



LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Workshop Meeting Minutes

Administration Building

February 15th, 12:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on November 8, 2023. Present were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson.

Agenda Approval

Vice-Chair Gilles made a motion to amend the Workshop agenda, changing Perdue Road to Perkins Road. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Proposal for the Armory/School Property-Mike Jackson

Mr. Mike Jackson addressed the board regarding buying the property. He said it was given to the board by the State. He said several years ago, the Commissioners gave it to the National Guard because the County did not want it. The National Guard did not want it and gave it to the State. Then, the State put it up for bid, which was accepted for \$18,000.00. When zoning could not be acquired to put 312 apartment units on it, they gave it back to the State. The State turned around and gave it back to Lamar County. Mr. Jackson said he was there asking the Board of Commissioners to sale it to him.

Mr. Jackson explained that he wants to do office warehouses and entrepreneurial incubator systems for small businesses. He plans to rent the spaces. Mr. Jackson said he was still determining what the clean-up would cost. He said there is plenty of need for small businesses to have a space and not be robbed of the high rates they see up and down the four-lane or in town. Mr. Jackson said he heard they were planning on building a Justice Center. He said if he were going to build a Justice Center, he would not pick the worst piece of property. Mr. Jackson suggested they approach the City of Barnesville about buying the 67 acres that are empty in front of the jail since they already house prisoners in the jail. He said the City of Barnesville should give them the land.

Commissioner Gilles asked how an entrepreneurial incubator works. Mr. Jackson said it is for small businesses who cannot afford high rent, and they have an idea of what they want to do. You rent them a space with a small deposit and no long term lease. You support them with tools and forklifts when they receive goods on big trucks. They would build a doc high ramp for loads when they come in. They would also offer financial assistance and help them prepare their loan package

for a government loan. As they grow, they will offer evening courses in financial and estate planning.

Chairman Traylor agreed that what Mr. Jackson is proposing is a great thing for the County but said cleaning up the property was expensive because of the asbestos and other costs associated with it. He said he was glad the County had an opportunity to get it back when the state first took it back. Chairman Traylor said they have not discussed selling the property, and they are focusing on getting the money to clean it up.

Commissioner Fletcher said the property is in District 1, which is his District. He said this was the first time he had heard about it. He said that, as he told Commissioner Lovett, he was out of order, and it should have come to District 1 first. He said that he met with him and they also met with the Booker Alumni Association. Mr. Jackson said that Commissioner Lovett is the Commissioner for his District. Commissioner Fletcher said this property is in District 1. Mr. Jackson said he did not know this. Commissioner Fletcher said Commissioner Lovett knew this. Commissioner Fletcher said he should have met with the Booker Alumni Association as well because it is a historic property and has significant meaning to him. He said to come in here and make a proposal when the property is not for sale because today, he did not see a for sale sign, and to come in here and not go through the proper protocol is a problem for him.

Mr. Jackson apologized and said he did not know how to proceed. He said he called about it when they put the for sale sign up about five years ago. The man who answered told him it was not for sale and had never been for sale. However, he pursued it further with the State Representative and they told him the property was not for sale and had never been for sale and to watch their website. Mr. Jackson said the next thing he knew was it was subject to zoning, but the state said they sold it as is. Mr. Jackson said he kept running into roadblocks, and when the County finally bought it, he decided to ask again. That is why he contacted Commissioner Lovett; he did not know which way to go with this. Mr. Jackson said he called the County Administrator and he told him it was not for sale and it was going to be a Justice Center. He was told that someone would call him back but no one called him back. Mr. Jackson said this was why he was there today, to ask the County if he could buy it and said he understood the clean-up with the asbestos.

Mr. Jackson said he bought the Carter's Mill plant and broke it up to sell pieces of it. He said it is not in the greatest of shape but it could be done. There are people in the Community who would like him to build lofts. But it entails him tearing down more buildings. He said he tore apart a building he sold on Rogers Street. To do more, he would have to tear down two buildings for people to have lofts. He said there are 12-foot ceilings, and it is two stories high. He said 12 ft. ceilings are not conducive for a warehouse. He said he was still determining what he would do with the upstairs and would be back in front of the board for approval to have people live upstairs and have their business downstairs.

Commissioner Lovett thanked Mr. Jackson for coming to the meeting. He said when Mr. Jackson called him, he told him that Commissioner Fletcher wanted to meet, and they had a very short meeting and said that Commissioner Fletcher requested a meeting in front of the board. Commissioner Lovett said their meeting lasted ten minutes, and he requested to have him put on the agenda. Commissioner Lovett said Mr. Jackson is in his District, and Commissioner Fletcher knew he wanted to speak to the Board of Commissioners about this.

Commissioner Fletcher said he did not care that if the meeting was two minutes long; he still did not follow protocol. Commissioner Lovett said the protocol was to get this in front of the board. Commissioner Fletcher said that a common protocol is if something is going on in another District, you send it to that Commissioner. Commissioner Fletcher said he sent someone to him three weeks ago.

Commissioner Lovett said the County plans to level the property and build a jail. Mr. Jackson plans to renovate the old school and create opportunity zones known as small business incubators that encourage entrepreneurship. Mr. Jackson said he did this on Atlanta Street. Commissioner Lovett reiterated that Mr. Jackson plans not to knock the school down but to rebuild and make an opportunity. Mr. Jackson said he did one in Griffin, Georgia. He kept the one on Atlanta Street for about eight or nine years, and he sold it in November, and he kept the one in Griffin for ten years and then sold it in July. The units that he rents are 12. ft wide and 40 ft. deep and comes with one bathroom. If they want a bigger unit, it comes with two bathrooms.

Chairman Traylor said the property needs to be earmarked for what it will be and there is no current intention of selling it. Mr. Jackson said if the board changes their mind, then they can call him. Commissioner Thrash said she negotiated the deal on the property with the State with the permission of the Board of Commissioners. She said paragraph eight of the Quitclaim Deed states the State Properties Commission met on June 6, 2023, putting restrictions on the property. “The Property shall remain in public use in perpetuity; (iii) in the event that the Property ceases to be used for public purpose the Property shall revert back to the State.” Commissioner Thrash said was clear the Booker School Alumni Association wants some type of memorial on this property to recognize the Historical meaning that is there. Based on the requirements in the Quitclaim Deed, she does not feel they can sell this property.

Chairman Traylor called for a motion to settle this issue. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to deny Mr. Jackson’s request to purchase the old Booker School/National Guard Armory Property. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. Vice-Chair Gilles said she did not think they should vote on this in a Workshop. Commissioner Lovett said Mr. Jackson simply wanted to make a proposal and present an idea. He came before the entire board and the Community and said he had a great idea. Instead of tearing the school down and building a jail, they could renovate it and turn it into an opportunity zone for young entrepreneurs. He said from someone who has started multiple businesses from the ground up, he can tell you that sky-high rent and the unavailability of facilities are a detriment to the young entrepreneur. Commissioner Lovett said when you are thinking about places where someone wants to start a business, how would they do that, where do they do that, and who will help them with that? He said Mr. Jackson gave an idea that turned out to be a fabulous idea. Commissioner Lovett said he is Mr. Jackson’s representative and for the rest of the Community as well. So, anyone that walks up in this Community and says they would like to present something to the board, then he puts it on the agenda because that is the job that they were elected to do. It was not to single handily say, “Mr. Jackson you are not going to be able to present to the rest of the board” because what he is being accused of is exactly what he would have done if he had not brought it before this Commission. You are not hear to make a unilateral vote for everyone else by denying access to the rest of the board. Mr. Jackson said instead of demolishing this historic Black school for a jail, let's instead build an opportunity zone out of the building.

Commissioner Lovett said they have to look at all of these things, and Mr. Jackson presented an opportunity which said he would go to the City of Barnesville and find a piece of property across from the jail and said he would do a land swap. Commissioner Lovett said if the rest of the board does not like this idea, then vote it down, but not allowing a person who lives in our Community to have access to this board to share a wonderful idea should be met with much discourse. Commissioner Fletcher said he would never deny anyone the right to speak but said Commissioner Lovett did not follow protocol. Commissioner Fletcher said Commissioner Lovett should have said Mr. Jackson wanted to speak to him about this property since it is in his District. Commissioner Fletcher said he would have gotten in touch with the people who went to school there. Commissioner Lovett said it is noted on the record that Commissioner Fletcher did not have the same objection when a Church needed a road that was in his District and another Commissioner and the Lieutenant Governor put together a deal. They did not hear about it as a board until they had to vote on it. Commissioner Fletcher said that was not his District. Commissioner Lovett said he allowed Mr. Jackson to present his idea in a public format. Commissioner Fletcher said for Commissioner Lovett to find somewhere in his District to put him.

Chairman Traylor said, "If someone walked in and wanted to buy a Sheriff's car, they know that they cannot sell them a car that the Sheriff still has; they would have to talk to the Sheriff." In this particular case, this item should have gone to County Administrator Townsend, and he could have done the research and found out from the Quitclaim they could not sell the property. So, they do need to follow protocol and it would have been common courtesy to tell a fellow Commissioner but we need to run these things through County Administrator Townsend so that we would not have wasted Mr. Jackson's time. If he still wanted to come, he could have, but at least he would have known that, based on the agreement, we could not sell him the property.

Chairman Traylor said they had a motion and a second and called for a vote. Vice-Chair Gilles said this is a Workshop and they should not call for a vote. Chairman Traylor said that they needed to get clarification from Attorney Mayfield because, based on a conversation he had, if it is on the agenda and advertised, they can vote on it. Chairman Traylor requested the vote be tabled until they could get clarification from Attorney Mayfield.

Microsoft Teams for Video Conferencing and Meetings

Jantzen Shivers with WiReD Technology addressed the board and thanked them for their support. He said they had worked with County Administrator Townsend and Hogan Construction to get everyone moved in. He said his team worked hard and stayed on budget despite the deadlines. The new Commissioners meeting room is built for a Microsoft Teams Environment and Teams is a video conferencing application much like Webex and Zoom. However, the Teams Environment integrates with the Microsoft Outlook System and Teams so employees can share files and communicate with others. There is the ease of reserving this room as a resource in the calendar just by using Teams. If the board wants to keep its video conferencing application with Zooms, then the entire setup of the room would have to be changed along with all of the licensing. The system they invested in is currently set up for Teams. The calendar for the employees is also set up for other rooms in the building with the Teams environment. Mr. Shivers continued showing calendar meetings and room features using the Teams environment. The Teams application works like Zoom, where you join a meeting with an I.D. and password. The microphones work through the video camera when going into a meeting and are also positioned on the speaker. Everything is preset so people on the meeting see the speaker and the Board of Commissioners simultaneously.

Commissioner Thrash raised an issue where, during COVID, they met via Zoom, but with Teams, the meetings were dropped; there was no clarity, and you could not hear. Mr. Shivers said this could have been internet-related because he had not heard of these issues. Chairman Traylor said Gordon State College switched from using Zoom to Teams. Mr. Shivers said they have schools and counties that use Teams and do not have these issues. Mr. Shivers said they are invested in Teams through Microsoft Licensing, and a room costs \$480.00. With Zoom, a room costs \$500.00 plus any add-ons needed; therefore, many businesses and government agencies have decided to go with the Teams environment because of the investment they have already made with employee emails using Microsoft 365 and Outlook. Commissioner Thrash asked if there were any concerns with Teams being user friendly for the Community. Mr. Shivers said it works like Zoom. The meeting can be configured to do anything you want it to do, including town hall and Webinar templates. Commissioner Thrash said she was concerned about the average citizen at home being able to access the Teams application. Mr. Shivers said it works like Zoom; they can access it from the website or the app. Commissioner Thrash requested the change from Zoom to Teams application be broadcast to the public.

Chairman Traylor was impressed with the state-of-the-art servers and security cameras. He appreciated WiReD Technology's hard work to accomplish this. Mr. Shivers said he also started a small business and is very grateful for the opportunity to put his team here to provide good service.

Motion of Proposal for the Former Georgia Armory

County Administrator Townsend said Attorney Mayfield clarified that voting in a Workshop is not in the Code of Law for Lamar County. As long as an item is on the agenda, and the meeting has been advertised, it can be voted on. Chairman Traylor called for a vote on the proposal for the former Georgia Amory. Previously, Commissioner Thrash made a motion to deny Mr. Jackson's request to purchase the old Booker School/National Guard Armory Property. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. Commissioner Lovett opposed the motion. Vice-Chairman Gilles abstained from the motion. The motion passed 2-1.

Morgan Dairy Road

Commissioner Thrash said because of the new paving Spalding County did in Orchard Hill on Old Hwy 41, the trucks are now using Morgan Dairy Road and any cut-throughs to get them to the highway or wherever they are going. Commissioner Thrash noted when she was elected, Morgan Dairy Road was a no-thru truck road, and the Wallers and the Propane companies had special permission to travel on Morgan Dairy Road if they were not loaded. Along with the Sheriff, she researched this issue, and they were told that years and years ago, the State was the one that allowed that permission and who put it in place. However, no records from the State existed with this type of permission. Morgan Dairy Road is not a no-thru truck, and the Sheriff has advised his Deputies not to write tickets. Commissioner Thrash asked about the instructions they will give to the Public Works Director regarding route directions. He has a list of No Thru Trucks. She said the State is not going to take over the road in Orchard Hill, which is the easiest route for the trucks. Commissioner Thrash said the Propane Trucks have to have a way to get propane to the people, the nursing homes, and the schools. She said the citizens that live on Morgan Dairy Road want it to be something other than a Thru Truck Road.

Commissioner Thrash said she has had a conversation with Commissioner Lovett, and the citizens do not want trucks on Morgan Dairy Road. Commissioner Lovett said with Spalding County closing their roads they are literally boxing in the Propane Trucks. He suggested they defer this to the Public Works Director and the Georgia Department of Transportation for any assistance they could get because propane is an essential product they deliver. It is something everyone uses, and they continue as County Governments to box them in, and they are not going to be able to get out of it and deliver the product.

Vice-Chair Gilles stated they could do a Resolution with Spalding County stating they do want the State to take back that road. She suggested they formerly make a proposal. Commissioner Thrash said they are seeing this all over the State because of the truck weight increase. A lot of the Counties are closing their County roads. They have no choice because it is not fair to ask the taxpayers to repave these roads over and over again. Chairman Traylor said doing a Resolution is a great idea. However, he spoke to Representative Beth Camp, and she said this is not something that the State currently wants to do. Commissioner Lovett requested a motion be made and put into action. Vice-Chair Gilles requested to vote on this in a Regular Business Meeting because she still does not believe they should vote in a Workshop Meeting. The board agreed to put it on the Regular Business Meeting agenda.

Adequate Fire and Emergency Response-Fire Department Grant

County Administrator Townsend reported that the Fire Chief was working with a Grant writer. If they purchased two trucks and two pumpers, the cost would be \$700,000.00 for each one, and it would cost \$1,400,000.00. With the grant, they would have to pay five percent, and the grant writer would get 5 percent, which means they would pay \$140,000.00 for two trucks. He has not obtained any quotes but would like approval from the Board of Commissioners to proceed with the grant. This will come from the Special Local Option Sales Tax (S.P.L.O.S.T.). Currently, \$600,000.00 has been budgeted for new fire trucks. Chairman Traylor requested that the grant be added to the Regular Business meeting agenda.

Animal Shelter Budget

County Administrator Townsend said he is still working on quotes, and hopefully, he will have something to present to the board at the Regular Business Meeting.

Perkins Road

Vice-Chair Gilles said she had a call from a citizen who had just moved to Lamar County. She said she is aware it is a dirt road. She said her plan is to repave and refinish all of the County roads to keep the paved roads in good condition. This is a dirt road with heavy traffic that used to have one to two houses, and now there are six houses on Perkins Road. This is a one-lane road with big ditches, and they are having problems passing. Vice-Chair Gilles said they need to reevaluate the dirt roads because they need to be safe and passable. She said they need to reconsider looking at the dirt roads and they should not be pushed out five to six years because this will continue to get worse.

Public Works Director Rigdon said Perkins Road is three miles long and it will cost 15 million dollars to put asphalt on it. Vice-Chair Gilles said she is not asking for asphalt but would like to

have the road widened in places so you can pass. She said on one portion of the road, you have to back up into someone's driveway if another car is coming. Public Works Director Rigdon said they would have to widen it first. Commissioner Thrash asked if Vice-Chair Gilles had spoken to the citizens on that road requesting, they give up their right of way. Public Works Director Rigdon said you cannot widen it one way because of the creek, and then the other way, they have to dig into a 40 ft bank. Vice-Chair Gilles said that all the lots are sold but have not been developed. She said that you are looking at two to three cars per household.

Juanita Fletcher said that she is a bus driver and when it rains really hard, she can barely get through. She has to stop and let other cars go by. Vice-Chair Gilles said there are some places where two cars cannot go down the road next to each other. She said that some people on the road are willing to give up their right of way but need to think long-term. The Public Works Director said that 12 lots are on 20 to 50 acres with 5 acres of lots spread in between them. He said they are building million dollar houses. Chairman Traylor said that they do have a contract on the cost but they can get a proposal to see how much it will actually cost to do this. He said that they could have EXP go out and do a survey on Perkins Road. Vice-Chair Gilles said that she was not happy the last time EXP surveyed the flooding in the Needleleaf subdivision.

Commissioner Thrash asked if Vice-Chair Gilles was talking about all the dirt roads in the County. Vice-Chair Gilles said they need to look at all of them. She noted they have the rock at Vulcan that needs to be moved by July. Chairman Traylor said Vulcan extended the timeline for removing the rock. Vice-Chair Gilles said they need to hire a third party contractor to get the rock out. Chairman Traylor said that Public Works Director Rigdon is working with Vulcan. Commissioner Gilles said that the dirt roads in her District have underlying circumstances that would not be financially feasible for the taxpayers to blacktop.

County Administrator Townsend said a one-mile road survey was done on Possum Trott Road about two years ago, and the cost was a little under four million dollars. It required moving a lot of dirt, massive trees, utilities, and possible water lines. Public Works Director Rigdon said it cost over \$150,000.00 to repave a mile of road. This is just resurfacing the road. He said he only has eight employees at Public Works and they have 280 miles of paved roads and 70 miles of dirt roads to keep up. County Administrator Townsend said the Public Works Department closed 116 work orders in January.

Chairman Traylor said this is an area of concern and they can continue to research different ways to help with Perkins Road, but it is expensive.

Rezoning from Agricultural-Residential to Residential 1-Emily Ann Nobles and Billy Butler Smith-(Tax Map 098, Parcel 012)

Planning and Community Development Director Buice addressed the board. She stated this is a Rezoning from Agricultural-Residential to Residential 1 and the Joint Planning Commission recommended approval. There was a great turnout from the family and no one was there to oppose it. There has been a recent death of a family member, and they said there would probably be no one in attendance from the family at the Public Hearing. However, she requested to carry on with the Public Hearing, whatever the vote turned out to be. The rezoning is on a large farming property and most of the family have built on this property. They are asking to pull out 2 acres and the property is located on Brent Road.

2024-2044 Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning and Community Development Director Buice said this Public Hearing is for the Draft Comprehensive Plan, and it is posted on the Lamar County website. This is a future land use planning tool that the state requires them to use and is a very useful tool to get the Community together to see the vision for the next twenty years, even though it is updated every five years. The Draft Comprehensive Plan is available and the Public Hearing is for the draft. It is being reviewed by the Department of Community Affairs (D.C.A.) and the Community. Hopefully, it will be approved by the Lamar County Board of Commissioners in March. There are no actions to be taken at the Regular Business Meeting.

Regular Business Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Recess for Public Hearing
6. Rezoning from Agriculture-Residential to Residential 1-Emily Ann Nobles/Billy Butler Smith
7. Comprehensive Plan Update
8. Reconvene Regular Meeting
9. Minutes Approval
 - i. Workshop Meeting-January 11th, 2024
 - ii. Special Called Meeting-January 16th, 2024
 - iii. Regular Business Meeting -January 16, 2024
10. Lamar County Animal Shelter Proclamation-In Honor of Fred Morrison
11. Black History Month Proclamation
12. 2nd Reading Ordinance 2023-23 Personnel Policy Update (Exhibit A)
13. Ordinance 2024-01 Noble-Smith-Brent Road (Tax Map 098-Parcel 012)
14. Administrator's Report
15. Public Comment
16. Round Table
17. Executive Session
 - i. Real Estate
 - ii. Litigation
 - iii. Personnel
18. Adjournment

Public Comment

Eloise Ivey of 116 McCollum Road addressed the board regarding a thru road to Perdue Road, where all the big trucks are coming to the new area they are developing. Mrs. Ivey said a lot of the trucks have material on them. She said they put a sandy topping on the old road, and when anyone travels at a certain speed; it creates sand in the air. She said she has issues with this environmentally because her husband has C.O.P.D., and it affects his breathing, which makes it a health hazard. Mrs. Ivey said the traffic is causing this because of the construction. She said she would like to see the road paved. Mrs. Ivey said they have an issue with debris and litter. There are also tree limbs that have fallen and the limbs have not been moved. She said with all the heavy rain and wind, the falling limbs need to be taken care of before someone gets hurt.

Silvia Bush addressed the board and said he had come back home and had been here for three years. Ms. Bush said she is a product of the Black Booker High School. She said she has had a lot of conversations with the alumni and thanked the Booker School Alumni Association. She said that it is a Black Historical site. She said her mother and father were both teachers. Her father taught agriculture, her mother was an English teacher, and her father coached. Ms. Bush said to come back and not even have a brick from that property broke her heart. She went to elementary and high school there until integration, when she went to an all-girls school in Milner, Georgia. Ms. Bush thanked Commissioner Fletcher for standing in the gap and said that, hopefully, they can move forward to making it a historical site. She said they are in the 21st century and would like to see something done for their children and seniors. Ms. Bush said the property can be utilized in great ways. She said they all need to put their heads together, have options for the children and seniors, and work with the Booker School Alumni.

Elaine Hallada of 131 Steeple Chase addressed the board. Ms. Hallada presented copies of the new Solid Waste Bylaws, passed at the last Solid Waste Authority meeting, to the Board of Commissioners. She said she has copies of previous bylaws passed by the Solid Waste Authority board. Mrs. Hallada said she does not know how the board operates, but with the Homeowners Association they had to register at the County Courthouse for Bylaws to be ratified. It takes about ten days before they are sent back to them. Mrs. Hallada said she had an issue with Chairman Traylor being allowed to vote at the meeting when, in December of 2023, no Commissioner could retain their seat on the Solid Waste Authority Board. Mrs. Hallada referred the Board of Commissioners to O.C.G.A. 12-8-54 which states, "Control and management of the authority shall be vested in a board of at least five directors who shall be residents of the county or municipal corporation which is a member of the authority. At least three of such directors shall be elected officials of the county or municipal corporation, a member of the authority. The directors shall serve at the pleasure of the governing authority of the county or municipal corporation". Mrs. Hallada said she would like to know if the Solid Waste Authority Board has to present their bylaws to the County Commission to be approved. She said it further states, "The directors shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties." Mrs. Hallada said that she believes it is time to have a Resolution where every single member of the Board of Directors of the Solid Waste Authority, since 1993, where it clearly states they get \$25.00 for each meeting they attend, should have to refund the County all the money they were paid in excess. Mrs. Hallada said Commissioner Thrash's was around \$17,000.00, and Chairman Traylor's was around \$12,000.00. If all of the Solid Waste

Authority Directors returned the money to the County, it could go into a special account, and they would have enough to pay for the forensic audit, so it would not have to come from taxpayer dollars. Mrs. Hallada said she needs to understand why this Solid Waste Authority is not subject to the governing authority of the County or the Municipal Corporation. Mrs. Hallada said she asked Mr. Richards if he had received signed copies of the last one, and he sent back one word: No.

Juanita Fletcher of 120 Bradley Circle addressed the board. Ms. Fletcher said she is a product of the Booker School and a Booker School Alumni Association member. She said a while back, in 2014, a few alumni members, the County Commission, and the Mayor came together to try and save the school. They formed a committee with former Commissioner Horton, the Chairman at the time. Ms. Fletcher said she had a few documents where they were trying to save the school, and they went through all the protocols they could. Ms. Fletcher thanked the Board of Commissioners for saving the school and not to sell it.

Donald Hartman of 507 Old Milner Road addressed the board. Mr. Hartman addressed Public Works Rigdon. He said he was a product of that industry when they talked about roads and big trucks. He said they are tearing up the two lane roads. They are not built for high traffic or that weight. Mr. Hartman said they are talking about 80,000 lbs., which is for the interstate. Many States add ten percent to this for a backroad like Old Milner and Friendship Road. There are a lot of postings in this County. Like other cities and counties around the Country certain vehicles are restricted. What is missing? Enforcement is missing. Mr. Hartman said he was curious to know if the Sheriff had ordained commercial people who could write the tickets or if the Sheriff could write the tickets or if the City could. He said you have to have enforcement behind it. Mr. Hartman said if you allow the big trucks to tear up the local roads it is a lot more cost because the base is not built for that type of commercial vehicle. The truckers are paid on a percentage that is weighed just like the trash. He said sand, timber, 100,000 lbs. they push the envelope, and they are going to do it, and that is beating up the roads. He said on the four-lane, there is a trucker who parks his truck. Mr. Hartman said that Friendship Road looks sad. There is a lot of litter. He said out by the Enercon building trucks park there overnight and asked who cleans it up. Public Works Director Rigdon said they have a mowing company that takes care of it. Mr. Hartman said it is pitiful because no one wants to pick up a gallon jug or a 20 ounce bottle of urine that gets hot in the summer and explodes. Mr. Hartman said they needed to do away with the overnight parking and clean up that road. He said they are tearing up the roads, and many big trucks are tearing up the roads in front of the Enercon building and the shoulders, especially near the Flour Mill. Mr. Hartman said they were running off the roads, and someone was going to roll over in one of those front yards. Mr. Hartman said he understands they want to keep the town historic. However, if someone has a chance to help out the Community and take care of blight, still having a historical benefit to it and supporting our Community, it needs to be considered. He said he knows there are legal issues with the property and things that can or cannot be done but if there is something that is going to help somebody, with the alumni here, he is sure that they might like to see it brought back to its glory days maybe it could be brought up to something like that. Mr. Hartman said that this would be great for the Community.

Round Table

Vice-Chair Gilles said she would ride out to Perdue Road after the meeting. She announced that on May 15, 2024, Mr. Eddie Felton, who does a lot for veterans in the Community, is bringing the

Department of Veterans Affairs to Lamar County. They are going to host it in the Board of Commissioners meeting room. There will be registration, vendors, health care conversations, and other programs the Department of Veterans Affairs offers. This will be an all-day event.

Commissioner Thrash gave a Legislative report as follows and asked for help from the Commissioners.

HB 193 is in the hopper. It increases the threshold for Public Works projects from \$100,000.00 to \$250,000.00, and it does not have to go before the board.

She has mixed emotions about HB 947 because it supplements the District Attorney, the Public Defenders, and the Judges. This is a cost savings for judicial members, and if the legislators do away with it, the burden could fall on the taxpayers.

HB 944 asks that they make a Resolution to the Legislators. When the Tax Assessor sends out the Tax Bill Notices, everything is based on the previous mill rate, and the previous tax amount is on the bill. The citizens do not understand this, and they think this is going to be their new tax bill. This legislation wants to remove the amount on the tax assessments.

Commissioner Thrash thanked Ms. Bush and Ms. Fletcher for their comments because one of the things that sold the State on them being able to reacquire the former Georgia Amory property was the fact that it does hold a rich history for the Black Community. Commissioner Thrash said it was a selling point in the negotiations.

Chairman Traylor explained that when a board member is replaced, boards have to maintain a quorum, like other board entities, until the new board member starts, and the old board member stays in that particular seat. Chairman Traylor said the vote for a new Solid Waste Authority Board member was tabled. So, that is why he is still sitting on the board. Chairman Traylor said no per diem has been paid to any Solid Waste Authority board member since 2022, so Mrs. Hallada might want to check her calculations. Chairman Traylor announced that the Solid Waste Authority has received their permit. He said he was glad to see so many faces there today and encouraged them to come back. Chairman Traylor thanked Mr. Shivers and his team, WiReD Technology, and County Administrator Townsend, who led the work. Chairman Traylor said the new Administration building is a one-stop shop where people can go from the Tax Assessor's Office to the Tax Commissioner's Office without driving across town. He said he received multiple complaints about how far it takes to walk from the parking lot to the Tax Commissioner's Office. One gentleman said that it is tough to walk that far at his age. Chairman Traylor said there are plans to build a second parking lot on the side of the Tax Commissioner's Office near the drive-thru. They are also trying to get a kiosk where a person can purchase their tag instead of going to the Tax Commissioner's Office. He said some cities and counties have partnered with Kroger to have a kiosk. He said that living in a small town is awesome, and he moved back here to raise his kids. Chairman Traylor said he saw the man who had complained about the walk to the Tax Commissioner's Office in the meat market of Ingles and noted that it is the same distance to the meat market as it is to the Tax Commissioners Office. He said with that being said, the board is committed to continuing to improve things in the Community and appreciates them being here.

Adjournment

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 1:56 p.m. Vice-Chair Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Ashley Gilles, Vice-Chair

Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk