

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 8, 2023
9:00 A.M.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Gene King, Commissioner Rosla Plant, Commissioner Emmett Collins, and Commissioner Adam Worsley
Staff Present: County Administrator Michelle Irizarry, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and Attorney Nathan Lee

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bryan Threadgill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Bill Gregory, Finance Director

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman King to adopt the agenda with the following additions: Add under Appointments 3. Appointment to the Hospital Authority. Add under New Business 6. Approve letter to Natural Resources Conservation Service as part of the dam breach analysis and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Monica Myles, Public Affairs Specialist, from the U.S. Small Business Administration, provided information to the Board on the U.S. Small Business Administration's disaster loan program which is available to homeowners, renters, businesses, and non-profit organizations in Meriwether County who had damage as a result of the recent severe storm and tornado that occurred on January 12, 2023. In addition, if their business or non-profit organization is not able to meet its ordinary and necessary financial obligations, as a direct result of the disaster, they can also apply for a SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan. Homeowners can apply for a loan up to \$200K to repair or replace their home that was damaged as a result of the storm. Homeowners and renters can apply for a loan up to \$40K to repair or replace furniture, appliances, clothing, and a vehicle that may have been damaged as a result of the recent storm. Businesses and non-profits can apply for a loan up to \$2M to replace damaged or destroyed real estate, vehicles, equipment, furniture, supplies, and inventory owned by the business.

In addition to the Economic Injury Disaster, where the business may have closed for a few days or so following the recent storm, which prevented people from being able to access the business or workers who could not come to the business, or where the business lost income. In addition, the SBA has mitigation loans for people and businesses to build back better. An example was given of a better type of roof structure. This was to decrease or prevent any damage if this were to happen again. The mitigation loan can be an additional amount to the regular loan up to 20% of the verified property damage can possibly be approved by the SBA in order to build back better.

Ms. Myles also informed the Board of the loan features, including low interest rates, no payment for one year, no interest accrual for the first year, and most loans are up to a 30-year term. The interest rates for an SBA loan start as low as 2.313% for homeowners and renters, 2.375% for non-profit, and 3.305% for Businesses. Homeowners can apply for loans across the street at West Georgia Technical College. The center is open every day of the week from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. FEMA is also located in the building and the SBA has asked applicants to first register with FEMA before meeting with SBA and submitting an application for a loan. If people are unable to come in, they can apply online. Ms. Myles provided the website addresses for both SBA and FEMA. They can call and SBA and ask to have an application mailed.

The deadline to apply to SBA for a loan is March 17, 2023. Businesses with economic damage has a deadline of October 16, 2023. SBA usually makes decisions within 2-3 weeks. Once loan documents are signed, they can usually get their first amount of funds which is generally up to \$25K within about 5-days.

VI. FINANCE REPORT

Bill Gregory, Finance Director, stated the bank balances were strong. There is approximately \$40K in the Animal Shelter account. Mr. Gregory stated it may be time to consider purchasing some equipment. The General Fund LGIP with GEAP has \$4M and with the General Fund at FPB there is around \$7M which must last us until the end of the year. Mr. Gregory stated we received the highest to date in the SPLOST and TSPOLST receipts. SPLOST receipts were \$157K and TSPLOST receipts were \$132K.

VII. CITIZEN COMMENT

None

VIII. MINUTES

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to approve the Minutes from the January 24, 2023, meeting. All were in favor.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING

None

X. APPOINTMENTS

1. Motion was made by Chairman Bryan Threadgill and seconded by Emmett Collins to reappoint Jada Holmes for the City of Woodbury position on the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board. The term will expire on January 28, 2025. All were in favor.
2. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Gene King and seconded by Emmett Collins to appoint Rusti Houston to the Meriwether County Hospital Authority. All were in favor.
3. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Gene King and seconded by Emmett Collins to appoint Quaradez Warrior to the Meriwether County Hospital Authority. All were in favor.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to approve acceptance of ROW Deed and Bond for Chambless Village Subdivision, TRGGC Chambless Investors, LLC, and Paran Homes, LLC pending legal review. All were in favor.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Administrator Irizarry stated in November she, Theron Gay, and Bill Cawthorne met with Harvey Crouch from Crouch Engineering at Mitcham Road Bridge over CSX rail. Crouch Engineering represents CSX Railroad. Meriwether County would be responsible for the cost of the road construction at the roadway that approaches the new bridge structure. This would eliminate the Silver Street grade at the crossing. Mr. Cawthorne stated CSX Railroad has engaged Crouch Engineering to prepare documentation for an FRA grant. This grant is proposed to replace the old wooden bridge with a new bridge structure, roadway approaches, the elimination of one grade crossing in Durand on Silver Street and improvement to County Line Church Road grade crossing. The inspection of the bridge was performed a week ago. The County would need to commit up to \$200K for the road that would take about three-years to start. Board members had questions about committing funds today, if this does not get approved and take place, and how can we approve without a funding source. Chairman Threadgill asked if the funding source could be approved in three-years. Following additional discussion, motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Vice Chairman King to commit up to \$200K for a roadway leading up to the bridge. All were in favor.
2. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Rosla Plant to confirm a letter of support of the Coweta County Development Authority's application for One Georgia EDGE Funding to locate Freyre Battery US, LLC to the Bridgeport South site in Moreland, GA. and allow the Chair to sign. All were in favor.
3. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to approve Budget Amendment #1 and allow the Chairman to sign. This Budget Agreement was to move the funds used for pay increases, from the Human Resources line item to each Department's Regular Employee's line item. All were in favor.
4. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Adam Worsley to approve the ACCG 2023 GCIP Grant, for the Probate Court Internship and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.
5. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Adam Worsley to approve the ACCG 2023 GCIP Grant, for the Superior Court Internship and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.
6. Administrator Irizarry stated the County has engaged Peoples and Quigley to do the Dam Breech Analysis at Lake Meriwether. Part of what needs to be done is the preliminary projects sketch which consists of installing a wave projection parapet wall (three feet tall) along the upstream side of the dam crest. This will help provide adequate freeboard during the design storm. Peoples and Quigley went to send this letter to EPD but since the State Conservation Engineer of Natural Resources was involved, we need to send a request to them first in order to follow the process. Chairman Threadgill asked if there was a cost to the County. Administrator Irizarry stated there would be cost on the three-foot wall that we have to build, and we are unaware of that cost is at this point in time. Administrator Irizarry stated once we have the cost, we would bring that before the Board. This is for us to come into compliance. Bill Cawthorne stated this was puzzling to him too and he thought they were looking to increase the flow because the spillway was high and that it is the opposite. The spillway is 8' above the water level and they have said there is not adequate freeboard to handle a one-hundred-year storm. That is why Peoples and Quigley said our only option was to put in a 3' splash wall across the top of the dam next to the road to comply with the safe dam requirements. This is in the stage for review to see whether Georgia EPD/DNR will approve this. This is part of the requirements to get our

permit for this category 1 dam. Category 1 dams must have a permit and we do not have a permit. There are two category 1 dams in Meriwether County. They have estimated the cost at \$300K in construction. Commissioner Worsley asked about the timeline. Mr. Cawthorne stated they want us to get this letter signed so that we can send it to the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and if they approve this it would be sent to EPD. EPD will not review this until the letter is sent to NRCS. The construction schedule for completion will be January 2024. The expense for this project will be brought before the Board. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the letter to Natural Resources Conservation Service as part of the dam breach analysis and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Irizarry had planned on updating the Board on Peoples and Quigley but that changed yesterday afternoon when we found out we had to send the letter to NRCS.

Administration Irizarry reported the name of the Legal Organ had changed to the Manchester-Star Mercury News. It will be published on Wednesday and advertisements must be received in their office by 3:00 p.m. on Monday. Administrator Irizarry reported the water leak at the Health Department and DFACS buildings had been repaired. We have received the work authorizations through ACCG insurance, and they have been signed. We are moving forward with the repairs through Principle Construction. The LMIG has been received. There will be two interns through ACCG. A meeting was held yesterday with Safebuilt because we had received a letter stating they were going to discontinue services. Following a good discussion with them, they said they would send a contract over and may have to increase the cost due to extra work. Our current contract expires in March. Chairman Threadgill recommended sending this out for a proposal to see if we could get a lower cost. The work authorization has been signed for work to begin at the Health Department and DFACS. The meeting for Lake Meriwether Advisory Board will be on February 13, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Brin Jones, E-911/EMA Director, provided an update from EMA. A meeting has been set with FEMA for tomorrow regarding the assistance side to recover the money that was spent during the initial response as well as debris. So far, we are approved with categories A and B which is debris and emergency response that occurred that night. This is where the paperwork starts. The distribution point at DFACS has closed and help is available on a one-on-one basis now. We are now considered in full recovery mode. FEMA is here now, and they have taken on most of the duties in meeting with the public to see what is needed. Chairman Threadgill thanked Brin for everything.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Emmett Collins: thanked County employees for all of the work they have done. Calls continue to come in regarding road issues.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: reported she receives a lot of calls about roads and appreciates all the work Public Works has done. It will take a while to clean up the County following the storm. The staff is doing a great job and kudos were given to Brin for heading up the disaster relief and staff, volunteers and those who came in from outside the County to help.

Vice Chairman Gene King: reported he has received many calls about the roads. Bill Cawthorne and Barry Lucas are doing a great job at Public Works and when people call about the roads, Vice Chairman King forwards the message along to Bill and Barry. Some of the callers are sending emails and text messages thanking us for taking care of the issues. They also asked Vice Chairman King to please tell the staff that were taking care of the issues, they did an excellent job. We already had bad roads and with the tornado, we are doing the best we can.

Commissioner Adam Worsley: reported he had received many calls regarding roads and bridges Commissioner Worsley thanked all for their hard work. There have also been several calls about Safebuilt program and the concern around it from local contractors. It will be good to see what the proposal has and the next conversation on that. Commissioner Worsley thanked everyone for their hard work during the storms.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: asked Brin Jones for a list of all who came to help us during the storm/tornado so that they could be recognized. This list should include the State, Counties, and others. The County had a lot of outside help that came to assist us. Chairman Threadgill also asked for a list of dirt roads in the County and the last time they were serviced and when they will be serviced next. Some of those roads have not been worked in years.

XV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

None

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Administrator Irizarry stated there was a need for Executive Session to discuss, Litigation, Personnel and Real Estate.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman King to go into Executive Session at 9:35 a.m. to discuss Litigation, Personnel, and Real Estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Emmett Collins and seconded by Vice Chairman King to go out of Executive Session at 10:46 a.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Adam Worsley to go back into Regular Session at 10:48 a.m. All were in favor.

There was no action taken.

XVII. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill made the announcement of Meetings and Notices prior to Executive Session.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman King to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Beverly Thomas, County Clerk

Date: February 28, 2023