

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**WORK SESSION**

March 23, 2021 - 4:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Shirley Hines, Rosla Plant, and Beth Neely-Hadley

Staff Present: County Administrator Theron Gay and County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and Attorney Michael Hill

**I. WELCOME** – Chairman Threadgill, 4:00 p.m.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Commissioner Neely-Hadley arrived for the meeting at 5:26 p.m. Attorney Michael Hill arrived later in the meeting.

Administrator Gay stated he had been working on paving of dirt roads and some of the criteria. With the current ordinance, we require development on or accessing off a dirt road to either be 5-acres, or 2-acres if the developer paves the dirt road to the subdivision lots. The question has been raised on how that works with a family member who desires to deed a lot to a relative. Administrator Gay stated his recommendation would be to require the 5-acre lots or 2-acre lots if road is to be paved when the development qualifies as a subdivision. If it fails to qualify as a subdivision, the division would be allowed, without the paving or 5-acre requirements but there could be no further division of the lots for a period of 5-years. If it does not go into subdivision regulation the property can be divided for a relative. There was additional discussion regarding why the County would require the property to not be able to be divided again for a 5-year period. This is mainly to prevent developers from by-passing the Subdivision Ordinance by dividing and redividing the lots.

There would be a 5-acre minimum if the developer does not want to pave the road and a 2-acre minimum if they are willing to pave the road. To pave they will need 6" GAB on streets and binder, topping and curb and gutter. We are releasing bids specifications today for 3 dirt roads for the Board of Commissioners to consider a full depth reclamation process. This helps neighbors who already live on the road so that they can travel on one side of the road during construction. Administrator Gay recommended allowing this process on existing dirt roads paved by developers. This benefits existing homeowners. Commissioner Hines and Administrator Gay used Beulah Evans Road as an example to understand the difference in the paving of the three roads in Warm Springs and request for paving on Beulah Evans Road.

Our Zoning Districts currently calls for minimum tract sizes of 25-acres, 10-acres, and 5-acres stepping down to 2-acre lots, but the Ordinance was changed to allow 2-acres as the minimum in all districts. Administrator Gay asked the Board if they wanted to consider a more gradual step down. Administrator Gay discussed an ordinance change to create a lot width to depth ratio.

Administrator Gay discussed an Ordinance change to create a lot width to depth ratio. This prevents long narrow subdivisions. That does not work well for several reasons. The Developer does not have to pave or put in a street and that comes back on the County. There could also be site distance issues. Administrator Gay gave examples of lot width and depth ratio. GDOT requires 350' of driveway space on 55 MPH and 230' on a 45 MPH section of roads. The site distance must be considered. There was additional discussion between Commissioner Hines and Administrator Gay regarding traffic going into the subdivision and the areas to turn around, receive mail and park. Commissioner Hines used Fulton County as an example. Administrator Gay stated the width to depth ratio will help with this. Bill Cawthorne, Public Works Consultant, stated we still could have issues with the site distance when doing the width to depth ratio and will need to look at each case. Administrator Gay reviewed the following draft policy on paving unpaved roads.

1. Road shall be an existing County maintained road. No private roads will be accepted.

2. There must be a minimum of 75 vehicles trips per day to qualify.
3. There must be one existing house for every 500' of roadway. On a through road, house counts may not be applicable. The number of homes already on the road must be considered.
4. Property owners will be asked to be responsible for removal of any encroachment (fencing, landscaping, sprinkler systems, etc.) in the donated right-of-way. This could be a point of negotiation for staff.
5. The utility relocation cost must not exceed 50% of the paving costs.
6. The request for paving shall be made in writing to the District Commissioner, with signatures from 80% of the property owners indicating their willingness to dedicate the required right-of-way and remove any encroachments.
7. This request will be analyzed by County staff to determine if the request meets the established criteria and an estimated cost and recommendation for the project will be provided.
8. The District Commissioner can then bring the project forward and receive Board approval to seek right-of-way.
9. When all right-of-way has been acquired, this will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for acceptance and approval of the project.
10. If extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances occur, the project may be scheduled for a later date.
11. If extraordinary or special circumstances exist, the Board may waive these requirements and approve paving of the roadway.
12. If cost of paving the roadway is excessive or cost prohibitive because of any special circumstances that exist, the Board also reserves the right not to pave said roadway even if our criteria is met.
13. To greatly reduce the cost and amount of right-of-way and utility relocations, an 18-ft. paving standard and reduced speed limits on gravel roads that are not through roads may be considered.
14. Property owners on the road must be willing to donate necessary right-of-way.

Administrator Gay asked the Board to advise of any additions that were needed. Commissioner Hines wanted this listed online and given to Building & Zoning once it is complete. Commissioner Hines stated Lowndes County and Valdosta has something similar to this. Commissioner Hines stated this was not in place, but the County identified work to be done on Peaceful Lane, Mt. Pilgrim Road and Tuskegee Lane. Administrator Gay stated there was no ROW to be obtained and the ditches are already established on those roads. This had been brought before the Board and was discussed and voted on to move forward. Commissioner Hines stated that she would go back and look at the Minutes to make sure the Board voted. Commissioner Hines stated at the end of the day citizens want to know how you come up with paving roads. Administrator Gay stated Beulah Evans Road does not have the ROW and is 30' in some places. Commissioner Hines stated she wanted everyone to get consistent information. Commissioner Hines then shared information from Lowndes County, GA for paving roads. Administrator Gay stated the Board could make this a part of the Ordinance. The Bid Package for Peaceful Lane, Mt. Pilgrim Road and Tuskegee Lane have been sent out for advertisement. There were no other questions.

Administrator Gay stated on the Regular Agenda we have County Line Road. There is a grant and a loan for this project. We are working on the engineering requirements. We need to get approval for funding which could be over \$800K. Before more money is spent on engineering, the commitment needs to be discussed. Administrator Gay is communicating with the Tollway Authority. We need to figure out funding and the Engineering cost. We will have to do the Corp of Engineers work. The Wetland Mitigation is next to this and it is not a cheap process. This also depends on which type of permit we must get. There was additional discussion of funding with Commissioner Hines and Finance Director Gregory.

Commissioner Hines asked when the meeting with GDOT regarding Luthersville Road would be scheduled. Administrator Gay stated we have a new contact due to the prior person resigning. We have one mile on Luthersville Road that will be full-depth reclamation. Commissioner Hines asked Administrator Gay to see if GDOT would do a traffic study of Hwy. 54 off I-85. Administrator Gay will reach out to the new GDOT representative.

**III. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy to go into Executive Session at 4:50 pm to discuss personnel and litigation. Rosla Plant seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go out of Executive Session at 5:34 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to go back into the Work Session at 5:34 p.m. All were in favor.

There was no action taken.

**IV. CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

The Work Session concluded at 5:38 p.m.

**V. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Future Meetings were listed on the Agenda.

Approved by: *Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*  
Attest: *Beverly Thomas, County Clerk*  
Date: *April 14, 2021*