

Workshop Meeting Minutes for Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Administration Building
12:30 p.m.
Date: January 16th, 2025

1. Call to Order

Chairman Traylor called to Workshop meeting to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on January 16th, 2025. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, Commissioner Boyle, County Administrator Townsend, County Clerk Davidson. County Attorney Mayfield joined the meeting via Teams.

2. Workshop Meeting Items for Discussion

Approval of 2025 Holidays

Discussion centered on scheduling for the 2025 holidays. The emphasis was placed on developing an inclusive calendar that incorporates ACCG conference dates.

HB581 - FLOST (Statewide Floating Homestead Exemption)

Changes in property tax procedures and appeals due to HB581. This is a new State Law for homestead exemptions.

Introduction of a new Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) for property tax relief. The purpose of LOST is to reduce property taxes. Projections for the Floating Homestead Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST). This form of LOST will further reduce property taxes for the citizens. The Tax Assessor will need to maintain two property tax evaluations. The regular numbers and the numbers from 2024 and both set of values will need to be maintained.

- One mill equals around \$827,000.00.
- For 2023, FLOST was projected at under two mills; for 2024, it is projected at 2.09 mills.

Discussion on the inclusion of exemptions and potential effects on revenue.

Decision to hold a joint meeting with municipalities during the first week of February 2025 to discuss further. The board will need to vote to opt in or opt out of this exemption. If they choose to opt out, then they will need hold three Public Hearings and pass a Resolution that is filed with the State. This will need to be done by March 1st, 2025. County Administrator Townsend is recommending that they opt in. He stated the voters voted to opt-in because FLOST and the exemptions will help the citizens.

Chairman Traylor asked about projections based off of current rate on a house that cost \$200,000.00 how much will this cost. Tax Assessor Haddock stated that this will be around \$400.00 and if they drop it by two mills it will bring it done to around \$320.00. A potential

2-mill reduction if FLOST is implemented, providing approximately \$60 in savings per \$100,000 property value for 2024 is based on \$90.00 a square foot. The inflation growth does not go into effect unless she does a re-evaluation. The values will go up to \$115.00 a square feet according to State sales. Currently there is \$73,140.136 worth of reassessed existing real property. The exemptions in 2024 were \$164,822.434. The digest for 2025 shows the exemptions at \$222,246.01.

Tax Assessor Haddock reported that the Lamar County School System as elected to opt out therefore the exemptions for the school will be based on \$383,000.00. She said a time-consuming task for her will be based on the fact that the schools and the cities took off the estimated taxes on the assessment notices and they put the roll back rate on it so she does not how the County will project a roll back millage rate. For example, on the assessment notice a project of ten mills and something comes up and you have to go to eleven mills, on the tax bill it will state the Board of Commissioners decided to roll the millage rate up to eleven mills. Tax Assessor Haddock said they are trying to take the burden off the Assessors' Office and put it on the Governor's Office. Tax Assessor Haddock said she projects a revenue loss of around \$466,000.00 on just the County's portion because of the difference between the 2024 and the 2025 evaluations is \$ 146,765,691. This is a 40 percent or \$ 58,706,276 of value loss.

Tax Assessor Haddock said this will help the homeowners. If you have two houses on a lot, only the main house will get the homestead exemption. If you have a 700-acre tract in conservation with homestead exemption, the whole tract is frozen. Tax Assessor reported that Personal Property changes to the Digest were a negative \$1,317,640.00 that was lost. Anything that is less than \$20,000.00 is exempt. The property value of a home for anyone who bought a home in 2025 will be based on \$115.00 a square foot. For anyone that has a homestead exemption already the value will be based on the 2024, 90 square foot. If a spouse passes away and you had homestead exemption, the get to keep the 2024, 90 square foot evaluation.

Tax Assessor Haddock said that SB 346 went away with HB 581. If you bought your property in 2010 for \$500,000 the maximum fair market value estimates the assessor can put on it for tax year 2011 is \$500,000 which is a \$200,000 assessment (40%). However, she now has a whole year to look at sales instead of just the first three months. Someone could go to the Board of Equalization (BOE) their value was automatically frozen for three years and now if you go to the BOE, the value has to be lowered by the BOE to be frozen for three years.

iii. Resolution 2025-01 Crawford Road Relocation - Rock Quarry

County Attorney Mayfield said that the Rock Quarry moved the road, and they want to deed us a piece of land where the road is now, for our right of When the road was moved it left a fragment that they want deeded to them. There is a survey that shows this. It is not

ready for the Board of Commissioners for a vote due to missing deed descriptions and plats. There is an exception in the code that if there is a piece of land that is irregularly shaped and cannot be built on or rezoned and is only useful to the adjoining property owners. The Resolution can be taken off the agenda until he gets the necessary documents by noon the following day.

Chairman Traylor said he looked at the property when he was a District 3 Commissioner, and the owner showed him the decimal readings for when the train went by. He said when they were leaving and got on Hwy 41, they pulled over because he saw a truck pull out of Crawford Road onto Hwy 41. The owner agreed to change the road and make that modification. The cost for the road improvements was almost \$300,000.00 along with them and GDOT to enhance the safety of that road.

iv. Fire Department PTO

Fire Chief Matthews shared a new PTO policy for the Fire Department.

- Transition to a 24-hour shift schedule for fire department personnel.
- Three months but less than five years, 20 hours per month accrual, 240 hours per year, ten shifts per 24 hours per year, Accrual Limit is 390 hours with 390 rollover cap.
- Five years but less than 10 years, 24 hours per month, 288 accrual per year, 12 Shifts per 24 hours per year, 390 hours accrual per year with 430 rollover cap.
- Ten years but less than 20 years, 26 hours per month, 312 accrual per year, thirteen shifts per 24 hours per year, 390 accrual limit with 450 rollover cap.
- Twenty plus years, 30 hours per month, 360 accrued hours per year, fifteen shifts per 24 hours per year, 390 accrual limit with 470 roll over cap.
- Adjustments to PTO calculations for 53-hour schedules.
- Employees working 24-hour shifts will accumulate PTO in 24-hour blocks, with allowances for shift swapping.

v. County Legislative Coordinators for the 2025 Legislative Session

Commissioner Ashley Gilles was selected to serve as the voting County Legislative Coordinator for the upcoming legislative session. The former legislative coordinator was former Commissioner Thrash.

vi. Regular Meeting Discussion

Reviewed the agenda for the regular meeting.

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation- Antioch Baptist Church- Eric Kincaid

4. Approval of Agenda

5. Minutes Approval

- i. Public Hearing-December 10th, 2024
- ii. Workshop Meeting-December 10th, 2024
- iii. December 17th, 2024-Regular Business Meeting

6. Annual Appointments

- i. 2025 Vice-Chair- District 1-Jarrold Fletcher
- ii. County Attorney-Scott Mayfield- Smith Welch, Webb and White
- iii. Open Records Officer-County Clerk-Carlette Davidson
- iv. County Physicians
 - Doctors Woodall, Wilson, and Manley
 - Doctor Aaron Buice
 - Family Medical Center (Family Medicine) Griffin, Ga.
 - The Hughston Clinic (Orthopedic Surgery)
 - Orthopedics Sports Medicine & Surgery-Thomaston Ga.
 - Orthopedics Sports Medicine & Surgery-Brandon Boyce-Barnesville, Ga.
 - Resurgens Orthopedics-Griffin, Ga.
 - Resurgens Orthopedics-Fayetteville, Ga
- v. County Surveyor-James Butler
- vi. Board Appointments
 - Three Rivers Regional
- vii. County Representative- District 2- Jason Lovett
- viii. Non-Public-Irvin Trice
 - E-911 Committee Appointee
- ix. County Commissioner-District 4 - Truman Boyle

7. Old Business

8. New Business

- x. Alcohol License-Addition of Wine Sales to Majik Market, 919 Veterans Parkway, Shezan Battiwala.
The board discussed having a pouring license for the County in the future and adding it to the referendum. The board discussed having a survey go out to the citizens.
- xi. Fire Department PTO
- xii. Approval of 2025 Holidays
- xiii. Administrator's Report
- xiv. Public Comment
- xv. Round Table
- xvi. Executive Session
 - Real Estate
 - Litigation
 - Personnel

9. Adjournment

vii. Administrator's Report

County Administrator Townsend reported Sheriff White would like to utilize the old Administration Building. He requested to know if the board would like to sell the building or left the Sheriff use the building due to the condition of the mobile units they are currently utilizing. County Administrator Townsend stated he would check see if the Sheriff could come to the Regular Business meeting to discuss this issue. County Commissioner Lovett said they bought this building because it was cost prohibited to fix the old Administration building. He said the facilities are inadequate, but he would like to explore more options. Commissioner Lovett said the promise was to purchase this building and then sell that building. He said he was concerned about renovating the old building and suggested that they could bring the Sheriff to this new building. Chairman Traylor suggested that County Administrator Townsend could provide some data on the projections before they purchased this new administration building. County Administrator Townsend said he has an appraisal of the old administration building. He stated the rent was adjusted for the tenants in the new Administration building and their rent has been increased based on other locations. For local governments, the lease cannot go over a year unless they have the automatic renewal policy. County Administrator Townsend said he let them know that the prices would be locked in for five years but also at any time the Board of Commissioners could give them 90-day notice.

Commissioner Lovett said he did not advocate kicking someone out of the building. If they could purchase them, every clause should have a buyout, and if one of the renters is not going to stay long term or would like to move downtown, they could look into this option.

County Administrator Townsend reported the old Tag Office is being utilized by the Coroner and the EMA office. There may not be any more room that could be used out there due to having a body cooler and other things that the need. The original plan was to have the E911 Center and Safety Complex, but the Sheriff backed out of this option.

Fire Chief Matthews said that down the road he will need three more office spaces.

Revenue continues to exceed expenditures, with tax collections catching up to expectations.

viii. Public Comments

Elaine Hallada, of 131 Steeple Chase, addressed the following issues during the meeting:

Ms. Hallada emphasized the importance of expediting liquor sales legislation. She stated that the Legacy 75 Project will include new restaurants that will require the ability to sell drinks by the glass to remain competitive and meet customer expectations. Requested that they expedite discussions and decisions regarding liquor sales to accommodate upcoming restaurant needs.

Mrs. Hallada expressed concern that the workshop agenda did not include an update on the Solid Waste Authority (SWA) Requested that members be regularly updated and informed on developments regarding the Authority. Mentioned feeling vindicated during the January 19, 2025 meeting, after enduring being called derogatory names such as a liar and a hater. Request that the board ensures regular updates on the SWA and that they are included on future agendas.

Diane Perry of 101 Maple Drive provided a detailed report regarding a trash truck traveling from Griffin and creating significant issues. She reported that a trash truck was traveling at approximately seventy-five miles per hour, with trash, including insulation, cardboard, and milk cartons that were flying out of the back. Mrs. Perry and her husband captured pictures of the truck. It had no visible tag, was not properly secured, and the driver was speeding. Mrs. Perry plans to report the incident to the Griffin Department of Transportation and Public Works, as she has the truck number. Mentioned reports from the local newspaper indicating that Lamar County law enforcement has previously been involved in addressing trash-related issues. She inquired about the amount of time law enforcement spends on such matters. She emphasized that the landfill is designated for C&D.

Donald Hartman 507 Od Milner Road addressed the board with several concerns.

Mr. Hartman reported that he heard an update from the Fire Chief regarding the new fire trucks and learned they will be ready and in service within a couple of months. He expressed gratitude for the progress being made on this matter.

Addressing County Administrator Townsend, Mr. Hartman inquired about survey ribbons spotted on Fellowship Drive. He asked if upcoming road work was planned and whether it was related to the Industrial Park.

Mr. Hartman highlighted the importance of transparency and community involvement in county affairs. Expressed hope for town hall meetings this year, stating that they would be beneficial for keeping residents informed and engaged. Reflected on the last meeting and brought up topics such as resolutions, emails, court orders, and inventories. Expressed a desire for updates on matters involving the Solid Waste Authority (SWA) and emphasized the importance of transparency while acknowledging that some legal issues may not be publicly available. Requested the board consider scheduling town hall meetings to foster community involvement and transparency. He also requested that the board regularly inform the public on developments concerning the SWA and other county matters.

ix. Round Table

Commissioner Lovett stated he was appointed to the Three Rivers Commission board two years ago and the surrounding counties work on problems together that affect them all. Every meeting there are discussions about workforce housing. The numbers for workforce housing are a fluctuating number. The tradition used to be that you moved from home, got

an apartment, then a starter home and moved on from there. This model has been destroyed over the past couple of years especially with the values of houses. This is mostly driven through Wallstreet. He researched this issue and could not find anyone to build a starter home, so he built one. Commissioner Lovett invited everyone to go see his starter home located on 782 McKenzie Road in Milner, Georgia. The sale price if he replicated this in the City of Barnesville, in lots not currently being used, is around \$189,000.00. Commissioner Lovett said it was not about him building the house but rather about showing that this is possible. He said that because of this they can start by rebuilding downtown Barnesville and offer affordable housing. Commissioner Lovett said there is some criteria in the State of Georgia that you can dictate it as affordable housing. Commissioner Lovett said they could start offering this to law enforcement officers or City and County workers so they can give them affordable housing options.

Commissioner Boyle said the Sheriff called him about the old Administration building calling in move in ready. He is inviting the board to look at the condition of the investigation section area because they need to move.

County Administrator Townsend addressed Mr. Hartman regarding Fellowship Drive. Public Works Director Rigdon believes this is Georgia Power surveying the telephone poles.

x. Additional Public Comment

Mr. Randall George of 4164 Indian Trace, Milner Georgia. He stated he was a processor and had two sets of legal documents for the County and the Lamar County Board of Commissioners. He served Vice-Chair Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, and Commissioner Boyle with the documents.

xi. Additional Round Table Comments

Chairman Traylor encouraged Mrs. Perry to share the trash truck pictures with the Sheriff's Office as they can get with the GDOT. He stated that trash being dumped in the community has been an ongoing issue and deer cameras have been installed in some places to try and catch people dumping trash on the side of the road. Catching someone dumping trash and having it go to the newspaper will accomplish more than any fine a judge can issue.

Reported that the Board of Commissioners had one tailgate talk last year and this was in District 3 and suggested they pick a time and date to hold another one.

xii. Executive Session and Adjournment.

Commissioner Gilles made a motion at approximately 1:42 p.m. to adjourn to Executive Session for personnel and litigation. Vice-Chair Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board came out of Executive Session at approximately 2:53 p.m.

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to adjourn the Workshop meeting. Vice-Chair Fletcher seconded the motion.

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Jarrold Fletcher , Vice-Chair

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Truman Boyle, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk