



**LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Workshop Meeting Minutes**  
**Administration Building**  
**12:30 p.m.**  
**December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson.

Commissioner Lovett motioned to move item number 5 on the agenda, Forensic Audit, and requested to move that item to 8.5 on the agenda after the Regular Business Meeting Discussion so they could discuss the Forensic Audit in Executive Session. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Lovett noted they were going into Executive Session for legal reasons/pending litigation.

**Impact Fees**

County Administrator Townsend reported that at the last workshop meeting they heard a report regarding impact fees from Bill Ross. The initial cost for a study on the Departments would be around \$18,000.00. The overall cost could potentially run around \$100,000.00. The board agreed to table the impact fee discussion until January.

**Crosswalk on Five Points Road**

County Administrator Townsend stated there was a request from the Commissioners to install a crosswalk on Five Points Road in front of Gene Crosby's home. The crosswalk will cost \$4132.86 and the lights will cost \$1822.92. The cost for Public Works to do the installation work is \$1214.00. Vice-Chair Thrash noted that this is in Commissioner Gilles's district and when they put in the new speed limit signs, cars were running 80 to 95 miles per hour. There is no staffing for a Deputy and the Sheriff's Office is doing what they can. Vice-Chair Thrash said that Mr. Crosby has almost been hit going across the road to check his mail and the post office will not move his mailbox. The houses built on his side of the road were before they increased the setback and there is a concern for families with children. This crosswalk will be between the four-lane and Zebulon Road so it will cause people to slow down. Commissioner Gilles said her biggest concern is the speed bump because there have already been wrecks with cars landing in peoples yards. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the biggest concern with this is at night and especially with motorcycles. She said that crosswalks are normally done in subdivisions where the speed limit is around 20 miles per hour. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the GDOT does not recommend that crosswalks be placed on roads. She said that having EXP

take a look at this is a great idea. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this is a three fold issue: slowing the cars down, Mr. Crosby and his neighbor has to cross the street to get his mail, and it is safety issue. Commissioner Lovett requested to have EXP take a look at this and the radar signs that have the speed limits built underneath them. Vice-Chair Thrash said the radar signs do not prevent speeders; only deputies prevent speeders. She said personally she feels it would be a waste of money. Commissioner Gilles suggested they have a study done on putting in a traffic common island and they could place those traffic common islands in places where if a vehicle hits it, they will go into a field instead of someone's house. She said they can be oval or square but you have to go slower to get around them. If you have them on the road, you are basically directing if a car hits the curve where it is going to go versus having one speed bump across the road where the car could fly anywhere.

Chairman Traylor said the other option is having a company come and put up cameras and monitor the speed. He said that would generate a ticket for speeders. Vice-Chair Thrash said these are in the Supreme Court as being unconstitutional. She said she would not want to spend the money on the cameras and then they could have to take them down. Chairman Traylor said these companies do not have a charge; they put up the equipment and they monitor it and the County or City gets a percentage of the ticket. Commissioner Lovett said he is a hard no on this from a constitutional standpoint; you have the right to face your accuser.

Vice-Chair Thrash asked how long it would take EXP to do a study on this. County Administrator Townsend said that EXP has other issues in the County including meeting with C.W. Matthews. Vice-Chair Thrash requested that EXP put this as a high priority because she would feel horrible if someone was killed on this road. She said that she would feel horrible if anyone got killed by a speeder in the County but this does need immediate attention.

### **LMIG/TSPLOST**

County Administrator Townsend stated they are discussing Johnstonville and Van Buren Road. He said it will cost around \$100,000.00 a mile and there are 12 miles which will cost \$1,200,000.00. He is asking the board if they want to put this into the LMIG/TSPLOST project. County Administrator Townsend said the board had already approved \$1,400,000.00 for two roads. Chairman Traylor explained they would have to take two feet of the existing road to get the part that is not smooth along the edges out and widen it a foot so it would be three foot expansion. He said it would improve the quality of both Van Buren and Johnstonville Roads. County Administrator Townsend said he is reaching out to GDOT for grants to widen the roads. He said wants to bring the roads up to 20 feet versus 17 and 18 feet. Commissioner Lovett said he gets multiple calls about Johnstonville and Van Buren Roads so he is very excited to hear this but he wants to make sure this is not jumping ahead of bigger problems in the County. County Administrator Townsend said this would come from TSPLOST. County Administrator Townsend explained this would take a road away from Phase III of the current TSPLOST project.

Commissioner Lovett requested to be educated on right of way. He said a lot of the roads in the County need improvement on the shoulders. He asked if they have to buy more right of way to expand the roads. County Administrator Townsend said it depends on the work that they are going to do on the roads. Commissioner Lovett said he appreciated the fact they removed the reflectors on Van Buren and Johnstonville Roads. County Administrator Townsend said the RFP that was put out by EXP was to meet GDOT specifications which includes having reflectors but Lamar County has a lot of roads that are not 20 feet wide. Vice-Chair Thrash said on the dark roads in the County when it is raining people are reporting they

cannot see the road and asked if the reflector paint is being used. County Administrator Townsend said they were. He said about five years ago they used some extra GDOT funds from a Safety Grant and they spent \$195,000.00 on striping. Chairman Traylor requested to put the LMIG/TSPLOST on the December Regular Business meeting agenda. Chairman Traylor said they went with the Microsurfacing to give them more coverage. He said in the past years, they were only able to pave five to seven miles of roadway and this gave them the ability to pave up to 30 miles. Chairman Traylor said now they are going back to doing less miles but a better job. Commissioner Fletcher requested to see Phase III. Vice-Chair Thrash said she is requesting emergency work be done on City Pond Road.

### **Recreation Advisory Board**

Recreation Director Tiffany Lowe addressed the board. The nominations for the new Recreation Advisory Board are Will Sneed, Luke Andrews, Roger Samples, T.J. Imberger, and Bo Dunn. She would like to have the Recreation Advisory Board in place in January. She said they have all had a chance to look at the by-laws. Recreation Director Lowe said they are not looking for them to take on the day to day operations but for them to help on Recreation improvements such as the bathrooms. The terms for each board member will be staggered in two year terms. Recreation Director Lowe stated she would confirm that they are all willing to serve prior to the December Regular Business meeting.

### **Martin Luther King Celebration-Courthouse Lawn**

County Administrator Townsend said he had a request to use the front lawn of the Courthouse for the Martin Luther King Celebration. The Board of Commissioners agreed to continue to allow this celebration at the Courthouse.

### **Regular Meeting Discussion**

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation- Major Leslie Holmes
4. Recess for Public Hearing
5. Joint Planning Commission Board- Planning Commission and Board of Appeals

Planning and Community Development Director Buice said at the November meeting they introduced the First Reading of two Ordinances. One was to include the City of Milner to the already existing Joint Planning Commission they have with the City of Barnesville and the second Ordinance was to disband the County Board of Appeals and role their duties into the Joint Planning Commission. They will need a Public Hearing which will be this coming Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. prior to the Regular Business meeting. She said she has not received a lot of calls and the ones that she has talked are in favor of this. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said during the same meeting the Board of Commissioner will need to appoint three board members in the section of the Board Appointments. Commissioner Gilles suggested Eddie Felton and Commissioner Fletcher suggested Dwight Fleming.

6. Reconvene Regular Business Meeting
7. Approval of Agenda
  8. Minutes Approval

- i. Workshop Meeting-November 8th, 2023
  - ii. Public Hearing-November 14th, 2023
  - iii. Regular Business Meeting-November 14th, 2023
  - iv. Budget Workshop Meeting-November 29th, 2023
9. Annual Appointments
- i. Annual Appointments
    - Vice-Chairman**  
Ashley Gilles  
County Attorney
    - Scott Mayfield**  
Smith, Welch, and Webb and White
    - Open Records Custodian**  
Scott Mayfield-Attorney  
County Surveyor  
James Butler
    - County Physician-Worker's Compensation**
      - 1. Doctors Woodall, Wilson, and Manley
      - 2. Doctor Aaron Buice
      - 3. Family Medical Center (Family Medicine) Griffin, Ga.
      - 4. The Hughston Clinic (Orthopedic Surgery)
      - 5. Orthopedics Sports Medicine & Surgery-Thomaston Ga.
      - 6. Orthopedics Sports Medicine & Surgery-Brandon Boyce-Barnesville, Ga.
      - 7. Resurgens Orthopedics-Griffin, Ga.
      - 8. Resurgens Orthopedics-Fayetteville, Ga
10. Board Appointments
- i. Re-Appointment of Irvin Trice-Non-Public Member of the Council of the Three Rivers Regional Commission
  - ii. Re-Appointment of Three Rivers Regional Commission-County-Jason Lovett
  - iii. E911 Committee- County-Ashley Gilles
  - iv. Re-Appointment -Lamar County Regional Solid Waste Authority-Ryran Traylor-Term Expires 12-31-2023 4 Year Term
  - v. Re-Appointment Board of Elections-Monica Walter-Term Expires 12-31-2023 Four Year Term
  - vi. Appointment of Recreation Advisory Board:
    - 4 year term- Will Sneed- District 1
    - 3 year term- Rogers Samples- District 2
    - 3 Year term- TJ Imberger- Chairman Traylor
    - 2 Year term- Luke Andrews- District 4
    - 2 Year term- Bo Dunn-District 3
  - vii. Joint Planning Commission
11. 1st Reading of Ordinance 2023-21 Personnel Policy
- i. Personnel Policy-Appendix A
12. 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-20 Planning Commission

- i. 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-20 Planning Commission
- 13. 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-21 Board of Appeals
  - i. 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-21 Board of Appeals
- 14. 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-22 Speed Limit Change from 45 to 35 mph-Skinners Bypass
  - i. 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2023-22 Speed Limit Change from 45 to 35 mph
- 15. Resolution 2023-18 Tax Assessors Board for re-appointment of Andy Bush to a 4-year beginning 1/1/2024 through 12/31/2027.
  - i. Resolution 2023-18
- 16. Resolution 2023-19 Qualifying Fees
  - i. Resolution 2023-19 Qualifying Fees

County Commissioner District 3	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 108.00
County Commissioner District 4	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 108.00
Board of Education District 1	\$ 6,600.00	\$ 198.00
Board of Education District 3	\$ 6,600.00	\$ 198.00
Magistrate Judge	\$ 56,451.65	\$ 1,693.55
Sheriff	\$ 64,255.19	\$ 1,927.66
Probate Judge	\$ 55,344.71	\$ 1,660.34
Clerk of Superior Court	\$ 55,344.71	\$ 1,660.34
Tax Commissioner	\$ 55,344.71	\$ 1660.34
Coroner	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 72.00

- 17. Resolution 2023-20 Budget Approval
  - i. Resolution 2023-20 Budget Approval
- 18. Request for Forensic Audit-Solid Waste Authority
- 19. LMIG/TSPLOST
- 20. Website Design

County Administrator Townsend stated this will cost \$24,800.00 and he currently does not have funding from ARP to upgrade the website. The board agreed to table the website design until January. Commissioner Fletcher requested that County Clerk Davidson reach out to other County Clerk’s regarding what website designs that they are using.

- 21. Administrator's Report
  - i. Administrator's Report
    - Reported that the Tax Commissioner had issues with escrow accounts from banks and December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 she sent in \$4,733,000.00.
    - Reported that the Life Safety Plan has been submitted for the gym. They have a temporary certificate.
    - Reported that they finished the Courthouse and Detention Center Roof Repairs.

- Reported that EXP is working on a punch list.
- Reported that they did speak with a contractor the end of November for the new Animal Shelter. He does not have a date for this.
- Reported that there is an ETA ( Estimated Time of Arrival) for the new glass for the Tax Commissioners Office, and the new building sign of the week of January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. They are finishing the punch list items; painting, cabinet work and holes and trash on the sheetrock. Reported that he is working with the movers about moving the Administration Office the 1<sup>st</sup> week of January.
- Chairman Traylor reported that Flint Contractors provided a chart for an anticipated timeline for the new Animal Shelter if everything is approved. County Administrator Townsend reported that they are working with the Department of Agriculture. Vice-Chair Thrash requested that County Administrator Townsend share the budget decisions with the Board of Commissioners so that in January they do not have to table it to February.
- Reported that with SPLOST IV, \$144,000.00 goes to the Town of Aldora, and the balance goes to the City of Milner. Once that is completed, then the distributions are split between the City of Barnesville and the County.
- Commissioner Lovett pointed out that the collections for the Local Option Sales Tax ( LOST) the Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) and the Transportation Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) is down from previous collections in 2023. County Administrator Townsend reported that they are above the total anticipated budgeted collections.
- Reported that there has been a decrease in the budget with the property taxes from 55 to 47 percent. He said that other revenues are supporting the budget.

22. Public Comment

23. Round Table

24. Executive Session

i. Real Estate

ii. Litigation

iii. Personnel

25. Adjournment

### **Forensic Audit**

Chairman Traylor said that there has been a lot of talk on this and there was a request to add it to the agenda in September of 2023. Vice-Chair Thrash said as a member of the Board of Commissioners, she has looked into this issue in depth, and she has also received an opinion from the County Attorney and she does not believe that this board has any legal authority to motion, vote on, or otherwise order a forensic audit. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they have a County Attorney to advise the board on issue like these and not following the attorneys advise in the past has gotten them into trouble. Vice-Chair Thrash addressed Attorney Mayfield and asked to hear from him on this matter.

County Attorney Mayfield said that he could not point to the Chapter and Verse that says you can or cannot do it but passed around three parts of the law to the Board of Commissioners. The first two are Georgia code sections and the third is the Lamar County code and none of

the three of them say that you can or you cannot. Commissioner Gilles said that she would like to talk about the Environmental Facilities Agreement between the Lamar County Solid Waste Authority and the Lamar County Board of Commissioners that was signed in for this loan as a part of the loan where it does say explicitly that the public body (meaning us) “if the borrower should fail any such agreement, the public body can institute action against the borrower that it may be necessary to compel performance or recover its damages for non-performance as long as such action shall do no violence or adversely effect the agreement that is part of the public body contained in this contract. As long as they are still paying, if there is non-performance it looks like they can execute by a third party according to this contract.” County Attorney Mayfield asked if they had technically non-performed until they miss a payment? Commissioner Gilles said that they keep missing deadlines and this was supposed to be up and running and making money. Commissioner Lovett said that this is not just about a GEFA loan; this is about failure to perform. Commissioner Lovett asked if this was the original contract. Commissioner Gilles replied that it was signed by; Jay Matthews, Johnny Poore, and Joe Bostwick. County Attorney Mayfield said that in his research he did not think to look at that. He said he just looked at the law. Commissioner Gilles said that they signed it over for taxing. County Attorney Mayfield said his only caveat to that would be is that it triggered, since they have not technically missed a payment, it has been continuous after continuous after continuous. Commissioner Gilles said that could be reactive on a 27.5 million dollar loan. County Attorney Mayfield said that he assumed Commissioner Gilles had that for a while and this is the first time she is reading this to him in the meeting. Commissioner Lovett said that he assumed he had it from the beginning. Commissioner Gilles said she asked County Attorney Mayfield if he had it from the beginning and she asked if he had the same amount of pages that she did. County Attorney Mayfield said that it says what it says but he would not think that it would kick in until they are in default. Commissioner Lovett asked if he meant the default of the loan or the default under the performance agreement. County Attorney Mayfield replied that it would be the loan he would think. Commissioner Gilles said it also says in there that if they ask for it, they have to give them unaudited financial statements for the whole month: if they ask for it. Commissioner Gilles said she believes that Commissioner Lovett has asked for it multiple times and they have yet to see an unaudited financial statement from the authority. County Attorney Mayfield said he no longer represents them so he cannot help them. Commissioner Gilles requested that this be on the record. County Attorney Mayfield said again, the statues he gave them seem to be the County’s delegation of all aspects of the Solid Waste’s management to the Solid Waste Authority. He said if there is an agreement between the two parties, that modifies that, that would change it. Commissioner Lovett asked County Attorney Mayfield if he would like to have time to look over it and give them an answer on Tuesday. County Attorney Mayfield replied that he would be happy to look at it.

### **Executive Session**

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to go into Executive Session at approximately 1:29 p.m. and said anything further out needs Executive Session. Commissioner Gilles Lovett said that he would agree and seconded the motion. Chairman Traylor noted this was for litigation and both Commissioner Gilles and Commissioner Lovett said it was for litigation. Commissioner Gilles said if it is not to please let them know. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Reconvene Regular Workshop Agenda**

The board came out of executive session and reconvened the Workshop Meeting at approximately 2:11 p.m.

### **Public Comment**

Harold Jackson addressed the board. Mr. Jackson said that he thinks that Chairman Traylor and Vice-Chair Thrash should recuse themselves of voting for a forensic audit because he feels it is a conflict of interest.

Cindy Bushby of 155 Redbone Run Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board. Mrs. Bushby said the Commissioners sitting on the Solid Waste Authority board should recuse themselves from the forensic audit vote. She said there needs to be a full engineering and a full forensic audit of the Solid Waste Authority.

Dixie Benson of 399 Grove Street addressed the board. Ms. Benson said for the sake of accountability she recommends there be a forensic audit.

Bonnie Martin 626 Piedmont Road Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board. Ms. Martin said she started going to some of the Board of Commissioners meetings a few years ago and said she does not understand the process. She commended all of the Commissioners for taking on the task because she knows it is a thankless job. She said they probably have a lot more headaches than they realized. Ms. Martin said she recalls that Public Comments used to be five minutes and questions that were brought up by the Public were generally addressed at that time. Now she said the time limit is three minutes and there are no legitimate responses to the questions that are asked. Ms. Martin asked where the citizens of Lamar County need to go to get their questions answered. She is definitely in favor of putting a decision to put a call for a forensic audit on the agenda. She said there are too many suspicious expenses, missed deadlines, and sketchy board meetings to keep pretending all is well. Ms. Martin said she sincerely hopes the project will get finished some day and work as promised. Ms. Martin said that it needs immediate and thorough investigation. This vote should be made by Commissioners who are not serving on the Solid Waste Authority Board. She said it is a huge conflict of interest for ones serving on the Solid Waste Authority Board to vote on whether or not to have an audit since payments to that will naturally be included in the audit. Ms. Martin said a vote concerning a forensic audit by the Solid Waste Authority Board members could certainly be perceived as a bias vote. As Commissioners you allegiance should be to the citizens of Lamar County and not the Solid Waste Authority. Ms. Martin said if Chairman Traylor and Vice-Chair Traylor do not recuse themselves any vote other than a yes will be perceived as a bias vote for the Solid Waste Authority rather than the citizens of Lamar County. Ms. Martin said to remember appearances to matter.

### **Round Table**

Chairman Traylor said the time limit for Public Comments used to be four minutes and there has always been a timer. He said there was not any response back and forth. Those comments were directed straight to Chairman Glass. Chairman Traylor said occasionally if there was something they could identify immediately, a speed limit sign was down, they could respond. If there was something that required research they never responded. Chairman Traylor said Spalding County also has a three minute time limit and he believes that Butts and Monroe County are a three minutes and they use the same procedure. Chairman Traylor said at



conferences he attends they share best practices. He said ultimately it is the decision of the Chairman but when they changed it from four to three minutes the Board of Commissioners discussed it in a Workshop meeting. He said very few people ever exceed the three minutes. Chairman Traylor said if you want answers and you have a direct concern or question, before you get to a workshop, contact your Commissioner. He said if their District Commissioner is not responding to you then you can contact him. He said the Solid Waste Authority conversations are different but if there is something that you are needing or that you see do not want until that month; call them immediately.

Chairman Traylor requested they have a great weekend and said he looked forward to seeing everyone on Tuesday night.

**Adjournment**

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 2:17 p.m. 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