed under the category of Transient Selling. She has reviewed other Food Truck Ordinances in other jurisdictions, but the issue is about duration. What is embedded in the First Reader Ordinance is regarding the duration of Transient Selling.

Sec. 2-12-61. Duration.

Licenses issued under this article shall expire one year from the date issued. Private events and events that are community sponsored are exempt from any restrictions on the number of days a transient merchant can operate.

- (1) Transient Merchants operating ice cream trucks may operate during daylight hours only.
- (2) Transient Merchants offering prepared food sales (food trucks) may operate from 7:00 am until 9:00 pm on Monday only and may not operate at any other time or day.
- (3) Transient Merchants offering all other types of wares as covered by this article may operate from 7:00 am until 9:00 pm but must not exceed more than 12 calendar days per year.

Commissioner Lovett requested Mrs. Buice share the reading process for Ordinance changes. Ms. Buice said that outside of Zoning Ordinances, which require a Public Hearing, any other type of County policy or local government rule, requires a 1<sup>st</sup> Reader at the Regular Business meeting and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Reader at another scheduled business meeting. Commissioner Lovett gave an opportunity for any food truck vendor to come and speak, but there was no one present. Ms. Buice announced that the 1<sup>st</sup> Reader Ordinance would be placed on the website.

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to accept the First Reading of Ordinance 2023-06 Transient Selling. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VIII. Coffey Road Extension**

Planning and Community Development Buice presented a request regarding a portion of Coffey Road. In 1972, Lamar County accepted the extension of Coffey Road along with 16 one-acre tracts. Originally 21 tracts were built as dirt roads, and one owner of the 16 one-acre tracts used the road as a driveway. The County must choose whether they maintain the Coffey Road extension as a dirt road, abandon it, or leave it as an unmaintained County road. Commissioner Lovett understood that the developer wanted to present his ideas about the road before making any decisions. Chairman Traylor suggested they have him present at the next workshop. Commissioner Lovett made a motion to table the Coffey Road extension. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion until the next workshop meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **IX. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

Chairman Traylor explained that the Recreation Department sports have grown, including places to practice, location, equipment issues, and coaches. To help address some of these issues, Recreation Director Lowe has suggested that they consider re-instating the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to re-instate the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board but stay any appointments at this time until they review an Ordinance. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **X. Towaliga Judicial Budget**

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to accept the Towaliga Judicial Budget as presented. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. Commissioner Lovett stated that he found money and offered it to supplement the cost, and it was denied. He said the information received was inaccurate, and everything proposed was available to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Lovett said that he would do this with every budget that comes across his desk. He said the five-year caseload average was 1853; in 2022, it was 850. They are slightly below the five-year running average. Lamar County's five-year average was 304; in 2022, it was 310. The five-year budget shows a 32 percent cost increase over the five years, which is \$332.00 over what they have requested in five years. The counties only provide a percentage of the total budget, and the State makes up the rest of the budget. The Accountability Court has requested two new courts: Veterans Court and a Mental Health Court for \$14,000.00 each. Commissioner Lovett said that the Accountability Court is universal and needs to be kept under one umbrella, and this request is a total of \$84,000 for the entire circuit budget. Commissioner Lovett requested that the Towaliga Judicial Budget be tabled until they look at funds that can be reallocated to reduce the expenditures. Commissioner Lovett said that Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) has an \$11,000.00 shortfall in their area, and there is an opportunity to reduce the ever-expanding growth of the Government.

Vice-Chair Thrash said that based on the information that Commissioner Lovett presented has led her to resend her motion until they can review the CASA area of the budget. She said they could call a Special Called meeting to review the Towaliga Judicial Budget with other interested parties involved in the Towaliga Judicial Budget. Vice-Chairman Thrash made a motion to table the Towaliga Judicial Budget, and Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **XI. Safety Products-Matrix Message Board**

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve two (2) matrix message boards to be used for Public Works during road work. The Mini-Matrix Message Board comes with a full display and a hydraulic winch. Each message board costs \$17,275.00, for a total cost of \$34,550.00. The freight for two is \$850.00 for a total cost of \$1,700.00. The funds will come from the Special Location Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) for a total cost of \$36,250.00.

## **XII. Board Appointments**

- i. Commissioner Fletcher made a motion to approve the reappointment of Oliva Banks to the Division of Family and Children Services (DFACS). The term is four years and expires on June 30th, 2027. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- ii. Commissioner Fletcher made a motion to approve the reappointment of Rev./Dr. Eddie Collier to the Division of Family and Children Services (DFACS). The term is four years and expires on June 30th, 2027. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- iii. Chairman Traylor acknowledged the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board appointment of Dr. Jessica Traylor to the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board, filling the expired term of Jeffery Stephens as of June 30th, 2023. Commissioner Lovett said several people are interested in serving on the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board and made a motion to table the appointment and have all interested parties submit resumes to the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. The motion to table the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board appointment passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gilles said that several people presented ethical situations and conflicts of interest. She said they have a letter from the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board Chair supporting Dr. Jessica Traylor for the appointment. Commissioner Gilles said that, unfortunately, in small towns, sometimes there are appointments where they are related. However, not all of them are conflicts of interest. She said she took an Ethics class through the Association Of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG). Commissioner Gilles said that they are looking for the best person in Lamar County to serve on this board.

Vice-Chair Thrash said that the board's role is to accept the recommendations when these boards submit them to them. They should put the person on the board based on the recommendation. The motion that was just made was outside of their authority. Commissioner Fletcher said that he also agrees because this is whom they have requested and agrees that the motion made is outside their scope. County Attorney Mayfield stated that if it is on the agenda, then it can be tabled. The question is not whether they can table the recommendation but whether or not they can reject their recommendation; he would need to see their bylaws. Vice-Chair Thrash said the CEO submits the recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. She said Commissioner Lovett could table the motion but asking them to submit resumes is outside the board's scope. Commissioner Lovett said that all of the involved parties had their voices heard, and that is what he means about transparency in Government. He said he had no problem approving Dr. Traylor, but there was a multitude of people that may or may not be qualified and

it's beyond his area of expertise. He said that he wanted to be sure that anyone that wanted to be involved had an opportunity. Commissioner Lovett said that it may be beyond their scope so he is not sure why it comes to the board if they are going to rubber stamp it. Vice-Chair Thrash said they need to re-visit how board appointments or recommendations are accepted at their next Workshop meeting and have their boards review them.

- iv. Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the reappointment of Lee Wood to the Lamar County Board of Health-Licensed Physician Actively Practicing in the County for a term of four years, expiring on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The motion died for lack of a second.
- v. Commissioner Gilles made a motion to re-appoint Douglas Matthews to the Region 4 West Georgia-Georgia Emergency Medical Services for a term of three years and expiring on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **XIII. Administrator's Report**

County Administrator Townsend reported the following:

- i. Reported that revenues over expenditures for March are at 33.33% and are at 29.91%.
- ii. Reported that there was a significant deposit into the General Fund from the Tax Commissioner's Office for prior year revenue.
- iii. Reported that he is waiting on a report from the State Fire Marshal for the gym renovation.
- iv. Reported that change orders are being made so they can repaint the medal in the new Administration building.
- v. Reported that C.W. Matthews is paving the list of priority roads.
- vi. Reported that he has received specs for the Courthouse roof, so he is working on an RPF.
- vii. Reported that the Local Options Sales Tax (LOST) distribution for April was \$152,932.85.
- viii. Reported that the Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) distribution for April was \$270,122.08
- ix. Reported that the Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST) for April was \$243,565.03.
- x. Reported that the first payment on the TSPLOST bond was made on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

### **XIV. Public Comments**

Sylvia Bush addressed the board as a concerned citizen regarding the gym. Ms. Bush said that there are things that she has heard about the gym. She said that she did not know about the County's policy regarding property, but she hoped that the children would come first for their safety. She was a ball player for years, and also her brother and sisters. Her father also coached ball for many years. She has a deep seeded heartfelt concern in ensuring the gym gets done properly, and no child gets hurt. Ms. Bush was concerned that there was not a swimming pool for the children to go to in Lamar County. She understood there was a pandemic but routine maintenance needed to be done just as it is done in a home. Ms. Bush said that this is a small town, and she advocates for growth and does not want the kids to go out of town for

activities. She said that Upson and Spalding County are growing by leaps and bounds, and she wants Lamar County to grow as well. Ms. Bush said that if there are problems, there needs to be more discussion because she hears that things are not being done.

Natalie Pearce of 186 Pleasant Road addressed the board. Mrs. Pearce extended an invitation to the Board of Commissioners as the Chairman of the Republican Party. The details are in the emails to the board. June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 is the date and the board is encouraged to talk about whatever they want to talk about.

Michael Floyd addressed the board. He said that in February, Mr. Harold Jackson asked a question. Mr. Floyd said that he looked through the minutes and saw a question that he asked, but the answer was absent. He said that he asked if they are compensated for their positions on the Solid Waste Authority board, and the response was per-diem. He feels Mr. Jackson is being robbed of the transparency in dialogue promised on the campaign trail. Mr. Floyd asked if the board would explain what they get compensated for because per-diem is not how it should be explained.

Commissioner Lovett responded that this was Public Comment and not debate. Mr. Floyd pointed at Chairman Traylor and said that he did not have to answer because he was the Chairman. Commissioner Lovett said that this was correct and said that this should have been stopped last time, and that when you ask for a public debate, you should ask for a public debate. This is your opportunity to tell the board what you have on your mind. It is not the time to have a debate back and forth. If you have comments, make those comments. June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at a town hall meeting, would be an excellent time to have a discussion. Commissioner Lovett said he would be there to answer any questions he or anyone put forth. Commissioner Lovett addressed the Chairman and said that Public Comment time should not turn into a debate. Mr. Floyd addressed Chairman Traylor and said that he could have told him that and not have other people jump in and answer for him. Mr. Floyd said that it is unfair, this is his public comment, and he is not expecting a reply, but it is unfair for him to say they can have dialogue and transparency but not the dialogue. Mr. Floyd said that they requested via email the bylaws from the landfill, and they were talking about the pay received, which is \$150.00 a month. He said that regardless of whether you do anything or not, you receive \$150.00 a month; he said he never attended one meeting or did anything at the landfill. He said that Councilman Skip Seda received his check and was told it was a Christmas bonus and said he was unsure if it was a per-diem or a stipend. Mr. Floyd said that the bylaws he received were from 1988. He said that he has bylaws that are from 2015. Mr. Floyd said he wanted to get Mr. Jackson what he was promised but understood campaign promises are campaign promises, but they need to make an effort to see them through.

Mike Perry addressed the board. Mr. Perry said he looked at the Recreation Department restrooms and took pictures per Commissioner Lovett's request. He said other counties come to the Recreation Department and they see what they have. Mr. Perry said that he hopes the issues will be addressed and the problems will be fixed because they are pretty bad right now. Mr. Perry showed the board pictures of a changing table. He also said that a lot of progress had been made on the gym, and the fire Marshall was pleased with what had been done, and the safety issues for the children had been taken care of. Mr. Perry said he is concerned with the

issues that should have been handled, such as the bidding process and the surety bonds. Mr. Perry printed off the manual from the State of Georgia to give to the Commissioners and the County Administrator. The guidelines should be followed on public projects, and he hopes that the guidelines are followed for every project going forward. This prevents friends and neighbors from taking over projects that specialty companies can do. He said if you put out bids and hopefully hire local people regardless of whether they are qualified or not, you will not start getting bids from professional companies to do these projects. So, let's do them right and save the county money because it will be the less expensive way to go.

Elaine Hallada of 131 Steeple Chase in Redbone addressed the board. Mrs. Hallada asked if there was a threshold that the County could spend on a project before it went out to bid. Is there somewhere in the Ordinance that states this? County Administrator Townsend said it was \$250,000.00 but it was \$125,000.00. Mrs. Hallada said that if they spend \$400,000.00 plus dollars, this is not a repair but a renovation. She said that she contacted two people that she does business with. One, in particular, is the heating and air. She said that two heating and air companies in Barnesville said that they never saw a bid go out and were never asked to bid, yet this company from Thomaston, Georgia did the heating and air on the gym renovation. The invoice was for over \$75,000.00. Mrs. Hallada said that she obtained the invoices through an Open Records request. Mrs. Hallada asked why this was not put out to bid and why they did not bid for a general contractor. She said that there was lots of money paid out for bleachers. There is all of this money paid out to various companies, but the amount is substantially over \$200,000.00, and it concerns her how the money was used and why this project was not put out to bid with a bonded and insured general contractor. Mrs. Hallada asked how this process happened for a gym renovation and it was not put out to bid.

Chairman Traylor said that the project started with the last Commissioner. He said that the County was under a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) for the last seven years, which means they were operating the County on a credit card. They would borrow from the TAN, and when the property taxes came in, the TAN would be paid back at the end of the year. Chairman Traylor said that the County Administrator and the team had worked tirelessly to reach a solid point so they do not have to borrow money to run the County. Chairman Traylor said no one is talking about that, but that is the most important news he could share. He said that this Administration was trying to find a way to renovate the gym he coached his daughter in 20 years ago, and it looks the same. He said they were trying to find a way to renovate the gym and make it safe. The idea was to be your own general contractor. You pull your only permits, and you bring in people. It was in good faith, and they paid for things under the threshold. The unfortunate part is that this was a learning process and one that had not been done before. The initial quote for a new gym was \$1,500,000.00. Commissioner Lovett says all the time that \$400,000.00 sounds like \$1,500,000.00 savings. Chairman Traylor said that in the future, they will not do this again. They will pay the extra money to have a supervisor come in like they are doing with the new Administration Building and pay a contractor like Hogan Construction. Chairman Traylor said County Administrator Townsend did a phenomenal job handling this along with the new Administration Building and the new animal shelter. It was commendable to him for what he was able to accomplish. Chairman Traylor said that in the future, they would bid it out to ensure they have some contractor that will go on record to oversee the project, which will be an expense the taxpayers will have to pay for.

Mrs. Hallada said that she knows people in Stockbridge that work for Georgia Compliance, and she called them. She asked how much more money it would cost to fix whatever else needed to be fixed. Chairman Traylor said that he would answer her question in Round Table.

Cindy Bushby of 155 Redbone Run addressed the board. Mrs. Bushby said that any Recreation center in this County needs to be brought up to code which includes the building, lightning, fences, etc. She said that the children would be the future of the County, and they deserve the best and to be safe. Mrs. Bushby said she is concerned with everything she has heard about the gym.

Diane Perry addressed the board. Mrs. Perry said there are State requirements for contractors, permits, and job descriptions. In the job description portion of the gym project, what did they have as a requirement for the building inspectors because inspections were not done on this job? Mrs. Perry said that inspections should have been done throughout the various jobs. Mrs. Perry said she would like to know how the County or City inspector is trained or who they are.

Chairman Traylor said that the County inspector was Buddy Lanier, but the project is inside the City limits, and the City inspector is Mike Aiken. Mrs. Perry said she had materials the State puts out about inspections before every job is done. She said that when they had an addition put onto their house, the inspector did not come in and look at things. There were no framing or electrical inspections. Since he did not do his job, she wondered what they had as an inspector to do the job at the gym. Mrs. Perry gave kudos to Commissioner Gilles for having the guts to do the research and find out that the insulation and the wiring were not properly done, that they had cheap paint, and that the wrong fire retardant was put in the gym. Mrs. Perry said they paid the final invoices according to the paperwork she had seen, and the job still needs to be finished. She asked about the warranties from non-licensed contractors, electricians, or plumbers. Mrs. Perry said if one of the workers gets hurt on the job and there is no Worker's Compensation; the County pays, the taxpayer pays, and not the company. Mrs. Perry said that it is like a mushroom. There sure be liability and worker's compensation insurance for every company doing work in the County, and their insurance needs to be checked every six months to ensure they still have it. They need to make sure they are still making payments on the insurance. Mrs. Perry said everyone in the room should be proud of Commissioner Gilles's work. Chairman Traylor said that the tough thing about public comments in the past year was that they did not respond to comments. Mrs. Perry said that the general contractor did not have a State license. He was not a certified builder. Chairman Traylor said that an electrician is a licensed electrician. Mrs. Perry said his son, who owns the company, was the licensed electrician. His son should have checked his work because it was incomplete; now, he is back doing more work. Mrs. Perry said his final contract was paid on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Beverly Eskridge of 130 Holmes Street addressed the board. Ms. Eskridge said she would fight to the last breath for the animals in Lamar County. She said that at tonight's meeting, she saw there were a lot of problems in Lamar County, and when she used to come to the meetings, there was hardly anyone at the meetings. Ms. Eskridge said congratulations, you are packing them in, but it could be bad news for the board because these people seem to know things. She



thinks that they will keep an eye on things because they know codes, which is how Government should work. Ms. Eskridge said that she wanted to fuss about the webpage. She said she sent a message on the webpage and wanted to know if the board received it. They all replied that they did. Ms. Eskridge said that she believes in transparency and that the webpage should have the Commissioner's pictures and contact information. Ms. Eskridge said that she is getting ready to retire and will have more time on her hands. She said 33 years as a librarian is a long time, and she believes in having information so she asked them to do research and know what is going on. She said that the webpage should have a place to ask questions. Ms. Eskridge said she got some information about the animal shelter and was mad. She said that when you have a groundbreaking, you start construction and build a building. Ms. Eskridge said that they are trying to make the big-mouth women and men who are pushing for animal rights to be quiet and passive and they think they will be happy because they have broken ground. Ms. Eskridge said that she heard it was done because they wanted them to vote again for the Special Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST). Ms. Eskridge said she voted for SPLOST years ago, fought for the animal shelter, and asked why nothing was happening. She asked if they were trying to get them to be quiet. Ms. Eskridge said getting donations for an animal shelter is hard when you do not have a building. They cannot buy furniture or cages because there is nowhere to put them. Ms. Eskridge said that she saw Fred Morris at Pastime, and he told her about the septic system. She asked why she could not find this out instead of having to see Fred Morris on the street. Ms. Eskridge asked why they could not put an update in the Herald Gazette or on their website, telling them why there was a delay. Ms. Eskridge said it would make a difference, and she might leave them alone. She asked if a conspiracy was happening and said they needed information. Ms. Eskridge said that if tax dollars are used for the board appointments, she wants to know how they are chosen.

Chairman Traylor said the septic issue had been a major problem, but they have drilled more holes. In the place where they were going to drill before, a septic tank would cost \$80,000.00. They only budgeted for \$25,000.00. They drilled up closer to the horse arena and found good virgin soil. The last report they received was that the Health Department was returning for inspection. The final drawings for the plumbing have been completed, so they should be moving forward with the animal shelter. Chairman Traylor said that regarding information, Mrs. Hallada and Mrs. Perry have brought up some great points. He said that former Chairman Glass used to say, "All it takes is money." The plan is to hire someone to help with information, but that will probably be next year so that it can go into the budget. There is a goal for someone to help maintain a Facebook Page and a Website. Chairman Traylor said that his Gordon students have been working on a Facebook Page for the Board of Commissioners, and they looked at the website. They realized that it would be too much for them to handle, and they will need someone that is hired on staff for that purpose, and they will be in charge of media communications.

## **XV. Round Table**

Commissioner Fletcher said that they hear them about their concerns. He said that the previous board made the decision regarding the gym. Commissioner Fletcher said he is an educator with children, so safety is his primary concern. He said they are working diligently, and County Administrator Townsend has done a phenomenal job ensuring things are going as planned. As

far as the City Pool, that is out of the County's lane. He said they know they may turn it into a splash pad, but that is the City of Barnesville, not Lamar County. Commissioner Fletcher said that they would discuss programs for youth in the near future.

Commissioner Lovett said that a long time ago, he made the public statement that at no time has any business, any company, ever paid a cent in tax. He said he has been a business owner for over 30 years, does a tax return and cuts a check to the IRS every year, and has never paid a dime in tax. Commissioner Lovett said this is because every tax must pass through the consumer. When you hear someone say that you should tax the company, you hear them say they should tax the individual. He said that he looks at how it affects the people at the Waffle House. When you go there, you see the most visual representation of the working class. He said that you time that by everyone who works in a warehouse or a manual job for not a lot of money. Commissioner Lovett said they talk about this every time they meet. He said that if you will back up, he berated the Towaliga Judicial Circuit budget for a 32 percent cost increase. Commissioner Lovett said that he would look at every single budget they get. He said they have already looked at a million-dollar cost increase in the five months he has been there. There was a 30 percent increase in health insurance, and they are already working on alternative plans for next year to lower the costs. Commissioner Lovett said the property evaluations would be received in the mail this week, and they have gone up. He said that they have to make sure that when they receive it, they compare it with a lowered millage rate so they do not pay more taxes. The previous board decided that they could not afford a \$1,500,000.00 gym. Commissioner Lovett said that no good deed goes unpunished. They decided to take \$400,000.00 and get the kids a gym; ever since then, they have been beaten up for that. Commissioner Lovett said that in the future, it will never happen again. As a taxpayer, you will eat the \$1,100,000.00 going forward. He addressed Mrs. Hallada and said that he tasked her with a program to fix the restrooms at the Recreation Department. Commissioner Lovett said that he would go to the bathroom ball and bid on one of the restroom stalls but that they have to fix the projects as a community. He said that if they want a swimming pool, it belongs to the City of Barnesville, and they need to take it to them and tell them that they want to put together a blue ribbon community, and he will volunteer for that too. Commissioner Lovett said that he would volunteer his own money to make sure they could get those kids a swimming pool. He said that if all they are going to do is say that they have to have more money for this and that, next week when you get your evaluations, do not be shocked when the millage rate has to equal that. Commissioner Lovett said that he would try as hard as he could to ensure that the people working in the Waffle House and every job that represents that is well taken care of as financially as possible. He said he does not look at the rich people; he looks at the poorest of the poor because they will bear the burden of everything they come forward with. He said that he wants them as a Community to embrace these projects or tell him he works for them and will vote them down.

Commissioner Gilles said that the entire board shares the same sentiments regarding safety and is taking it seriously. She said that they will all look at how these projects are done going forward. Commissioner Gilles said, "Was it a mistake? Yes, it absolutely was, and this board is working hard to fix it so it does not happen in the future.

Chairman Traylor said they met with the State Fire Marshall regarding the gym. He said he knew Commissioner Gilles and Mr. Perry worked together and someone communicated with the State Fire Marshall. They did an initial inspection of the building a couple of weeks ago, and today the Regional Inspector brought her supervisor, and he came in, and it was a good meeting. Both the City of Barnesville and the Lamar County Fire Chief were present. Chairman Traylor, Commissioner Gilles, Recreation Director Lowe, County Administrator Townsend, Maintenance Director Beverly, and Mike Perry were all present to meet with them. Several things needed to be repaired; The J-Box Covers for the electrical boxes, power to the exit signs and battery backup, panel box labels, cover wires, emergency lights outside behind the building, and walkway behind the building that connects the other public area (parking lot), fence around AC equipment, handrail on steps, put a "closer" on the bathroom door, drop ceiling in wheelchair accessible bathroom and grab bar in the bathroom. They will let them know if they need a fire alarm and they did not think they needed a fire sprinkler system. They doubted they needed a fire alarm because he said there is nothing in there to burn, and he did not think we needed it, but he will make that determination from the office and let them know.

Chairman Traylor said that what the Fire Marshall said was phenomenal, " I don't see a major issue with this gym." He said they were all scared and did not know if they were about to see another \$200,000.00 expense. Chairman Traylor said that the State Fire Marshall said that sometimes people need to use common sense and figure out how to get this done. He said that Barnesville is a small town and as Commissioner Lovett said, they are using taxpayer money and trying to be as frugal and thoughtful as possible. Chairman Traylor said he keeps hearing safety, safety, but when can we use it? This means that this process can move quickly because it can fix what needs to be done. Chairman Traylor thanked County Administrator Townsend for being there and spearheading the meeting. It was a pleasure to be able to gain some insight, and this was a positive meeting. Chairman Traylor said that he could tell them what it looked like before, and people that went to Barnesville Academy (BA) 40 years ago could tell you what it looks like.

Chairman Traylor said that he went to the Senior Center and the Woodmen of the World, the Accountability Courts, and the Boy Scouts had a "Retiring of the Flag" ceremony. He said there was a huge turnout. The Accountability Court and the Boy Scouts did some repairs and upgrades to the Senior Center. They put out mulch, straw, and planted raised flower beds. Chairman Traylor said that it was beautiful and commended them on volunteering to do this work.

Chairman Traylor said that his grandma used to say that everyone that walks into your house is not there to be pleasant. He said that when they come to the meetings with a concern on their heart or a chip on their shoulder, when they leave, they know that everyone who sits on the Board of Commissioners has intentions to make Lamar County better. No one is getting a big salary, and the goal is to help the citizens in the County.

## **XVI. Adjournment**

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business meeting at approximately 8:41 p.m. and after a five-minute recess, go into Executive session for litigation at 8:46p.m. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board came out of Executive Session at approximately 9:48 p.m. Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business Meeting, and Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Ryran Traylor, Chairman

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Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

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Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

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Jason Lovett, Commissioner

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Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

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