

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 28, 2023
6:00 P.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 Michael Hill

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bryan Threadgill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by William Brown, Pastor of Cove Baptist Church

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to adopt the agenda with the following addition under New Business 5. Request to purchase a new tire machine for Public Works. All were in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS

None

VI. FINANCE REPORT

Bill Gregory, Finance Director, provided the Bank Balance Report and stated the General Fund and EMS Funds are strong. EMS funds will be moved over in the first week of April. On SPLOST and TSPLOST reports the February amount is down from previous months but if you look at the previous February, the amounts are in line. We still have good balances in both accounts.

VII. CITIZEN COMMENT

VIII. MINUTES

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Adam Worsley to approve the Minutes from the March 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m. meeting. All were in favor.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING

None

X. APPOINTMENTS

None

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Bill Cawthorne received a response back from Jay Johnson, Principle Construction, who said they will provide a 12-month workmanship and material warranty for the caulking of the Atrium Clock Tower Courthouse Dome. Vice Chairman King asked the cost of the project. Mr. Cawthorne stated they will reseal the hatch and all the joints on the copper and reseal all joints coming down the clock tower, remove caulking from around the windows, remove the lead-based paint off the tower, re-caulk and re-paint. The cost was \$210,788. Vice Chairman King stated that was a lot of money to pay to only have a one-year warranty. Commissioner Worsley asked if the warranty was for the caulking portion and then stated the extended cost was to deal with lead paint and working in heights. Mr. Cawthorne stated their proposal is to repel on the tower. Mr. Cawthorne stated this was more of an emergency action we were going after to try to get the water stopped from going into the Courtroom, Atrium, and things of that nature. Principle will have a staff person watching the subcontractors to make sure they are following the safety precautions. Administrator Irizarry asked Mr. Cawthorne if Mr. Johnson said it was just a one-year warranty because he was not sure if that would fix all the leaks. Mr. Cawthorne stated this was just addressing the tower and there could be other leaks that occur in other parts of the roof. During the first phase they fixed the drains where they took everything out and relined the pipes and added new drains and sealed them. That has been completed and the next step is to stop active leaks in the Courtroom. We were trying to look at getting leaks stopped on the bell tower. Commissioner Worsley confirmed he was only willing to do the one year warranty because there could be other leaks beyond the scope of his work. Mr. Cawthorne agreed and stated Principle will warranty one year on the clock tower for the work they do. Mr. Cawthorne stated there are a lot of other areas up there that are not being addressed at this time. Mr. Cawthorne stated in the big plan they took bids that ranged from \$100K to \$500K. We were constantly getting leaks on the third floor, and we tried to get the water stopped from entering the office spaces. That was the task we were going after. Once we got that stopped, the plan was to go back and relook at the overall roof. We have not gotten to that point yet. The clock tower was step two. The roof drains had holes in them and every time it rained water ran into the building, that was the first step. After repairs, the drains did not leak for about 3-months until we had very heavy rain when it started coming in the clock tower around the bell. There is a hatch up there, but it is not sealed well. The copper bands have not been sealed in a long time and there is also some decaying wood underneath and inside the copper area. We are looking to try and get that done. Chairman Threadgill stated once this is done and the Board approves it to be done and we complete whatever, we probably need to put that building on a maintenance plan to be checked every year. Mr. Cawthorne stated every building and Chairman Threadgill agreed. Chairman Threadgill stated we have failed to do that as a County. Vice Chairman King asked if we had received an abatement letter for this project as to what percentage is lead. Mr. Cawthorne stated they had tested it but he was not aware of an abatement letter. Vice Chairman King stated we need to see the letter because when you take these buildings down you usually have a letter from the engineer that handles that. The letter gives you a breakdown of the cost just to remove the lead products and dispose of them. Mr. Cawthorne stated he knows they have to get a permit or notify the State, etc. Vice Chairman King stated the guy he has used in the past comes in and assesses everything then provides a letter before they can do anything. They have to send it to the State, which takes about 14 days, then they come in and give a price of what the clean-up is going to cost. Mr. Cawthorne stated Principle does not have that broken down but we can get that if you want to continue. Vice Chairman King stated he would like to know just what they are charging

us for the clean-up. Commissioner Plant stated we had over 7" of rain this weekend. Commissioner Plant has not been at the Courthouse this week but last week the 3rd Floor did not look good. With there being three types of roofs on the Courthouse there will probably be additional problems that will occur once we fix this one. We will not know that until we seal this system off. Commissioner Plant stated in her mind we need to move forward, and this had been delayed for over two-three months. Administrator Irizarry stated the date on the letter from Principle was February 3, 2023. Mr. Cawthorne stated the roof had been leaking for years. Commissioner Collins asked if we had seen the bids yet. Commissioner Plant stated it was the first bid and the bid amounts were all over the place. We came back after that and zeroed in on the first phase. Administrator Irizarry stated when the original RFP was sent out it was for a new Courthouse Roof and that is when we received the bids that were all over the place due to not having correct specs in the bid that indicated what needed to be done to the roof. We had three different versions of what companies thought needed to be done to the roof. When Principle investigated this they determined that it was not necessarily the complete roof but the drain pipes, so that was Phase 1. The drain pipe issue was completed and now they have identified this as another source of leaking. The Clerk of Court told Administrator Irizarry that the Courthouse does have leaks again on the third floor after the rain. With the amount of rain we received and with it going sideways and going in the hatch, it is going to continue to leak. Mr. Cawthorne stated the bids ranged from \$105K to \$539K. Chairman Threadgill asked if the \$105K bid included everything that was included in the \$210K bid. Mr. Cawthorne stated he was not sure and would have to look. Vice Chairman King agreed and thought the one year warranty was not much but knew we needed to get rolling. Mr. Cawthorne agreed that was not much of a warranty. There was discussion about making a motion with the addition of an extended warranty of 24-months. Attorney Hill stated if the motion is made with a contingency, and they do not approve the extension, the Board would have to bring this back. Motion was made by Rosla Plant to move forward with the scope of work that has been outlined, the dome, the clock tower, (Mr. Cawthorne stated from the bell until you get to the main roof) and because it is not a budgeted item, we probably need to use ARP funds. Mr. Gregory, Finance Director, stated this was repairs and maintenance. Administrator Irizarry stated the Courthouse Roof was budgeted in SPLOST. Chairman Threadgill asked if everyone was ok with 18- or 24-months warranty. Chairman Threadgill made a motion to accept the proposal from Principle based on the fact they will do a 24-month warranty vs. a 12-month warranty. Adam Worsley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Rosla Plant to set a Public Hearing for April 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. to hear Case# 2023-006 Request for Road Closure: Twin Lakes Road from Jimmy Clark Road to Rat Road. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman King to set a Public Hearing for April 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. to hear Case# 2023-007 Request for Road Closure: Jimmy Clark Road from Mockingbird Lane to Germany Road. All were in favor.

4. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Rosla Plant to set a Public Hearing for April 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. to hear Case# 2023-008 Request for Road Closure: Peapod Road to Callaway Road (362) to Lima Lane. All were in favor.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman King to approve the

Memorandum of Understanding between Evidence Based Associates, LLC, and Meriwether County Board of Commissioners. All were in favor.

2. Commissioner Collins stated the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board would like to purchase a Storage Building to keep tools and possibly a future lawn mower. Commissioner Collins stated it would be best to purchase a larger building to accommodate a mower. Vice Chairman King stated there is Sturdy Buildings out of Newnan and sometimes you can purchase a used one at a good price. Commissioner Collins did not have prices for the buildings. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Adam Worsley to table the request until the next meeting when prices and sizes would be available. Voting in favor were Rosla Plant, Adam Worsley, Chairman Threadgill and Vice Chairman King. Emmett Collins abstained.

3. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Emmett Collins to notify ACCG by letter of the County's intention to seek alternative options for our upcoming Property & Liability Insurance and allow the Chair to sign. This allows the County to shop for rates. All were in favor.

4. Administrator Irizarry stated the Board had discussed the surplus of property located on Church Street, identified as tax parcel number, 168A 043. Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Emmett Collins to surplus property located on Church Street, tax parcel number 168A 043 and allow the County to advertise for bids starting at \$2,400. All were in favor.

5. Bill Gregory, Finance Director, stated the tire changing machine at Public Works quit working. It is old, has been there a very long time, and is beyond the point of repair. Three quotes were received, and they are as follows: Ranger Products Model #R76ATR \$5,710, Coats Rim Clamp \$9,999, and Hoffman Equipment Model M3550EM110B \$11,349. Mr. Gregory stated Public Works wants the Ranger model at \$5,710 and that is what staff recommends purchasing. Mr. Gregory stated there were funds in the capital line account and in general fund to cover this purchase. Commissioner Worsley asked if we have money in the account to cover the tire changer from Hoffman if that was the route we decided to go. Mr. Gregory confirmed we did have funds if that was the pleasure of the Board. Commissioner Worsley wanted to make sure the decision from staff was not based on the cost of the one from Ranger thinking it would be approved quickly. Mr. Gregory stated the first question he asked was which one was the best and Public Works stated the one from Ranger was the best. Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Emmett Collins to purchase the Ranger Model #R76ATR at \$5,710 with payment from the General Fund. All were in favor.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Irizarry – reported the Comprehensive Plan meetings would begin on April 12, 2023, and we are looking for two Commissioners to be part of this. Commissioners would know the dates and times in advance so that it can be advertised. Information has been sent out today regarding Coleman Creek closure and detour. The 120-day closure will begin on April 11, 2023. Administrator Irizarry spoke with Chief Deputy Hadley this afternoon to request the use of law enforcement for the first few days and he said he would also reach out to the Department of Transportation. We have put No-Thru truck signs on both ends of the road and we are concerned about Coleman Circle. All of the information has been forwarded to the Board along with the detour map. We need to set up a date and time for the former Commissioner's dedications. Administrator Irizarry stated April may be a good time for this and asked the Board to get back with her. Administrator Irizarry facilitated another successful Leadership Meriwether for Government on March 16, 2023. At the last meeting it was reported that Administrator Irizarry

and Chief Stephens worked on an application with Senator Ossoff's office where we applied for two three-thousand-gallon pumper tankers and two ambulances. We did not get feedback from the two ambulances but did get feedback regarding the two pumper tankers. This looks positive. ACH is available and included in the expense checks today. Questions can be directed to Bill Gregory, Finance Director. The Cotton Fair is May 6th -7th. The Good Shepherd Ranch is hosting a Community Day Thursday, March 30, 2023, from 11:30 am – 1:30 pm. Good Shepherd provides residential care to adolescent boys through a unique farm-based treatment program, and it is located in Warm Springs. Bill Cawthorne is researching automatic water shut off for County buildings due to plumbing issues since this is a more economical route. We received information on the Safety LMIG, and we would like to move forward if the Board has a consensus regarding this. Administrator Irizarry stated she did not see any reason we would not move forward with that. Meriwether County 4-H competed at the Northwest district project achievement on Saturday in Douglas County. There were twelve 4th-5th graders from Meriwether County who competed at the event. Eleven placed in the top three and eight of them placed 1st. Administrator Irizarry was in attendance and Griffin/Spalding had 88 kids present. Meriwether County showed up, showed out and did very well. Meriwether County 4-H has a waiting list for both Cloverleaf and Junior Camps. Meriwether 4-H is selling Vidalia onions to help offset Camp cost. Please let Ashley Harman or Beverly Thomas know if you would like to buy onions. The cost is \$11 for a 10# bag. Meriwether 4-H received a strawberry educational grant "I Love Strawberries" provided by American Farm Bureau, the Meriwether Co. School System, Flint River Academy and Fitzgerald Fruit Farm to provide agricultural curriculum to our youth. Three quotes have been received for pressure washing at the Courthouse and all are under \$5K. They are off in comparison to what parts will be washed and Administrator Irizarry will work to get this narrowed down. Brin Jones, EMA Director, was online to speak but the sound would not come through. Administrator Irizarry announced the Road Closures and spoke about the work that was done. Administrator Irizarry stated this was a major storm event with a confirmation of two tornados, one on Sunday and one on Monday morning. Administrator Irizarry thanked Emergency Management, Fire Services, Law Enforcement Services and Public Works. On Dunn Road a tree was cleared, on Dallas Mill Road a tree was removed, water was over Wallace Road bridge, Gaston at Massengill Mill was blocked on the 27th, Bobby Marshall 2537 Stovall Road driveway, Bill Todd Road just past 1051 the road was washed out on one side, Waddell Road and Cove Road is blocked and closed, Duke Waddell is blocked and closed, Barron Road bridge was blocked, Massengill Road Bridge is blocked, Old Durand Road was cleared, Ogletree Road was cleared, Rosewood Road had trees down, Country Club Road was closed but it is now open, Primrose Circle had a tree down and there was some clean up there, River Cove Road is closed, Magnolia Road had to be cleaned up, Jimmy Clark Road is closed. The dirt part of Silver Street is closed. The County will post on the Website what roads are closed. The County received more than 9" of rain. We will find more issues as the water recedes. There were comments that some of the roads will have flooding after the water crests.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Emmett Collins: Thanked all of the county employees again for the job they have done, especially, following the flooding. Thanks were given to McCoy Grading for loaning us some barricades to block some of the roads. Commissioner Collins hopes we can get some funding from GDOT to repave Coleman Creek Circle once it gets torn up from detour traffic. Mr. Robert Lovett told Commissioner Collins that he had never seen the water at Lake .

Meriwether as high as it was this time. It did not flow above the spillway, but the docks were covered.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: Thanked all the hard workers we have in the County and thanked those for providing the tornados and weather alerts. Commissioner Plant appreciates having the alarms in place. There was a lot of water, and we are getting many road requests. Commissioner Plant especially appreciates everything Public Works is doing. Keep Meriwether Beautiful will have a Clean-up Day on April 22, 2023. Clean up is ongoing due to the tornados we had in January as well as last week. Commissioner Plant thanked the Board for approving the work at the Courthouse.

Vice Chairman Gene King: It has been overwhelming to see the County come together and work as a team. Vice Chairman King has received calls from citizens saying thank you for getting out and getting things done. Many emails and texts have been received regarding drainage problems. With 9" of rain there are drainage problems and Vice Chairman King has assured citizens we will get to each one of them as priorities.

Commissioner Adam Worsley: Thanked everyone for their hard work. Many had little sleep but got up in the morning and responded by helping. That was much appreciated. Commissioner Worsley has been doing work at his job with Troup County and LaGrange Development Authority with helping high school students be ready for the workforce. It is interesting with the projects they want to extend and get support and help with. It will help us in the IDA, School System, and the County as a whole. Commissioner Worsley would like to set up a time to discuss these things and feels it is critical to support each other as a unified area. It is a good opportunity to help our young people who are not going to college right now and to teach them and show them opportunities for what is around here and how they can be successful and have great lives. Chairman Threadgill stated we may be able to add this to a Work Session.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: Reiterated what the other Board Members shared regarding the Workers and road issues following the recent storm and tornado.

Commissioner Collins asked if someone could find out what was going on with the sirens. The Woodbury sirens did not go off and someone told Commissioner Collins it was because of the repeater. Administrator Irizarry will investigate this. There was additional discussion of the repeater and the sirens. The tower was destroyed due to a storm and tornado a while back. This has been filed with the insurance company and it has taken a while to get costs. Commissioner Collins stated this should be an emergency issue since there are no siren warnings.

Commissioner Plant stated the cell phone alerts are working. Chairman Threadgill stated we will check into this.

XV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

No reports but advised of the need for an Executive Session to discuss Litigation, Personnel, and Real Estate.

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Emmett Collins to go into Executive Session at 6:40 p.m. to discuss Litigation, Real Estate, and Personnel. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Gene King to go out of Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Gene King and seconded by Emmett Collins to go back into Regular Session at 7:40 p.m. All were in favor.

Employee, Albert Partridge had an FMLA extended until March 24, 2023, and it has ended. He has requested to have the leave go from March 25, 2023, until April 5, 2023. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to approve the requested leave until April 5, 2023. All were in favor. Attorney Hill clarified this was not an FMLA it was a Disability Leave since his FMLA had expired under County Policy.

Alevtina Correia from the Tax Commissioners Office has requested to be off from June 5, 2023 – June 23, 2023, to visit family that is out of the Country. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to approve extended leave for Alevtina Correia from June 5, 2023 – June 23, 2023, to visit family out of the Country. All were in favor.

Travis Daniels with Public Works requests an extension for Disability Leave to go from March 25, 2023 – June 10, 2023, to equal a total of 50 days additional. Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Vice Chairman King to approve the request from Travis Daniels for an extension to Disability Leave from March 25, 2023, until June 10, 2023 to equal a total of 50 days. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Gene King to approve the Opioid Settlement and allow the Chairman to sign. This is a lawsuit that will not cost the County any money. An additional amount of money could come to the County due to being in this settlement. All were in favor.

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 Adam Worsley and seconded by Vice Chairman Gene King to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Allyson L. Stephens, Deputy Clerk

Date: April 12, 2023