

Workshop Meeting
Lamar County Board of Commissioners
5-11-2023
12:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on April 13th, 2023. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, and County Clerk Davidson. County Administrator Townsend was absent from the meeting. The meeting was available via Zoom.

Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Director Kathy Oxford

The board heard a presentation from the Barnesville-Lamar County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Director Kathy Oxford (Mrs. Oxford) regarding New Business, Workforce Development, Marketing, and Economic Development expectations. Mrs. Oxford was the IDA Director from 1993-1998 and left to work for the State of Georgia for 18 years. She came back home and has been the IDA Director for Barnesville-Lamar County for the last six years. Mrs. Oxford presented the following facts to the Board of Commissioners.

- Manufacturing Wage: \$1,085 or \$56,420 (*assuming 52, 40 hour work week*)
- Represents 26.8% of the workforce and pays *29% higher than the service industry wage*
- Service: \$842 or \$43,784
- Represents 47.3% of the workforce
- Government: \$965 or \$50,180
- Represents 25% of the workforce
- All Private Sector: \$920 and Represents 74.6% of the total workforce
- All Industries: \$931 or \$48,412
- Manufacturing helps balance the Tax burden.
- One Industrial Taxpayer in Lamar County pays \$88,062 in taxes.
- The Average household in Lamar County pays \$2,200 in taxes.
- It would take 40 homes to pay the equivalent of this single manufacturer.
- In Lamar County, ten new manufacturing jobs will create six additional positions.
- Industrial Facilities pay 13.38% of the net County Tax M & O Digest and pay almost 17% higher wages than all average wages.

Mrs. Oxford stated that housing is a critical issue in Georgia, and the unemployment rate is very low. They need to count on new people in the workforce or those who have moved to the County. The workforce comes from the five-county region and might not be suitable if Lamar County were to get something really big, which she is not a big fan of for Lamar County because it is a small county. The bigger the County, the more options and taxpayers that you have. When Continental Tire expanded, they brought people from other plants. There would be a housing issue if they tried to do that now. Housing brings additional burdens because it never pays for itself, but the workforce and housing go together, so you must have affordable housing in your City or County. The Department of Community Affairs and the Governor of Georgia have a new housing initiative where if you have a real estate developer and a municipality or County that needs something to happen, there is money available.

Mrs. Oxford stated that a recruitment strategy works best when you have a product to sell. She said they need more land in Legacy Park, Roberta Drive, and the Industrial Park. They are closing on the last 26 acres in Legacy Park. They are transitioning to Developers having control, economic development, and

property. The only incentive they can give is tax abatement, but only when there are enough jobs that make sense and they have tools to help them make those decisions. They have not offered this since Continental decided they wanted to expand. They offered it, but they did not take it. They did have affordable land to offer but not so much now. Existing businesses, support for growth, and expansion is something that she does in her job. Two companies are moving into Legacy Park; one is called Coggins Construction, but it is a sister company to them, and the other is Josh Raybon. He takes all the trash from construction companies, chips it, and sells it to Piedmont Green Company. He also grinds concrete and uses it to make "crush and run." They are both from Pike and Upson County. Lester Ranew bought the front piece and will put up a building for a company in the Electric Forklift Battery distribution business. Mr. Ranew is also planning to build another construction but has yet to determine what it will be, depending on the economy. He has room to build four buildings. Mrs. Oxford said that her job is to promote the available sites and facilities, and currently, they need to have that they can control. The property across from Legacy Park is still for sale; the Chinese were going to purchase this land many years ago. She is trying to get this land in the hands of a developer. There is a lot of interest on I-75, which is the best opportunity for new industrial development.

Mrs. Oxford said that there had been a lot of interest, but sometimes they do not have exactly what they want. She has a packet of information for the investor that is specific and customized towards their particular business. She has done packages for automotive, food, and warehouse distributions. Mrs. Oxford said that you have to speak to many people, and her 30 years of experience helped her with the Department of Economic Development and the utility partners. She has to weed out the serious ones, and a lot of filtering goes on, and you have to know what the workers are like in the region.

Mrs. Oxford explained that commercial businesses are hard to get because of the traffic count in Lamar County. She received a request from Electric Cities of Georgia for a Coffee Company, but they needed a minimum of 12,000 cars a day, and Lamar County has a limited amount of traffic. They look at phone data for traffic counts. Mrs. Oxford said that she wants a branded hotel, but they need more population, according to the people looking at the data, and she needs a consultant to visit the area. She believes that there is enough traffic count based on the events with Gordon College Graduation, Barbeque and Blues, Buggy Days, and other events that draw people into Lamar County that spend money to spend the night. Mrs. Oxford said that she realizes that they have an infrastructure issue, but this is the type of business she wants to plan for when she has money in the budget, and there is a lot of convincing to get them to come look.

Mrs. Oxford addressed the film industry. She said that small movies and commercials come in, and they pay for security and deputies, and they donate money. They have one film company that comes every month. The Courthouse and the jail are used a lot because the buildings are old and unique. Each County has a Camera Ready liaison, and that is herself. They do not charge for a film permit because they try to stay film friendly. They are outside of the 50-mile zone from Atlanta but not outside the 50-mile area in Fayetteville. Recently, they have had Marvel films come to Lamar County to do brief shootings.

The IDA paid off the Legacy Park note this year, which should help with the things she wants to do that require money. There may be money to help pay for some due diligence on the property. Mrs. Oxford stated that if they return to the real estate business as a community and identify a piece of property, they need more funds to buy it. This is why they are counting on the developers, but there is good and bad that come with developers and property. They try to put covenants on properties that they control. Mrs. Oxford said there is a need for large buildings, and if she had a 30 x 40 square foot building available, it would easily be rented or leased. It would be a revenue generator for the developer. Mrs. Oxford said that the sewer system is an issue, and some businesses can manage on a septic tank. In Legacy Park, companies can tap into new sewer systems because the pipe is new. However, the lack of infrastructure will impede

progress in many areas. She has had investors looking at the old Carter's building, but the challenge with that is that it is in a residential community.

Mrs. Oxford explained that the IDA has assisted with the Continental expansion over the last ten years. They were competing with a Chinese vendor despite being a German Company. They were dealing with a consultant that wanted an incentive package because they get paid based on the incentives that they earn. So, the IDA told them to give them whatever they wanted, knowing that it would not happen because the Germans disliked doing that. Continental was competing and won because this plant produced their sister company in South Carolina. Continental expanded again, but its challenge now is with the workforce. They are connecting with the Technical Colleges to try and get new employees. The IDA has also gotten Lester Ranew to return to Lamar County with new buildings/businesses in Legacy Park. Jordan Lumber has expanded, but the lumber industry has had ups and downs. Another company bought the property across the street from them, where Jordan sells wood to them to make pallets. When a potential business comes into town, they walk them through resources such as State tax credits and tax credits on investment and equipment. Mrs. Oxford said she had created 40 folders/packets for legitimate projects since she had been here. She does not deal with retail or commercial because the local retailers have those listings. Mrs. Oxford said that they needed to stick to Industrial Industry.

Chamber of Commerce-ChowDown Buggytown" Event for the 4th of July at the Rec Dept.

Recreation Director Tiffany Lowe addressed the board regarding the 4th of July event called "ChowDown Buggytown." Mrs. Lowe said she was concerned about the alcohol and the fireworks on the County property. Chairman Traylor said that the fireworks and beer and wine requests were optional, based on a text he received. The main interest is the water activities, games, and food vendors. Tax Assessor Haddock said that fireworks had been shot off at the Recreation Department in years past. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they could have the Fire Department present. Chairman Traylor noted that they do it this way in the City of Barnesville. Mrs. Lowe said they could shoot them from the top of the hill at the Recreation Department, thus eliminating the number of houses affected. Mrs. Lowe said that they need to consider the water usage for the inflatable water slides because water connections are closed to the public. Commissioner Lovett asked if the Chamber would be renting from the Recreation Department. Mrs. Lowe said they do not have any fees for this. Commissioner Lovett noted that this would be a fundraiser for the Chamber of Commerce, so they should be contacting them about a cleaning fee or some type of usage fee. Commissioner Lovett inquired about beer vendors. Planning and Community Development Director Buice said there is a no alcohol allowed County policy, but the Commissioners could change that.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Vice-Chair Thrash said several parents had met with her and Mrs. Lowe about Parks and Recreation. She said that in 2009 and 2019, the Recreation Department took the biggest hit in the budget, and they have yet to be added back to the budget. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she recommends they re-instate the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Advisory Board) to help take some burden off of Mrs. Lowe. This way, they could help her with grants, construction, and issues with coaches. Mrs. Lowe said the Advisory Board was dissolved because they had too much power. They tried to make their own decisions, such as whose kids would get to play on the All-Star Team, and they planned the schedules. When Buddy Lanier was brought on as the Recreation Director, he asked that it be disbanded, and the Board of Commissioners agreed. Mrs. Lowe said that she should implement guidelines as to what the roles should be on the Advisory Board. She said that most counties operate with an Advisory Board, which could help with disciplinary issues with coaches. Many counties have each District Commissioner appoint an advisory member along with the Recreation Director's appointment. Vice-Chair Thrash said the bylaws needed to be carefully written because they do not want the Advisory Board to take over.

Mrs. Lowe said there are many safety concerns in the Recreation Department. One of them, that she showed Vice-Chair Thrash, was where the pine trees hang over the playground area in the park. The limbs

are falling, the trees are old, and they need to be removed. Mrs. Lowe said they could be presented to the community as a "Buy a Tree" project. The Boy Scouts may want to take on this project where people can buy a tree to plant in memory or honor of someone. Mrs. Lowe said that she has several things on her list that are safety concerns, but the trees are the biggest ones. Chairman Traylor asked if she had spoken to County Administrator Townsend about the trees, and Mrs. Lowe said she had not. Mrs. Lowe said that she puts safety over want. Vice-Chair Thrash said she wanted to gather some figures before speaking to the County Administrator. Chairman Traylor said a tree company is on contract with Public Works. Commissioner Lovett said that Piedmont Green Power uses trees, so they will give you a list of people that will take them down. He said taking the trees down will cost approximately \$2,500.00, so they need someone to come in as a community "Give Back" project. Generally, it is a 10-acre minimum, but since this is a Recreation Park, they would want to go there first.

Commissioner Lovett stated that he and Commissioner Gilles went out and inspected the restrooms at the Recreation Department and found that they were remarkably clean. He said there were some complaints at the last board meeting and challenged that person to fix the problem. Commissioner Lovett said that they could privately raise funds to improve the restrooms. Mrs. Lowe said they came and looked, and she gave them a list of other things that needed to be done. Commissioner Lovett pointed out that the restrooms are designed poorly. Commissioner Gilles said the kids are the main ones messing up the bathrooms. Chairman Traylor pointed out that some issues stem from the influx of new growth and volume in the County.

Mrs. Lowe mentioned another safety concern: the area on top of the hill at the Recreation Department. In the event of an emergency, it would be hard to get Emergency Medical Services (EMS) or a fire truck up there. Mrs. Lowe requested to have a right-of-way exit onto Red Bud Drive. Commissioner Lovett suggested that it be for Fire and EMS only. Vice-Chair Thrash stated that there is a parking issue concern as well because if a lot of games are being played, people are parking everywhere. Recently, Fire and EMS could not get to a recent emergency call at the ball field at the top of the hill. Mrs. Lowe said they are now parking people, so they cannot park on the side of the road. Mrs. Lowe said they have their Dixie Youth State tournament in the coming weeks. She reported that the next sign-ups are for football, soccer, cheerleading, and girls' flag football. Vice-Chair Thrash thanked Mrs. Lowe for all that she does in Lamar County.

Tax Assessor-Re-Assessments

Tax Assessor Jeannie Haddock (Mrs. Haddock) addressed the board regarding the assessments. In 2017, the net digest value was \$449,995,266.00, and in 2022, the net digest value was \$658,219,336. This year, the gross digest is over a million dollars. The Board of Commissioners has lowered the mill rate by 2.15 mills in the last two years. The Board of Education rolled it back by 1.92 mills in the previous two years. Based on a pie chart that County Administrator Townsend created, 60% of the money goes to the Board of Education. She studied the millage rates in the surrounding counties, and Lamar County still has the lowest millage rate. The tax assessments will be mailed out Monday, with a 45-day window to submit a complaint. The biggest increase this year is land because there is a shortage of houses. People are buying 25 to 50 acres to live on or divide up. People pay anywhere from \$7,000.00 to \$9,000.00 an acre for land. The sales ratio has gone from 30% to 38%. Mrs. Haddock shared an "Understanding Your New Assessment" (attached to the minutes) with the board and stated it would go on the Lamar County Assessor's Office Facebook page. They may also want to have a Town Hall meeting if necessary. Mrs. Haddock said that there would be law enforcement officers on-site during the month of May and June.

Commissioner Lovett noted for the record that the State of Georgia mandates the assessment. The assessment does not set the tax. This is an assessment of the property, and from the assessment, the Board of Commissioners will establish a millage rate to meet the County's financial obligations. The Assessment, the property owners, will receive in the mail is not a tax bill. Chairman Traylor announced

that a Five Year History and Property Tax Breakdown that County Administrator Townsend created would also be mailed out on Monday.

Mrs. Haddock said that the County had gone down in the millage rate. In Henry County, the Board of Education's millage rate is set at 20, which is the highest you can set it, and they have a bond set at 3.2 mills. If you live in Henry County, the Board of Education millage rate is the total millage rate in Lamar County. Vice-Chair Thrash said that you could point fingers all day long, but when people move here, and they pay 27 to 30 percent over the list cost of a house, this affects everyone in the County because it is based on the sales ratio. It falsely elevates everything, and it is no longer sustainable. This will end up taxing people out of their homes because there is only so much the Board of Commissioners can do. They have things in the budget mandated by the State that they have to pay. Mrs. Haddock said that the assessment would continue to go up unless the economy tanks. People are paying cash for their homes, and a lot of sales do not have security deeds behind them. Mrs. Haddock said that the utility companies' assessment is based on the percentage of sales ratios, so if it is 32 percent, they pay 32 percent on their tax bill. However, property owners pay their tax bill based on the assessed value, which is 40 percent. This is why the minimum sales ratio needs to be 37 to 38 percent. If not, counties lose a lot of money and face penalties if they submit an incorrect sales ratio. Mrs. Haddock said there are 13 to 14-square-foot homes selling for \$300,000.00 and a 1990 mobile home on 2 acres that sold for \$250,000.00. Mrs. Haddock said that there are more conservation use applications being submitted. It has to be 12 acres to get the exemption. Mrs. Haddock announced that the Governor is giving \$18,000.00 off the 40 percent, which is about \$450.00. It will not be listed on the assessment notice.

Discussion of Coffey Road Extension

Planning and Community Development Buice (Ms. Buice) addressed the board regarding Coffey Road. She said that in 1972 there was a 21-lot subdivision developed that included an extension of Coffey Road. The County excepted both the subdivision and the road. Some of the lots were sold, and individual homes were built, leaving about 16 one-acre lots. One owner purchased the 16 one-acre lots and built one house on it. He used the Coffey Road extension as his driveway. The County did not abandon the road; this portion of Coffey Road is dirt and grass. Now, someone is interested in purchasing the property to build 16 houses, so the County has options. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the County could abandon the road, and the developer could take care of the road. Ms. Buice said they would need an easement, but it could be a private or county-maintained road. Commissioner Gilles said that abandoning the road causes chaos and drama when they pay taxes, and it is deemed a private road. She asked if they could put up a sign that says, "Private Road." Commissioner Lovett said that he advised Ms. Buice that anyone who comes for a permit has to sign a form stating that it is a private road.

Chairman Traylor said that they need to check with the County Attorney that they can do this because the disclosures go out to the developer. It is up to the developer to provide the notifications. Chairman Traylor said he knew about another location in the County where people were concerned. It was known that something would be developed on a piece of property that could impact property value. The developer moved fast in developing the properties, and they should have been notified. Commissioner Lovett said that when they do zoning, there is always a sign located at the site, so they should be able to put up an abandonment sign. Ms. Buice said that part of the procedure of abandoning a road is to put up a sign and run an ad in the paper for two to four weeks. Vice-Chair Thrash said they have to give a utility easement by law, but the best thing to do is abandon the road. Ms. Buice said that the lots are legal non-conforming lots that have been grandfathered in, and whatever you do with the lot does not get rid of the road. Commissioner Lovett said that you would have 16 lots at the end of Coffey Road, and he agreed with abandoning the road. He said it is unlike the Redbone situation, where they have private roads. The road is elevated, and the bed is there. The developer will come in and put up houses and driveways. He said that the problem with the roads in Redbone is that the road goes down to a swamp, whereas the Coffey

Road extension portion is a massive development. The board agreed to put “Coffey Road Extension” on the Regular Business meeting agenda.

Five Points Rd., Speeders and Subdivision Designation

Vice-Chair Thrash said that she and Commissioner Gilles had received numerous calls regarding speeders on Five Points Road. They would like to have an Ordinance reducing the speed to 35 miles an hour. The new houses built on this road did not have the 100 ft. setback requirement, so the houses are close to the road. Ms. Buice said that you only need an Ordinance to change the speed on a local county road. County Clerk Davidson asked if the Sheriff’s Office would need to be involved with changing the speed limit. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they would if they ran radar on the road. Ms. Buice said you do not have to go through the Sheriff’s Office if it is a local road. They will send a list of roads every three years for the radar. Ms. Buice said that the local entity sends it to the State, and the State sends it to the Sheriff’s Office. Traffic studies are done on State roads. Commissioner Lovett would like to see them hold a Public Hearing about the speed limit change. Ms. Buice said there are requests for speed bumps, four-way stops, and speed limit changes. Instead of a Public Hearing, they could send a letter with a return stamped letter to the property owners that are affected by the requested change. They could return the letter with a yes or no, then tally up the results. Commissioner Lovett stated that he thought the people should come and be heard. Chairman Traylor said they could put up signs for a town hall meeting. Vice-Chair Thrash said that if they change the speed limit for this road, others in the County will want their speed limits changed. Chairman Traylor suggested that they take it to the people.

Other Business

Regular Business Meeting Agenda Discussion

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation-Pastor Marable

Recess and Resume the Meeting

The board recessed and resumed the meeting in approximately 10 minutes.

4. Approval of Agenda
5. Minutes Approval
 - i. Workshop Minutes April 23rd, 2023
 - ii. Public Hearing April 18th, 2023
 - iii. Regular Business Meeting April 18th, 2023
 - iv. Special Called Meeting April 24th, 2023
 - v. Special Called Meeting May 2nd, 2023
6. Lamar County 4-H Tech Changemakers -UGA Extension Octavia Jackson
7. Ordinance 2023-06 1st Reader-Transient Selling

Chairman Traylor stated there is no need for a Public Hearing to have a first reader. They had public comments at a recent Public Hearing last month, and no one showed up to speak. The concern is based on conversations Ms. Buice has had with the Commissioners. Chairman Traylor said that the survey showed the following: Commissioner Lovett said that food trucks could operate whenever they want to under the transient selling Ordinance, Commissioner Gilles said that food trucks could operate whenever, Chairman Traylor said they could operate four times a month, Commissioner Fletcher said that

he agrees they can operate whenever or two times per week, and Vice-Chair Thrash said that food trucks could operate during special events only. Vice-Chair Thrash said that on Friday night in Jackson, Georgia, they have food trucks, which bring in a lot of revenue. They do not collect sales tax on what they sell and are missing out on LOST money. The fees are around \$60.00. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she does not want them to be Commissioners that are always chasing revenue, but she also does not want them to turn into Midtown in Atlanta, Georgia, where on every corner, there are a dozen trucks at lunchtime. Vice-Chair Thrash said that she is good with weekends but not every day. Chairman Traylor said that the City of Barnesville is saying no to food trucks, but the cities are normally the ones that allow food trucks. This is currently falling on Lamar County to establish an Ordinance to allow food trucks in the County. The board continued discussing possible times for food trucks. Since most restaurants are not open on Mondays in Barnesville, Chairman Traylor, and Vice-Chair Thrash agreed that Mondays would be the ideal day for food trucks to come, and they could do it on a trial basis. Commissioner Lovett agreed with Monday but did not want to stop food trucks from coming because they bring business to the community. He said he likes "Food Truck Fridays" but also liked Mondays and Special Events for food trucks on a sunset basis. Ms. Buice pointed out that the current Ordinance allows food trucks every day and goes back to every day if it sunsets. Commissioner Fletcher agreed with Monday and Special Events but would also like to have food trucks on the weekends. He said you have to consider the wishes of the young people in the community.

Vice-Chair Thrash suggested that they get a Special Event tax from food trucks because, currently, there is no fee or tax for transient selling. The board agreed to food trucks on Monday and Special Events. Ms. Buice pointed out that ice cream trucks also fall under transient selling, and per the Ordinance, they can sell every day. There are three categories under Transient Selling: Food Trucks, Ice Cream Trucks, and other types of sales, any types of sales outside of brick-in-mortar. Each category can have a different timetable. This also includes fireworks, selling DVDs out of your car, etc. Vice-Chair Thrash and Commissioner Gilles said they did not want to see anything sold out of a truck or a car. Ms. Buice said that this, too, could be added to the regulations. Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about door-to-door sales. Ms. Buice said this type of sale could be done on a two-week basis with renewals after that because this is a transient type of seller. Vice-Chair Thrash said that any business outside of ice cream trucks or food trucks could be done by permit only. Ms. Buice said that they are already by permit only. Ms. Buice said that the trucks selling meat do it until someone catches them, and then they come in and get a permit. There was more discussion about the time frame for permits and restrictions on other types of businesses. Vice-Chair Thrash noted that school fundraisers and church fundraisers are exempt. Commissioner Gilles inquired about the John Birch Society and the man from Texas selling homeschool books for two months. Vice-Chair Thrash said that with transient selling, he would need a permit and could only sell for 12 days for the total year. Ms. Buice inquired about selling boiled peanuts. Commissioner Lovett said this is a rabbit hole, and when you try to micromanage every little aspect of sales, then you have to come up with more creative ideas. Chairman Traylor said that this is not the most pertinent issue. The most pertinent issue is the food trucks. He suggested they make the change for the food trucks and leave all other transient selling the way it is. Commissioner Gilles said that means all other types of sales are wide open. Ms. Buice said she had had multiple calls about people coming in with food trucks. Vice-Chair Thrash suggested that they just address the food trucks. Ms. Buice said that historically it was called a Peddler's permit; door-to-door salesman and then transient selling was used. So, the State changed all the codes to remove the word peddler. She said that this is one code of many that need to be updated.

8. Towaliga Judicial Budget

Commissioner Lovett asked if this is rubber-stamped budget and do they have input. Chairman Traylor said they do have input but typically approve it. Commissioner Lovett said that they did not get an explanation for budget increases. They are cutting employee insurance benefits but will rubber stamp \$200,000.00 worth of increases for the judicial circuit. Commissioner Lovett said that he

requested information on a five-year running budget from Judge Wilson but had not received it. The Victim's Advocate's program has been discontinued, which means he is turning in 50 percent of the 5 percent money for the Victim's Advocate program, and it was not accounted for in the Towaliga Judicial Budget. Commissioner Lovett said he would like to table this until he receives the information. He said that on a personal note, about six years ago, you grilled someone that he is very close to on what she made. Now that she is not there, her replacement makes double that amount. They had two people, and now they have four; the director of that program makes double. He said that the Victim's Services Director is asking for over \$100,000.00. Vice-Chair Thrash said Judge Wilson could order Lamar County to pass the budget. Commissioner Lovett said he was okay with this. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they are mandated to supplement the State programs because the State legislators will not fund them. The local taxpayers are paying for the Governor's raises. Commissioner Lovett said that if they approve the Towaliga Judicial Budget, he has to find more places to cut in the local community or do the last thing he wants to do, which is a tax increase. He said that for every dime he spends without looking at it, it is a dime less he has to put into the people that will benefit our community the most. Commissioner Lovett said that it could be that they did not do anything because of COVID for two years, and now they have a backlog of cases and got paid to stay home, and now they are coming back to work. He said he would like to see if this is the reason, but he cannot get anyone to send him that information. Vice-Chair Thrash said they did a lot with the Towaliga Judicial Budget last year. Commissioner Fletcher asked if they needed more time to approve this budget. Commissioner Lovett said they had until May 31st, 2023, and could have a Special Called meeting if they do not approve it on May 16th, 2023.

Vice-Chair Thrash suggested they leave it on the May 16th, 2023, agenda. Commissioner Fletcher said that if it were just Lamar County approving the budget, it would be different, but they are a part of other counties, making them look like they are not participants. Commissioner Lovett said that he liked the word "frugal." Commissioner Fletcher said he likes that word too, but these are people's jobs that they need to fund to do their work. Commissioner Gilles asked about the percentage that they received from the State. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they got five percent raises. Commissioner Lovett said that what you received in the budget is what he wants from the County, and you have no idea what all those State employees got paid. They are asking for a supplement. Vice-Chair Thrash pointed out that they only approve of the supplement. Commissioner Lovett pointed out that the Sheriff disbanded the Victim's Advocate Program, and it needed to be taken out of the budget. Vice-Chair Thrash said they would all be best served by visiting their legislators because this is unsustainable. She said that in one of her cases, the Public Defender took a guy outside, and they were there for less than one minute. They returned inside and told the judge he qualified as a Public Defender. Commissioner Lovett said he could not allow the County employees to take a hit so that everyone gets an increase. Lamar County is a tie on the caseload from year to year.

9. Safety Products Message Board

County Clerk Davidson explained that the Electronic Message Board would be used when they are doing road work. This is a Mini-Matrix Message Board with a hydraulic winch for a cost of \$17,275.00. He is asking for two of these message boards; the total cost is \$34,550.00. The freight for two message boards is \$1,700.00.

10. Board Appointments

- i. Division of Family and Children Services (DFACS)-Re-Appointment of Oliva Banks-Term Expires 6-30-2023
- ii. Division of Family and Children Services (DFACS)-Re-Appointment of Eddie Collier-Term Expires 6-30-2023
- iii. McIntosh Trail Community Service Board - Appointment of Dr. Jessica Traylor to the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board, filling the expired Term of Jeffery Stephens-6-30-2023

iv. Lamar County Board of Health-Licensed Physician Actively Practicing in the County-Re-Appointment Lee Woodall-Term Expires 6-1-2023

Commissioner Gilles stated that Jeffrey Stephens was present to speak about serving on the McIntosh Trail Board. Mr. Stephens addressed the board. He said he served six years on the McIntosh Trail Service Board. He said that he served on the finance committee, the nominating committee, and the CEO search committee. He is the Chairman of the non-profit known as the Community Action Service (CARS) board. He conducts the meetings for CARS quarterly. Vice-Chair Thrash asked Mr. Stephens if he had spoken to their board. Mr. Stephens said he had spoken with Kenyatta Walker and told her he wanted to continue serving. Vice-Chair Thrash pointed out that they sent a letter stating that they wanted to replace him, so he needs to talk to the board about this and suggested that he speak to all the board members.

11. Administrator's Report

12. Public Comment

13. Round Table

Commissioner Fletcher said that he was excited about the road projects. Chairman Traylor said that the Microsurfacing they are doing allows for more miles of road to be paved. He said that they are storing rocks at the location of the new animal shelter site and the Public Works Department. There was a question about the rocks flying all over the place. He said that the more they ride on it, the smoother it will get. Commissioner Gilles said that Country Kitchen has some places they went back over and is still rough. Chairman Traylor requested that she send this to Public Works Director Rigdon.

Chairman Traylor said that anytime there is a question, he would like to have a phone call so he is not blindsided, and he calls a Commissioner about an issue, and they already know. He requested that if they know of something, a complaint, or whatever it may be, please do their due diligence and let him know. He said this is the team side he wants to work toward. That voice that people hear is a consistent voice of concern. It might not be a consistent vote, but a consistent voice, so please call him.

Chairman Traylor said he received a call about the equipment blocking the road on High Falls Road. Public Works Rigdon said he has six employees, and they are working on other roads. They have staged these roads with older trucks and motor graders while working.

Commissioner Gilles asked if Dr. Jessica Traylor works with the McIntosh Trail, wondered how the board would make that recommendation, and asked if they knew her. Chairman Traylor said they knew her because she was the school psychologist for 15 years. Commissioner Lovett said that Mr. Stephens has three days to mend fences. Commissioner Fletcher said that he made the comment that he was not the only one up for re-appointment but noted that there is only one appointment for Lamar County. Commissioner Gilles said that there are eight counties, and it is all based on population.

14. Executive Session

- i. Real Estate
- ii. Litigation
- iii. Personnel

15. Adjournment

Adjournment

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to adjourn the Workshop meeting at approximately 3:42 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

Jarrold Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk