



**LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Special Called Meeting Minutes
Administration Building
January 16th, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. on January 16th, 2024. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Gilles, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson.

Conflict Counsel -Patrick D. Jaugstetter-Jarrard & Davis LLP

Patrick D. Jaugstetter of Jarrard & Davis LLP introduced himself to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Jaugstetter stated that he was a partner in the law firm and explained about their firm and himself. Jarrard & Davis LLP is exclusively in the world of City, County, and the State of Georgia Government type work. He said he has been at Jarrard & Davis LLP for four and a half years. Before this, he practiced in Henry County, representing the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Presently, the firm serves eight counties, five cities, and several authorities. Last year, they represented 64 counties throughout Georgia as a conflict counsel. It was issues such as this where your county attorney had a conflict of interest. It could not represent both entities, or they were called in to handle a specific matter due to their experience and expertise. Much of their work is insurance counsel work, or they defend claims for cities and counties. Mr. Jaugstetter said he had done this work for 15 years representing cities, counties, and State governments, including GDOT. Mr. Jaugstetter also serves as a Special Assistant Legislative Counsel representing the Georgia General Assembly in various matters. Currently, they are handling a dozen or more conflict cases on behalf of various counties and cities. They are frequently called on to do this type of work. They have 20 lawyers devoting their work exclusively to local government.

Mr. Jaugstetter stated that do everything from Civil Rights Litigation to routine day-to-day services such as open records and general advice to elected and appointed officials. He serves as a County Attorney in one County and City Attorney in another City, and he also serves as a Special Assistant Legislative Counsel representing the Georgia General Assembly, handling civil rights litigation on behalf of clients all over the State, including eminent domain.

Mr. Jaugstetter said he spoke with Attorney Mayfield, who gave him a very broad description of their issue. They are currently wrapping up a twenty-year-old case between a County Government and one of its authorities. They are uniquely situated to help Lamar County solve its issues.

Commissioner Lovett inquired about the turnaround time on issues of this nature. Mr. Jaugstetter said that it depends on the circumstances. If hired, you hire the whole firm, and they like to get out of things rather quickly. Without knowing all the details, he cannot predict how long it will take them to form an analysis and issue an attorney opinion letter, but they would get to work on it immediately. He would assign an associate to do the initial legal research needed if hired. Mr. Jaugstetter said he would probably handle the investigation.

Commissioner Thrash asked Mr. Jaugstetter how he liked being in North Georgia. Mr. Jaugstetter said that it was cold. She asked if he had any clients or had done any litigation involving Solid Waste or Landfill or issues such as that. Mr. Jaugstetter said they currently serve as general counsel to the Newton County Solid Waste Authority. They have several landfill cases involving land use or landfills. They have handled a lot of litigations regarding other types of authorities, such as water and housing authorities. Several cities and counties have less active authorities than a busy Water Authority or a Solid Waste Authority. Commissioner Thrash asked if he had any landfill or garbage business clients. Mr. Jaugstetter said none other than the Solid Waste Authority that they had.

Chairman Traylor thanked Mr. Jaugstetter and said he appreciated that they could jump on this quickly since they are looking to resolve this. He said it would take time to do the research, but knowing they will not be out for four to six months is extremely important. Mr. Jaugstetter said he was excited to hear from Attorney Mayfield since he practiced at Smith, Welch and Stutter many years ago. He said that as a firm, they enjoy stepping in as conflict counsel as it allows them to work with governments that they do not typically get to work with and solve problems. They are excited to have the opportunity to help.

Public Comment

Elaine Hallada 131 Steeple Chase addressed the board. Mrs. Hallada read a letter from the Solid Waste Authority in the paper. She said the citizens want to continue the Waste to Energy (WTE) project. They have been trying to understand why the WTE never started in 2017. The people who represent the citizens of this county are Chairman Traylor and Commissioner Thrash. Chairman Traylor and Commissioner Thrash never reported to the Commissioners or the public that the project had failed at that time. In 2017, and now it's 2024, seven years later, the project is probably \$17,000.00 in the hole. It was supposed to generate revenue starting in 2017 but has yet to happen. Mrs. Hallada said there are a lot of questions that have to be answered by the Solid Waste Authority. She said that for you to say that the citizens want to stop this project from the beginning. Mrs. Hallada said that she did not know about the project in 2014 and took exception to this comment. She said they need to be held accountable for what happened in 2017 and recuse themselves from any vote that this County Commission has to take on anything to do with the Solid Waste Authority.

Adjournment

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 2:13 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Ashley Gilles, Vice-Chair

Jarrold Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk