

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**May 11, 2022**  
**9:00 A.M.**

**This meeting was held in person and also by Zoom due to COVID**

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Commissioners Present: Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley, Vice Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Alfred "Buster" McCoy  
Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Shirley Hines  
Staff Present: County Administrator Michelle Irizarry, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, Director of Special Projects Theron Gay, Attorney Michael Hill

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Beth-Neely Hadley

**II. INVOCATION**

Chairman Beth-Neely Hadley

**III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

All

**IV. ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to adopt the Agenda with an addition under New Business: 8. Agreement between the City of Warm Springs and the Meriwether County Detention Center Inmate Contractual Agreement. All were in favor.

**V. FINANCE REPORT**

Bill Gregory, Finance Director, reported the General Fund was strong and would drop \$600K due to paying our portion of the LMIG. SPLOST receipts for April 2022 – The County portion, \$151,735.86 was the largest receipt we have to date. T-SPLOST receipts for April 2022 – The County portion of \$125,928.03 is the largest receipt we have to date. Mr. Gregory reported almost all Departments are at or under budget. Mr. Gregory will speak with others regarding the remaining portion of the year. The Auditors are close to having our audit ready. Mr. Gregory provided a list of SPLOST, T-SPLOST and ARP project listings. Mr. Gregory explained items on the ARP list were items that would qualify and came from the SPLOST list. The County has only committed to Network improvements and Internet Cybersecurity.

**VI. CITIZEN COMMENT**

None

**VII. MINUTES**

1. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Minutes from the April 26, 2022, 6:00 p.m. Regular Meeting. All were in favor.

## VIII. PUBLIC HEARING

None

## IX. APPOINTMENTS

### 1. **Water & Sewerage, District 5 - to fill an unexpired term that will expire on 12-31-24**

Motion was made by Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to table the appointment to the Water & Sewerage, District 5 - to fill an unexpired term that will end on 12-31-2024. All were in favor.

### 2. **Region 4 EMS Council, Position 1 - to fill a three-year term that will expire on 6-30-2022 (New appointment term will expire on June 30, 2025)**

Motion was made by Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to table the appointment until the June 8, 2022 meeting for the Region 4 EMS Council, Position 1 - to fill a three-year term that will expire on 6-30-2022 (New appointment term will expire on June 30, 2025). All were in favor.

### 3. **Region 4 EMS Council, Position 2 - Proclaim Michael Nelson to Position 2 – with an expiration date of 6-30-24**

Motion was made by Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to table the appointment until the June 8, 2022 meeting for the Region 4 EMS Council, Position 2 - Proclaim Michael Nelson to Position 2 – with an expiration date of 6-30-24. All were in favor.

## X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### 1. **NFP Insurance Proposal for 2022-2023**

Administrator Irizarry reported this came before the Board at the last meeting. NFP was unable to get a decrease from Blue Cross Blue Shield. Bill Gregory, Finance Director provided the financial portion of the proposal. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to approve the 2022-2023 Insurance proposal from NFP. Discussion followed. Administrator Irizarry asked the Board about the breakdown of the County/Employee cost. Mr. Gregory provided the Board with a spreadsheet of the County/Employee insurance cost over the last 4-5 years. It remained steady up until 2020-2021 when we raised the employee contribution amount. The employee's monthly portion has remained at \$113.25 for a couple of years. The total monthly cost per employee will increase from \$652.54 to \$737.37. The Board must decide how much, if any, to pass along to employees. Previously the split has been about 17% and if we stayed with that percentage the employee's monthly portion would increase from \$113.25 to \$128.01. The employee's portion will increase to \$198.08 if the employee absorbs the entire cost. If it is split with the County the employee's cost would be \$155.67

Mr. Gregory stated the consensus among staff was to hold it as is (\$113.25) due to the state of the economy with increases in inflation, gas, and grocery prices, etc. With preliminary numbers from the auditors, the County fund balance will increase over \$1M from last year. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked how much of an increase would this be for the County. Mr. Gregory stated from \$1.3M to \$1.4M. Following further discussion among the Board members, the decision was made to increase the employee portion from \$113.25 to \$128.01 per month.

The motion was amended by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to accept the NFP proposal and move forward with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield for the 2022-2023 year with the employees percentage portion remaining the same at 17%. All were in favor.

## **XI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Enrichment Service Program, Belva Dorsey – update on services provided to Meriwether County**

Ms. Dorsey provided an overview of services offer Meriwether County, Early Head Start and Head Start. These services have been offered to Meriwether County since 2020. They also provide services to 10 other Counties including one in Russell County, Al.

Dr. Thom Canning-Skinner is the Representative appointed by Meriwether County. The current location for the Enrichment Services is located on Moreland Street in Greenville. There are plans to add a new location next school year in Luthersville. There are currently 22 employment positions in Meriwether County and during the 2020-2021 year they expended \$829,822 for the Early Childhood services. The program was able to serve 58 children and their families. During this service period they were able to help 1,269 children who gained school readiness skills, 12 individuals who received employment training, 6,963 households who received energy assistance with heating and cooling bills, and 2,035 households received food boxes each month. There were 182 families who moved toward economic self-sufficiency. This was during the pandemic and the families encountered more barriers and challenges. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked if their program was connected with CAFI. Ms. Dorsey stated CAFI was their sister agency who provides other services they do not provide for the County. CAFI provides Early and Head Start services from Newnan to Carrollton and the Enrichment Service Program took the other part of the service area which includes Meriwether, Troup, and Harris. Ms. Dorsey asked the Board to help get the word out about the services they are providing to Meriwether County.

### **2. Revision of the Meriwether Service Delivery Strategy for the addition of the Housing Revitalization Service and accompanying Resolution**

Administrator Irizarry stated this was a request from the City of Manchester and it is for an additional service, Housing Revitalization, to be added to the Service Delivery Strategy. There is also a Resolution required to add this to the Service Delivery Strategy. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to approve and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

### **3. River Cove Rd. Culvert Replacement**

Bill Cawthorne reviewed information on the River Cove Road Culvert. The culvert is in bad shape and the County has piece milled it together for a few years. Photographs were included in the Board Members package to show the condition of the culvert. The culverts are rusted out and are too small to handle the drainage in the area. Mr. Cawthorne requested the Board give permission to order the pipe and allow Piedmont Paving to build a prefabricated headwall to set the pipes and the County would do the majority of the work. Piedmont was the low bid on two other projects with headwalls. One was Owens Road. Mr. Cawthorne asked for approval to move forward and order the

pipes. The projected cost is \$70K with the County doing the majority of the work. Following the discussion of the funding source, motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the request and use T-SPLOST funds. All were in favor.

#### **4. Change Order #1 for Meriwether County Fire Station #1**

Administrator Irizarry stated during the Project Site Work Process on Fire Station #1, there were several areas that did not pass. Change order #1 is for the amount of \$7,185 and is needed in order to get us into compliance. Mr. Cawthorne stated the process was going smoothly and we didn't know what would be found in the field site as far as what material had been hauled in and out before we started the process. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to approve change order #1 in the amount of \$7,185. All were in favor.

#### **5. 2022 Resurfacing Contract**

Mr. Cawthorne reported this year, being the same as last year, we solicited 2022 Resurfacing bids from many contractors for the 2022 Resurfacing Project. This went on the procurement site for the State of Georgia, and we only received one proposal for this project which was from Piedmont Paving. The total bid amount was \$1,435,082.91. This was about \$181,329.91 above our estimated amount. Their unit prices have increased. Mr. Cawthorne recommended approval. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated there had been some road failure since the last paving and Piedmont had subcontracted that to a third party. Mr. Cawthorne stated that had not been corrected. We had a consultant come in and look at it and he recommended that we wait until late May/June when the weather was hot. That is when they will come back to fix the roads. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked when they would start on the resurfacing. Mr. Cawthorne thought it would be soon. Vice Chairman Threadgill suggested tabling this request until the third party or Piedmont could get the other issues fixed that failed last year. Mr. Cawthorne stated we have not paid them for the project that is in question. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated since they are coming at the end of the month to fix the failure from last year, he would like to wait and have this brought back to the Board next month. Commissioner Plant stated they checked Forrest Road last week and it needs work beyond the 3 miles in District 2. It goes to the Coweta County line. Commissioner Plant stated in looking at the three miles that need a full depth reclamation, from Cousins Road up to the City limits of Lone Oak, we are looking at \$1,526,870 and numbers were provided by Finance Director Gregory on what we can do for a full depth reclamation patch in five areas and the cost is \$337,000. King Road is on the resurfacing list for District 2 and changes will need to be made on that. In order to address Forrest Road, we need to make changes with the LMIG list and will probably need to come back with additional funding for Forrest Road. Commissioner Plant asked other Board members if they wanted to do this all at one time when the Board approves the LMIG list. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated it is easier to approve every road we want done at one time than to have approvals scattered between different Minutes. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we are going to have to make some changes and pick up Forrest Road because it is not on there, so we don't need to approve it for these roads now. Bill Cawthorne compared the request from Commissioner Plant to what the County did last year in changing Mt. Carmel Road to Turkey Trail in lieu of

doing Mt. Carmel. Mr. Cawthorne stated Commissioner Plant wanted instead of doing King Road, to use that money toward the safety patches on Forrest Road. The Board asked how long the bid was good for and Mr. Cawthorne stated he would have to check with them and get back with the Board. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked that he gather that information from the paving company to have at the next Board Meeting this month. Commissioner Plant asked Mr. Cawthorne to make sure it was going to be the deep patches and was the total cost or if we would balance out the cost. Mr. Cawthorne stated the Board would have to decide if they wanted to stay at the amount they bid on King Road or increase the amount. The problem with Forrest Road, being three miles, is there are two areas that are dangerous and three other areas in bad shape. This will not fix Forrest Road but will make it safer to drive. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to table the 2022 Resurfacing Contract until the May 24, 2022 Meeting. All were in favor.

#### **6. Public Safety Communications Tower**

Brin Jones -, E-911 and EMA Director, Byron Hadley – Chief Deputy, MC Sheriff's Office, Alan Smith -Fire Chief, Meriwether County Fire and Rescue, and Dean Ginn from Dean's Commercial Two-Way, Inc., discussed the need to replace a Communications Tower that was located on Hill Haven Road. That tower was destroyed by a hit and run truck and the tower cannot be repaired. The County filed an insurance claim and received a settlement for the one that was destroyed. Everyone shared a concern for safety and the need to install a new communications tower. Chief Deputy Hadley provided information on their need for radios especially in areas where deputies have foot chases, and a radio signal is their lifeline. There were two 180' towers, one was destroyed and the other one does not have the coverage that is needed. Mr. Jones and Mr. Ginn provided the Board with several estimates that involved phases for a new 330' tower that would be located behind the fuel pump island at the E-911 Center. The existing antennas from the destroyed tower would be placed on the new tower. This will be a master site for building a Public Safety communications system. The tower that was destroyed was located at the highest elevation point in Greenville. We cannot rebuild there, due to not having enough property to install a new 330' tower. Mr. Ginn discussed the prerequisites needed for an installation of a tower and the timeline including the lead time now for steel, which is 10-12 weeks. It will take approximately 2-months to complete the prerequisites before an order can be placed. There was discussion by the Board regarding the best location for the new tower, additional funding from selling space to cellular companies, the pros, and cons of using space on cellular towers and funding sources. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to table the request until the next meeting in order to search for other fund sources. All were in favor.

#### **7. Work Source GA/Three Rivers Regional Commission Program**

Alan Smith, Meriwether County Fire Chief, requested Meriwether County partner with Work Source Georgia, a program to recruit and work underprivileged youth, from within the County. The job candidate would be able to go through County training and could potentially be hired to work for Meriwether County. They could be blended into the recruit training school at no cost. This program can work with any of the Departments in

Meriwether County. The Work Source Georgia program pays for everything including course materials, working hours up to 480 hours, workers compensation, and uniforms. The person would be training and could possibly come to work for the County following the program. There is no obligation to hire the person and if they do not meet our requirements they can be dismissed. They must be at least 18 years old and have a GED. The one cost to the County is for a physical and drug screen. We can have up to 5 people in the program at one time. The school will last 8-10- weeks, and once they are trained they can be hired by the County. Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to move forward and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

**8. *Agreement between the City of Warm Springs and the Meriwether County Detention Center Inmate Housing Contractual Agreement***

Sheriff Smith provided a City of Warm Springs/Meriwether County Detention Center Inmate Housing Contractual Agreement with the request that the Board approve. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to approve the Agreement and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

**XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Administrator Irizarry stated Meriwether Fire and Rescue reported our ISO rating was updated last week. It is still a 6X, but we are 2.56% away from a 5X. IT Office 365 is set up and migration is in process. The Cotton Fair went well and there was great teamwork between the Sheriff's Office, Fire and EMA. Public Works did a great job cleaning up around the area owned by the County. Twelve of the seventeen animals that were taken to the Fair were adopted. Public Works completed the bridge repair on Cane Creek Bridge and GDOT has been notified to reinspect in order to reopen. Public Works is trenching the new water and sanitary lines for Lake Meriwether RV expansion. Mr. Gay will discuss the definition of home occupation in regard to a request.

**XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**Commissioner Plant** – encouraged everyone to attend the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Roosevelt Memorial Airport. Lead Edge will host "Business After Hours" tomorrow evening. The Chamber of Commerce Annual Membership Event is Thursday week in Warm Springs and the Meriwether County IDA will be recognized. Ms. Jane Fryer, IDA Executive Director, stated she also had tickets and the IDA was honored as the Business of the Year.

**Chairman Neely-Hadley** – received an update from Bill Gregory on the Chamber of Commerce annual event. Last night the Board of Education recognized the Teachers and Para-Pros of the year. Ms. Tressa McCoy, wife of Commissioner McCoy was recognized as the Para-Pro of the Year at Manchester High School. Peaches in the Pines will be held on June 11<sup>th</sup>. A package was provided to Board members on the Keep Meriwether Beautiful Clean Up results. There is a Keep Meriwether Beautiful meeting today at 1:00 p.m. Ms. Fryer thanked Tyrell Johnson and others, especially, Public Works for their help.

**Vice Chairman Threadgill** – no report

**Commissioner McCoy** – reported there will also be a groundbreaking ceremony at the Airport tomorrow for the new hangars. There are ten new T-Hangers being built and

three are maintenance hangers. All of the hangers have been rented. AWOS should be operational soon. Commissioner McCoy and IT Director Skip Richmond met with Randy Shepard at Diverse Power on Monday regarding a dedicated line at the Airport. Commissioner McCoy had lunch yesterday with Jeff Bishop regarding the River Ramp. Construction will begin on the ramp within the next thirty days. Southern Rivers will begin offering Internet services to the households they service. Commissioner McCoy wanted to get the word out.

**Vice Chairman Threadgill** reminded everyone to get out and vote during the May 24, 2022 election. Early voting is going on now.

Theron Gay, Special Projects Director discussed Home Occupation Licenses. During COVID, some people wanted to run businesses from home. There have been a lot of questions that have come up since then that we have not faced in the past. Mr. Gay spoke with a gentleman yesterday that has an interest in selling products from his home, items that he would order. You would call him; he would secure the product and distribute it out. Mr. Gay stated after reviewing our current policy, we have a Residential Home Occupational Category and examples were listed like Avon, Tupperware, etc. Today, people sell computers from their homes, etc. This gentleman was interested in having a firearm license and being able to sell firearms without having stock, displays, or having any signage. There would not be any inventory, and everything would be a custom order. Mr. Gay stated he felt this was the same basic concept as the Tupperware etc. sales. We are unable to write every item into our Regulations on what is allowed in a Home Occupation License. We do have items that are not allowed. Mr. Gay wanted to speak with the Board about the interpretation and if we expand that level to allow direct sale product distributions beyond Avon, Tupperware, etc. and allow other items to be ordered and brought to the home and sold to the person who ordered. Chairman Neely-Hadley confirmed there would not be a retail space or employees but only the homeowner with no signage. No one would come to the home for pick up. Mr. Gay stated next time the codes are updated we could change the language. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked Mr. Gay if he could get together some wording on what we may want to use. Mr. Gay stated as it is written now we can use it. It is just an interpretation of what goes into that category. Mr. Gay recommended we remove or broaden those examples that we currently have. If we are going to change the code it must be advertised but this may not be a change and may only be an interpretation. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated you do not have to have a license to sell Mary Kay, or something like at home but anything dealing guns, you have to have a license. Vice Chairman Threadgill asked if that was really comparable and did we need to have a rezone for a business license within a residential area. Mr. Gay stated within the residential area you have home occupation and rural home occupation which allows people to have small businesses in their home. If you get really big, like the zoning case at the last meeting, where the person wanted to grow their business beyond what was allowable, and they have their Residential Home Occupation License, they will also have to go out and find a Commercial Site. If they were going to meet the other rules, which says they will only use a certain portion of the home, cannot bring employees in, only people who can work there are in the home, they have to be licensed. Vice Chairman Threadgill stated he knew a license was required for that, then he asked Attorney Hill if we would have to do something like a special use for that area. Attorney

Hill stated if it was within compliance with the rest of the Regulations we were ok. Chairman Neely Hadley asked Mr. Gay to bring the items needed back before the Board on May 24, 2022.

**XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Stated Executive Session was needed for Litigation and Real Estate

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to go into Executive session at 10:23 a.m. to discuss Litigation and Real Estate. All were in favor. Vice Chairman Threadgill left Executive Session at 11:00 a.m.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go out of Executive Session at 11:08 a.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go back into Regular Session at 11:09 a.m. All were in favor.

Action was taken in Executive Session. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to offer for Public Sale Parcel ID 048A039 that was obtained through a tax sale in 2008. All were in favor.

**XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES**

Chairman Neely Hadley read the future Meetings and Notices prior to Executive Session.

May 24, 2022, Work Session 4:00 p.m.

May 24, 2022, Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m.

May 30, 2022, Memorial Day Holiday – County Offices are closed

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to adjourn at 11:11 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Date: May 24, 2022

Attest: Beverly Thomas, County Clerk