

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Business Meeting Minutes

October 17th, 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.

Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

Everyone said the Pledge of Allegiance. Reverend Clayton Andrews with Building Relationships Ministries International

Agenda Approval

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes Approval

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the following three sets of minutes. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. Special Called Meeting Minutes-September 14th, 2023
- ii. Workshop Meeting-September 14th, 2023
- iii. Public Hearing Minutes-September 19th, 2023
- iv. Regular Business Meeting-September 19th, 2023

Resolution 2023-17 Urging the Governor and General Assembly of Georgia to Continue Efforts to Reform and Improve Mental Health Services for the Citizens of Georgia

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-17, "Urging the Governor and the General Assembly of Georgia to continue efforts to Reform and Improve Mental Health Services for the Citizens of Georgia." Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-15-Camp Road-"No Thru Trucks"

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-15 Camp Road -No Thru Trucks". Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Alcohol License-C&B Convenience Store

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the alcohol license for C&B Convenience Store under new ownership; A and S 2023 LLC DBA C and B Store; Anitaben Kanubhai Patel. Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about their Tax Return for 2022. Planning and Community Development Director Buice explained they would not have a 2022 Tax Return as they are new to the business. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. Vice-Chair Thrash and Commissioner Fletcher denied the motion. Chairman Traylor approved the motion breaking the tie 3-2. The motion carried.

Lamar County Impact Fees-RFP # 2308-03

County Administrator Townsend explained that an RFP was put out for 60 days and that one bid was received from Ross Associates for \$94,500.00. Planning and Community Development Director Buice addressed the board and stated that it takes a year for an intense study to be completed. The State highly regulates the study. Impact fees are used for new construction, warehouses, and major industries. Planning and Community Development Director Buice requested that they have a question and answer session with Ross Associates. Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to table the Lamar County Impact Fees-RFP # 2308-03. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lamar County Construction Management-At Risk Services RFP # 2308-04

County Administrator Townsend reported that three bids were received for the Lamar County Construction Management-At Risk Services RFP # 2308-04 as follows. The staff recommends Flint Building of \$1,000 Pre-Construction Services and a 4% Manager's Fee.

	Flint Building	Renfroe Construction	McLeRoy
Pre-Construction Services	\$1,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$29,000.00
Construction Manager's Fee	4%	10%	4%

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the bid from Flint Building for Pre-Construction Service Cost of \$1,000.00 with a 4% Construction Manager’s Fee. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NFP Insurance Renewal

County Administrator Townsend explained that NFP and Allstate presented this medical alternate plan in the October Board of Commissioners Workshop. There has been a significant number of claims over the past years, and if they go to July of next year, there will be a 30 percent increase. Several other counties have converted to this type of insurance plan. NFP had three bids, and Allstate was the lowest bidder. The benefit of getting this on the January calendar is that it flows with the budget.

Chairman Traylor said other plans they heard about offered better savings, but it was more challenging for the staff and the employees. He said a neighboring county converted to a similar plan, but it came without an in-network. That has been extremely challenging for the local physicians in that community as well as for the employees. Allstate has created a plan that has an in-network PCHS plan.

Vice-Chair Thrash was concerned with this type of insurance plan because the employee has to work with Allstate to get their claims paid with larger facilities. She said that they run the risk of employees having their credit jeopardized. Vice-Chair Thrash said that from a financial standpoint she feels like they do not have a choice but to do this, but she wants the employees to understand what this means for them. This insurance plan comes with responsibilities for the employee to ensure their claim is covered. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the only alternative is to no longer offer insurance for the employees of Lamar County. She said that the legislators have reduced Medicaid rates, and the Insurance companies are coming after the individual insured. She said that she does not think it is fair to make that up on the backs of the employees.

Commissioner Gilles agreed with Vice-Chair Thrash and said that she used to work in the medical field, and this does happen. She said that they have discussed having one designated person who could help with the new insurance process, not only with the employees but with the doctors that the employees are using.

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the medical renewal alternate PCHS In-Network plan with Allstate for an annual premium pay of \$865,225.00. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the option for a full-time dedicated service representative, as outlined by Jonathan Shaw with NFP from his email on October 17, 2023, to aid in the transition of Lamar County's employee insurance program. The annual cost does not exceed \$50,000.00 for a contracted term of one year. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. Commissioner Fletcher said that \$50,000.00 is a big price tag to hire someone you could handle in-house or hire someone part-time for a fraction of the cost. Vice-Chair Thrash asked if Commissioner Lovett's motion was that they have Jonathan Shaw provide the dedicated service representative or that Lamar County hire someone. Commissioner Lovett replied that Mr. Shaw would hire the person. Commissioner Lovett said that as they go through year after year, when reviewing the historical data, the insurance cost has had a 30 percent increase, and they were actually canceled this year. If they want to have a traditional insurance plan, they have to basically start over. This PCHS insurance plan will save money, but it requires the employees to participate in their health coverage. It will be uncharted territory for the employees. The anticipated initial savings is \$274,000.00 for this type of insurance plan. Commissioner Lovett said that Mr. Shaw will provide their insurance, and he will hire someone to transition all of the employees. If you do not hire someone, then all of the employees are at the mercy of an 800 number. If the doctor or provider is not a part of this system, then the employee has to fight this on their own. To smooth the transition, Mr. Shaw has offered to dedicate a sole person to this operation. NFP is out of Statesboro, Georgia, and

there is the ability to hire an insurance graduate trained by NFP to transition the employees of Lamar County for one year.

Chairman Traylor said he spoke with Mr. Shaw later in the afternoon of October 17, 2023, after Commissioner Lovett spoke to him. He said Mr. Shaw's reasoning for hiring someone in-house rather than NFP, based on his experience, is because he believes that person will be sitting there with nothing to do. If they hire someone in-house, they can help others in Human Resources and other Administration Offices. Mr. Shaw said that NFP would be dedicated to training this person as well as finding someone to hire. If they choose to have NFP hire a dedicated person, they will not only be working for Lamar County but with other clients of NFP. Commissioner Lovett said that Mr. Shaw said that the person would be a dedicated person for Lamar County. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she also spoke to Mr. Shaw, and he told her that if NFP hired them, then they could use that person elsewhere. County Administrator Townsend said that he spoke to Mr. Shaw around 5:40 p.m. on October 17, 2023, and told him that in the budget, there is one position that needs to be filled that will be helping with the front desk, the County Clerk, and Human Resources. This dedicated representative position for NFP would gather information from the employee and transfer it to either Allstate or Cigna. That employee would be doing the leg work for the employee while maintaining the database for the County or the employee. County Administrator Townsend suggested that discuss this further in the workshop so that they can all have a better understanding of the process. County Administrator Townsend stated that the new position will start sometime in January, and he would be working with the County Clerk and Human Resources regarding the job description.

Commissioner Lovett rescinded his motion. He said for full disclosure, he had a one-hour meeting with Mr. Shaw and Human Resource Director Kilchriss, and either Mr. Shaw told three people something different than himself and Human Resource Director Kilchriss, or the wires have gotten crossed. Vice-Chairman Thrash noted that the position was not on the agenda, so she recommended they put it on the November Workshop agenda. County Administrator Townsend stated that Budget workshops are scheduled for October 30 and October 31st, 2023.

Administrator's Report

County Administrator Townsend reported the following:

- Reported that the Tax Anticipation Note was not utilized because after the Bi-Weekly October Payroll there was a balance of \$55,104.62.
- Reported that AmeriPro had 222 transports, 88 refusals, and 42 cancellations, and the response time was nine minutes and seven seconds. There was mutual aid 19 times from Upson County for Lamar County calls.
- Reported that the cash flow is running on schedule.
- Reported that Hogan Construction should be getting the windows in for the Tax Commissioner's Office in the new Administration building within the next few weeks. Reported that painting touchups have been pointed out to Hogan Construction.
- Reported that the roof repairs at the Jail began on October 9, 2023.

- Reported that the Local Options Sales Tax (LOST) distribution for September was \$135,410.66.
- Reported that the Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) distribution for September was \$237,503.33.
- Reported that the Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST) distribution for September was \$221,982.19.
- Reported that \$673,705.78 was received from the Tax Commissioner.
- Reported that \$939,063.59 was received for the Insurance Premium Rollback.

Public Comments

James McClarty of 161 Dumas Road addressed the board. Mr. McClarty stated that there are communications issues. He said that there was a meeting scheduled as listed in the legal register. He said he drove all the way across the County to get there, and there was no meeting. There was supposed to be a sign on the door, and when he spoke to an employee, he got the “deer in the headlight” kind of look. Mr. McClarty said they needed some change, and the people in the audience had the same concerns and wondered what he was getting for paying his taxes. He said that he could go on and on about the landfill and said he would discuss this further with Vice-Chair Thrash. Mr. McClarty said that he did not understand when you found out that there were meetings after the fact, and that did not do him any good because no one bothered to call him about it. He said he does not do social media: Twitter, Tweet, Facebook, or Messenger. He depends on the telephone and live in-person communication, and that is how he gets his information. Mr. McClarty said that this was his gripe for tonight.

Diane Perry 101 Maple Drive, addressed the board. Mrs. Perry requested for a donation of books for the semi-annual Barnesville-Lamar County Library book sale to be held on November 4, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The two book sales and the raffles give a lot back to the library, and the funds help with supplies and equipment. They have a milk crate of books for \$5.00, which contains various books. Mrs. Perry announced that there would be a prayer service for Israel at the City Park at 6:30 p.m., organized by Mayor-Elect Kelly Hughes. The raffle tickets for the Barnesville-Lamar County Library are \$5.00 each or five tickets for \$20.00. Someone in the audience asked about the cake walk and Mrs. Perry said they did need cakes for the cake walk supporting Dolly Goodpuppy.

Dwight Fleming of 1011 Van Buren Road addressed the board. Mr. Fleming said he bids a lot of work for counties, States, and the Federal Government. He said that if they were a sole bidder on a project, they would be surprised how fast the government entity jumps on them to negotiate their price even further. Mr. Fleming said that on the Impact Fee proposal since there is only one bidder, they need to hammer them on the price. He said with the Construction Management that there is no way Flint Building is making any money at their 4% with only \$1,000.00 for pre-construction. They may be donating to the County. He said that the high bidder was 10 percent. Mr. Fleming said that contractors do not do work for 10 percent. He said that even the 10 percent is a good deal; he would question if the County is getting its money's worth from Flint Building unless they know Flint Building can handle the job. Mr. Fleming said that with the insurance renewal, they could do a six-month contract. He said that he did not think that they could go out and hire a qualified insurance

knowledgeable person for \$40,000.00 a year. They need to stick with the industry folks and hire them on a trial basis, and they need to train our people to handle it. Mr. Fleming said that \$48,000.00 for a six-month contract would be well worth the money.

James Hyde of 116 White Oak Drive addressed the board. Mr. Hyde quoted from the Georgia State Constitution. He said that there seemed to be a problem with comprehension. All government originates with the people and is founded on their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole. Public officers are the trustees and servants of the people and are at all times amenable to them. The origin of the word amenable is a 16th-century Anglo-Norman French legal term meaning liable to answer to a law or a tribunal. Mr. Hyde said that simplified terms means, you answer to us. He said that several months ago, he was appalled as an elected representative who sat on this bench and moved for a constituent's comment to be stricken from the record because the constituents opted to protect her source rather than subject them to the malice your behavior suggested. Mr. Hyde said that a few weeks ago, after listening to Mr. Poore for an hour, she was shut down in mid-sentence. He said if this is the way that you behave in the face of adversity, then he does not feel they are fit for public office. Furthermore, you took it upon yourself to implement a rule to limit Public Comments to three minutes, and he heard that they are trying to eliminate it altogether. Mr. Hyde said they did not seem to understand what he had just read. If the residents of this County want four, five, or ten minutes for Public Comment, that is the rule. We all understand the guidelines that need to be in place to maintain a sense of order, but to arbitrarily make a rule without bringing it before the public is completely out of line. Mr. Hyde said that he fears that some of them ran for office thinking that it gave them some sense of power; it does not. You do not get to think or reason beyond that or any other individual in this County. But you get to represent, and the only authority you have is to represent and vote the will of your constituents regardless if you agree with it or not. Mr. Hyde said he attended a Town Hall meeting several months ago. While he applauded the two Commissioners who actually attended that meeting, he was disheartened when he heard one of the Commissioners say that they had been to training at the University of Georgia. Basically, they had learned that their job is Roads and Levies. Mr. Hyde said that he submits to them that they are not educated; they are indoctrinated. While roads and levies may be a responsibility that you have to the State, your number one job is to represent the people who put you into office, to be their voice in our County seat, and to represent their will in the laws of government. This is your primary responsibility that is clearly spelled out by the State Constitution.

John Carroll of 530 Thomaston Street addressed the board. Mr. Carroll said that after the last meeting, he was concerned about a few things after going through the document dump by GEFA. So, he wrote a letter to Ms. Carroll, the liaison for the project, and had no relationship to him. Mr. Carroll said that in the last meeting, Mr. Poore was asked why he hired JMA to do this work. He replied that it was during COVID, and that was all they could find. Mr. Carroll said that in an email from Ms. Carroll on February 16, 2022, she also asked the same question because no official procurement was done, and he gave the same reasoning. Mr. Poore did not mention that JMA was owned by his brother-in-law, which Mr. Carroll said he found very suspicious. But aside from the familial relationship it was also written in the paper, and no dish to the paper, because it took a lot of work to find all the invoices in the document dump. The document dump stated that JMA had an invoice for \$10,000.00. The total of the invoices from

JMA was closer to \$130,000.00 for a family member's company, and he finds that very odd. Mr. Carroll said that there is a problem with the fact that \$36,000.00 was paid to JMA for demolition and cleaning work at the Enercon building during COVID-19. He said that you could not tell him that there are no qualified people in Lamar County who can use torches or who can drive forklifts and we do not need to import people from Irmo, South Carolina, which sits in the shade of a massive million-dollar BMW factory to come to Lamar County and do that kind of work. The other group of invoices from JMA was for the installation of the feedstock equipment. That was a 2.8 million dollar contract purchased through an agent in Charlotte, North Carolina. Mr. Carroll said that through a friend of his, who is the Honoree Austrian Consulate, she put him in contact with the owner of that company and he found out a lot of very interesting information. For instance, in the 2.8 million dollar contract, there was a supervisor technician included that was never used for the installation of the contract. Instead, you have almost \$336,000.00 in invoices between JMA and Seaborn Crosby's company Paradigm for the installation of that work. In speaking with them to install that part of the equipment can take about six weeks for the mechanical portion, which was all that was done. They went from January to September installing that equipment for \$336,000.00.

Elaine Hallada of 131 Steeple Chase addressed the board. Ms. Hallada thanked James Hyde for his great points. Mrs. Hallada said there was supposed to be a meeting held on November 17, 2023, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Milner Library. It was for the Solid Waste Authority with Johnny Poore and the EPD. However, today's meeting has been changed to Wednesday, November 22, 2023. Mrs. Hallada said that this was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Mrs. Hallada implored Vice-Chair Thrash, the Chair of the Solid Waste Authority, and Chairman Traylor, a member of the Solid Waste Authority, to change the date of the meeting. Mrs. Hallada said that no one would attend a meeting the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and asked if that was their intent so that no one would speak out. Mrs. Hallada said that this was a very poor time to meet with the EPD about the Solid Waste Authority. Mrs. Hallada suggested at the Board of Commissioners' next Workshop meeting that they pass a Resolution so that the meeting is changed to a more appropriate time for the citizens of this County.

Donald Hartman of 507 Old Milner Road addressed the board. He said that his property is about 300 ft. from the Enercon building. He said he is new here, but his family is not. They have been here for over a hundred of years. Mr. Hartman said that they are building on family property. He has a lot of interest in what is going on in the front yard., what are they going to blow out of the roof, how much noise are they going to make, what other explosion are we going to have, the train goes by multiple times a day, is it going to blow up again and are we still in a prototype situation. Mr. Hartman said they do not know when the pressure cooker will go boom, in his terms. He wants to know what will blow from the West to the East of his and the family members' property. Mr. Hartman said there is a lot of question marks that he has. There is a lot of noise being emitted from the building, and is it going to continue? Mr. Hartman said that it sounded like an airport. He said it was quiet today, and he does not know why, but he has an idea. Mr. Hartman said that the noise had been going on for several months. He said if you look at the place from Old Milner Road, it is an atrocity; it looks like a waste dump. Mr. Hartman said their buffer is being eliminated because they cut the bamboo. He said that they are not doing due diligence, and he knows a lot of people are

looking deep into this, but it is in his front yard. He knows other people who live two miles away from it, and they can sit on their front porch and have a conversation. Mr. Hartman said that he could not sit on his front porch and have a conversation without raising the tone of his voice and asked if this would continue or if this was just part of the phase for the building. He said he has doubts it is going to get off the ground. Mr. Hartman said the Solid Waste has a webpage, and per the Sunshine Law, you are supposed to post the minutes; there are no minutes. Mr. Hartman asked why there were no minutes. He said that he read 23 pages of the last Regular Business meeting that lasted until midnight and said that whoever put together the minutes, "hats off to you," you did a wonderful job; that is a lot of typing. Mr. Hartman said that, like with the employees and the insurance and what is going to benefit them, think about what is going to benefit him.

Round Table

Commissioner Fletcher said, "No new optics" tonight.

Commissioner Gilles said that Rebuild Lamar is always looking for volunteers. If you want to help rebuild houses in the community with a lot of outdoor work and lifting, please contact someone with Rebuild Lamar. Mike Perry in the audience said that they need a plumber tomorrow. Commissioner Gilles said that they could also contact Mike Perry or, Charles Glass or someone because they are looking for volunteers.

Chairman Traylor said that the Lamar County Health Department has a Memory Loss Program, and Lamar is one of three counties in the State of Georgia that can do this. There are a lot of people in the community that is suffering from Dementia or Alzheimer's, and if there is a family member who has any of these issues and you cannot get an appointment with a neurological doctor, please contact Sherry Farr with the Lamar County Health Department. Chairman Traylor congratulated the Lamar County Middle School Lady Trojans Volleyball Champs. Chairman Traylor encouraged everyone to go out to the Prayer Vigil for Israel at the City Park starting at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Elect Hughes has flyers available to take after the meeting. Chairman Traylor encouraged everyone to complete the Comprehensive Plan Survey.

Recess for Executive Session

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to recess the meeting to go into Executive Session for litigation at approximately 8:19 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:45 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk