

Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Special Called Meeting Minutes
Date: January 9, 2025
Time: 4:00 PM
Location: Administration Building

1. Call to Order

Chairman Traylor called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to amend the agenda, adding motions for further motions regarding the Solid Waste Authority (SWA) and also a motion for a Freedom of information. Vice-Chair Fletcher seconded the motion. The amendments were added as item four for the SWA discussion and item five for the Freedom of information. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Items for Discussion

i. Sheriff's Office – New Cars

Sheriff White addressed the board regarding a discussion on purchasing Dodge Charger Pursuit vehicles as part of the SPLOST project.

- Cost per car: \$38,483. A total of three cars were requested.
- Total cost for four cars: \$153,932 (exceeds the \$140,000 budget).
- Excess funds from SPLOST will cover overage.
- Vehicles are needed due to aging fleet and transmission issues in older vehicles.
- Warranty: 3 years/36,000 miles.

Vice-Chair Fletcher made a motion to purchase 4 2023 Dodge Charger Pursuit cars from SPLOST funds. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion was amended to add the cost of the 4 Dodge Charger Pursuits in the amount of \$153,932.00 and added to the motions. The motion passed unanimously.

ii. SWA (Solid Waste Authority) Board Appointment

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to table the SWA board appointment. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

iii. Resolution 2025-02: Legal Legislation for Solid Waste Authority (SWA) Board

Commissioner Gilles said she did not know if anyone had seen the SWA meeting and said the SWA is no longer responsive to the Lamar County Board of Commissioners and they feel that if the SWA is no longer acting in the best interest of Lamar County and they fail to act in the matter consistent with the purposes for which it was established, and where they are the guarantor of the significant debt for the authority. This Resolution provides local legislation and for our State Representatives to come in and rework the board. Instead of being a five- or six-member board where the City of Milner is dominating the whole entirety of the SWA board it will be two members from the Lamar County Board of Commissioners, two members that the Lamar County Board of Commissioners selects and one member from the City of Milner. Commissioner Gilles requested

that the Resolution be signed today and sent to the State Legislature because they are going to be meeting very soon. They only have 40 days.

Chairman Traylor stated he appreciated Commissioner Gilles for taking the lead and contacting their legislators about this.

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to authorize counsel to file any legal actions necessary to protect the County's interests related to the Lamar County Solid Waste Authority. Vice-Chair Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lovett made a motion in response to twenty-six pages they received. The other Commissioner Gilles made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-02. Vice-Chair Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

iv. SWA Discussion

Commissioner Gilles made a motion that they advise their legal counsel to ask the Judge to order the SWA board not meet until this is resolved by the State. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Boyle made a motion that they direct counsel to seek a court order allowing for three unrestricted and unrestrained engineering audits of the Waste to Fuel Program performed by engineers selected by the Lamar County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to direct counsel to seek a court order requiring the Solid Waste Authority and all of its subcontractors to submit to an immediate physical inventory of all properties and equipment owned and/or leased by the SWA and its subcontractors with the physical inventory to be performed by the Board of Commissioners, and/or its assignees. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lovett said his motion was in response to twenty-six pages they received the other day and was dated on October 15th, 2024. He said it was everything that you do not want to see from your elected officials. Commissioner Lovett said knowing that future litigation is inevitable, he believed that preserving documents is tantamount to the protection of our community. Therefore, Commissioner Lovett made a motion that this board instruct counsel to file a Freedom of Information request with gmail's parent company, Alphabet, Inc., for all inbound and outbound emails regarding addresses, commissionertrash@gmail.com and nticswa@gmail.com for the entire duration of Nancy Thrash's full term as Lamar County Commissioner. Commissioner Boyle seconded the motion. Commissioner Gilles noted that this was because she used those two email addresses and not the County email address for her official work in her official capacity. Commissioner Lovett stated that this was correct. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment

Elaine Hallada of 131 Steeple Chase

- Stated that this issue with the SWA started two years ago when she asked a simple question about why she could not take her trash to the dump. The question was answered with a stupid email that made her wonder what was going on.
- Presented a copy of a letter from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (EPD) dated January 4th, 2024. The letter was to Johnny Poore, Executive Director of the Lamar County Regional Solid Waste Authority regarding Permit No. 085-009P (MRF). Mrs. Hallada referenced page 3 of 5 of the letter regarding the MRF. “Coverage of the RF under this permit shall automatically terminate unless construction of the MRF facility has commenced within one hundred and eighty days (180) and completed within three hundred sixty-five (365) days. Mrs. Hallada stated she contacted Keith Stevens with the EPD and found out the permit had not been extended or renewed. Mrs. Hallada said this means that the SWA is in violation of EPD permit. Mrs. Hallada referenced page 5 of 5 of the letters, “ The Permittee shall comply with all other applicable state and local laws, rules and ordinances which are not incorporated as conditions of this Permit, but which are separately enforced by the relevant state or local agency with jurisdiction. The letter and the Permit are attached to the minutes.
- Expressed gratitude for the progress made on SWA issues, including everyone in attendance that agrees.

Donald Hartman of 507 Old Milner Road

- Congratulated District 4 Commissioner Truman Boyle.
- Called for public disclosure of penalties/fines levied against SWA with the EPD.
- Called for any and all penalties with any agency pre SWA need to be made public as well.
- Stated that with the Freedom of Information Act and Public Records, the citizens deserve to know anything that is not correct or not compliant with the SWA.
- Raised concerns about the previous Commissioner having a Facebook page as a Commissioner for Lamar County.

4. Round Table Discussions

- Vice-Chair Fletcher: none
- Commissioner Lovett stated that this has been a grueling two years fighting this and said that he knows that the other board members are as frustrated as he has been. He said they will continue to find out what has transpired, and they do that because the community deserves to know. The amount of money that has evolved is equivalent to what a new jail or a new Recreation Department, or twenty miles of paving, or forty gymnasiums would have cost, and, in his opinion, what has been wasted. He never thought that he would involve this much effort and take this long to find the truth of what was going on. Commissioner Lovett commended Vice-Chair Fletcher, because at one time they did not see eye to eye on this issue and now they are working together, and he could not be more happier. He commended Commissioner Gilles and stated the State route is the best route. It is very obvious they need help. Commissioner Lovett welcomed Commissioner Boyle.

Commissioner Lovett said he looks forward to working on things other than SWA and said the community needs them to concentrate on other work.

- Commissioner Gilles stated to Mrs. Hallada that she knew about the January 4th, 2024 deadline and she personally sent letters to everyone on the SWA board about the materials and the facility being up and running. Commissioner Gilles stated she received no response from anyone in the last two weeks, but she is tracking it, and she knows what is going on there but there is no good communication.
- Commissioner Boyle stated that Bonnie Kitchings contacted him with complaints about the SWA facilities across the road from her dealing with the smell. He sent Skip Seda the Chairman of the SWA a text about what they need to do about the smell, and he said, “It is a landfill, and it is going to smell. Commissioner Boyle said he was not happy with this answer, and he made a call to Keith Stevens. He left a voice mail but had not received a call back. Commissioner Boyle said that this answer was not a good enough answer for him, that a landfill is going to smell and will continue to look into it. Commissioner Boyle thanked everyone for their support.
- Chairman Traylor welcomed Commissioner Boyle to the board. He said he knew Commissioner Boyle’s integrity and feels that he will bring a lot to the board, especially with his history with law enforcement and legal matters. Chairman Traylor commended the Sheriff’s Office, staff and directors of all departments who go above and beyond for the citizens. He commended the Sheriff for finding the cars at a price that is under price. It helps the overall budget which helps the taxpayers and the community. Reported that there will be a workshop on January 16th, 2025 and invited everyone to attend.

5. Executive Session

- No executive session was held.

6. Adjournment

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:31 PM. Commissioner Boyles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Jarrod Fletcher , Vice-Chair

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Truman Boyle, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk