

**MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

May 25, 2021

This meeting was held by Zoom due to COVID-19 for the public with Board Members and County Staff attending in Person

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

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION – Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to adopt the Agenda with the following additions under New Business: *11. Letter of Support for Ag Tech Center of Innovation for the City of Woodbury* *12. Presentation and gift from Jonathan D. Parker of the Indian Upper Paths Map.* All were in favor.

III. MINUTES

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Minutes of the May 12, 2021, 9:00 a.m. Board of Commissioners Meeting. Voting in favor were Chairman Threadgill, Vice Chairman McCoy, Commissioner Rosla Plant, and Commissioner Neely-Hadley. Commissioner Shirley Hines abstained due to being absent at the May 12, 2021, Meeting.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS

None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS COMMENTS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

None

Chairman Threadgill stated as a Board, a decision was made regarding the office of the County Administrator. County Administrator, Theron Gay, has served the County well and continues to serve. He has brought a plethora of knowledge to the County. Mr. Gay retired once and had requested the Board allow him to step back. Upon his request, the Board moved forward and hired a new Administrator, Bradford Vaughan. The Board welcomed Mr. Vaughan and looks forward to working with him starting on June 1, 2021. Administrator Gay will become a consultant and work on Special Projects. Chairman Threadgill stated he considers Mr. Gay as a lifelong friend. Administrator Gay stated this has been a team effort and the Board has been very supportive. The staff is wonderful and the Board is very blessed to have them. Administrator Gay stated he had enjoyed it and will still be around. At a later date, Administrator Gay and Mr. Vaughan will talk about what we have done and future plans. Commissioner Neely-Hadley echoed what was said by Chairman Threadgill.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go into a Public Hearing to hear

Case #17-2021, a request from John Knight to rezone 134 acres with 5,300' of frontage from LDR to R1. The property is located between Tenney Nelson and Primrose Road, Tax Map/Parcel #048 006. The purpose of the rezone is to create a subdivision of single-family residential homes. This is in Commission District 2.

Butch Oliver, Building, Zoning, and Community Development Interim Director stated John Knight requested the rezoning of 134 acres with 5,300 ft. of frontage from LDR to R1. The purpose of the rezoning is to create a subdivision of single-family residential homes. The homes will be between 2,000-2,500 square feet of heated area. These houses will be like the homes he previously built on Forrest Road and Goldmine Road. The property is located between Tenney Nelson and Primrose Road and is known as Tax Map/Parcel #048 006. The city of Luthersville will supply water and allow for the expansion of its water lines for the development of up to 50 homes. Existing nearby parcels are residential consisting of 1 to 3 acres. The use of this parcel will be consistent with neighboring parcels and will not adversely affect the existing use or property values. Mr. Knight proposed creating a private road with 2 entrances and 2 exits on each side to eliminate 47 driveways from county roads. There will be a 40 ft. landscaped buffer with a split rail fence to give the appearance of a subdivision entrance. This will set the homes another 40 ft. off the road and buffer the homes from the road. He will do the same on both sides of the subdivision. It was the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Department to approve the rezoning to R1. Mr. Oliver stated since then, a meeting was held with him, Administrator Gay, Jodi Sharpe, and Mr. Knight. It is shown on the project map that Mr. Knight meets the R-1 Zoning on each side along with the driveway cuts, however a private road only allows three lots. The other issue is the depth of the lots. We previously spoke of a width to depth lot ratio last month and what Mr. Knight is wanting to do will not meet what we are looking to do in the future. A meeting was held with Mr. Knight and there was discussion of doing a conventional subdivision that would include roads and cul-de-sacs. Mr. Knight does not want to change to the new recommendations. Because of that, Mr. Oliver does not recommend approval. Commissioner Neely-Hadley confirmed the request does not meet our Ordinance of driveways off a private road and did not know what he could do with it at this point. Mr. Knight stated he could do 5-acre lots with individual driveways. Mr. Oliver stated he is allowed 5-acres per lot and can go with that, but he cannot build on a 1½ acre lot. Administrator Gay stated driveways would have 200' of road frontage rather than 100' of road frontage and would go from 47 lots to 20-21 lots on Primrose/Tenney Nelson Roads. Mr. Knight stated when he came up with the plan, he wanted to build individual drives off the main road. There were too many driveway cuts so then he came up with another plan to please the County. Mr. Knight stated he was then told about the 3 lots and private drives. Mr. Knight ran the cost estimate, and it would not work for him since it would push the selling price of the home to \$300K. Mr. Knight stated they were going to add columns at the entrance, landscaping and fencing but the development cost would not work due to the cost which would run over \$1M. Administrator Gay explained the long-term problem for the County when anyone places many lots off a private drive. In the future the homeowners will want the County to pave the roads. There was more discussion of the 5-acre lots and paving if it accesses a dirt road. One section of property would remain a private road with no more than three homes or structures. There was further discussion of how the homes could be placed and the advantages. Attorney Michael Hill stated we must look at the proposal on the table. No action was needed if he is doing 5-acre lots or he can withdraw and come back with another plan. If he is turned down, he will have to wait 6-months to come back before the Board. Mr. Knight stated he prefers the first plan but will proceed with the other plan with 5-acre lots and will run public water. Attorney Hill stated he can withdraw, and the Board takes no action. The current zoning allows 5-acre lots.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to deny the request. All were in favor.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Motion was made by and seconded by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to table the discussion of the County Line Road Project. All were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Chairman Threadgill stated former Manchester City Manager, Doug Westberry, was not able to attend the meeting. The Board appreciates and thanks him for his hard work and dedication. The County has a gift for him in his retirement. Administrator Gay stated he enjoyed working with Doug and that he was very knowledgeable. Everyone wished Mr. Westberry their best upon his retirement.

2. Veronica Dowell spoke on behalf of herself and Beverly Ball regarding funds requested for the 2021 Summer Program through the American Union Relief Society, Inc. (AURS). Ms. Dowell provided background information on the program and stated they were unable to have the program last year due to COVID. This year they are asking the County for \$15,000. This program is run by volunteers. The location of the program will be at Unity Elementary School. They are trying to keep the children engaged, active, and off the streets. The days of operation will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and they will be off the week of July 4th. The program will begin on June 29th. They have no other donations and have not been able to do fundraising because of COVID. The Board of Education has donated some supplies. Chairman Threadgill stated funds were used from the DATE fund in the past. There are strict guidelines for using DATE funds and the Sheriff's approval is needed. There was an increase in cost this year from prior years. It was confirmed the total cost of the program was \$15K. Following more discussion, the Board was comfortable with the previous amount provided of \$7K. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve funding in the amount of \$7K to go toward the Summer Program. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to table the appointment from District 2 to the DFACS Board. All were in favor.

4. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to table the appointment from District 5 to the DFACS Board. All were in favor.

5. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to allow the Chairman to sign the 2021 TSPLOST Project Contract with Piedmont Paving for Mt. Pilgrim Road, Peaceful Lane, and Tuskegee Lane that was approved during the Commissioners Meeting on April 27, 2021. All were in favor.

6. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to allow the Chairman to sign the 2021 Resurfacing Project Contract with Piedmont Paving for the 2021 LMIG that was approved during the Commissioners Meeting on April 27, 2021. All were in favor.

7. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Right of Entry on Calvin Murphy Road to replace three culvert pipes and grade out tail ditches in front of JC Murphy's property. Voting in favor were Beth Neely-Hadley, Shirley Hines, Chairman Threadgill and Vice Chairman Threadgill. Rosla Plant recused herself. The motion passed.

8. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve and allow the Chairman to sign the Three Rivers-Work Source Georgia Non-Financial Worksite Agreement. All were in favor.

9. Administrator Gay stated they have been working on the Greenville Fire Station. Principle Construction took bids, and they did a good job to keep the price down. With value engineering the project was only up about 4% from the original estimate. Some on the numbers will go down. Administrator Gay stated Principle Construction will review the areas on the value engineering to reduce the cost by approximately \$43K to at total of \$1,142,000. The subcontractors will honor the prices through this week. It was confirmed to be a three-bay station. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to execute the documents and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

10. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve and allow the Chairman to sign the Three Rivers Regional Commission Transit Agreement FY-2022 at a cost to the County of \$11,000. All were in favor.

11. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to sign a letter of support for the City of Woodbury's Agricultural Innovation Center. There is no financial responsibility to the County. All were in favor.

X. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Bill Gregory, Finance Director, reported the General Fund was approximately \$3M with \$2M in LGIP. The SPLOST Account is strong. We will get another distribution this Friday. Mr. Gregory gave a brief update on the American Rescue Act from the ACCG webinar that was held yesterday. Mr. Gregory stated the Board may wish to hold a Work Session in July to discuss projects. We will need to come up with a plan for the Treasury Department. There was additional discussion of keeping the funds in a separate account, engaging the Public, transparency, looking at the Comprehensive Plan regarding projects, and the reporting timeline of the funds. The Board will hold a Work Session on July 27, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. to discuss this.

XI. REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Reported a modification of the Service Delivery Strategy was done and we have received notification from DCA that is has been fully updated. We submitted new maps and appreciation was given to all who helped with that project.

To assure that we will receive the full requested amount of \$200K, we had to modify the Budget submittal and move some of the County match funds and in-kind service to a new category titled "Other Development Costs".

A meeting was held with several businesses that are interested in coming to Meriwether County.

A meeting that included Vice Chairman McCoy was held at the Turkey Run Landfill.

An RFP has been sent out for two new Ambulances.

Meetings were held with property owners on three roads that we will be paving. Those communities are very excited about having the roads paved.

A meeting was held on the Fire Station Project.

Administrator Gay spoke at the Lions Club.

A meeting was held at the Red Oak Covered Bridge regarding repairs.

A bridge at Massengale Mill Road collapsed. Bill Cawthorne, Public Works Consultant, feels we need to tear it out and put in a culvert. Thanks was expressed to Ms. King on Findley Cato Road for calling in the Bridge collapse and for putting barrels in front of that area on the road even before we were able to get the word out regarding the closure of the Bridge.

Administrator Gay provided an update on the Red Oak Covered Bridge and provided the history of what happened and what we have done. Damage was caused to the Bridge by someone who traveled through and hit the support beams. There was a metal barrier on the west side and the driver came through the east side which caused damage then turned around and went back through. We have barricades up and have lowered the metal entrance. Because of the damage the bridge was closed to thru traffic. This Bridge is everyone's treasure. There were volunteers who previously worked on the bridge. It takes more than labor and effort and we must make sure this is repaired correctly. Since the closure of the Bridge, a meeting was held with Georgia Trust at the site. There was discussion of the repairs, and we may have some funding provided to us. GDOT inspected the Bridge and felt it was a good structure but said they do not deal with structures over a bridge. There has been a lot of comments on Facebook and many assumptions. We have cameras there, but the service was not the best. If anyone has information regarding this incident, we ask that they come forward and let us know so that we can prosecute. We had issues with people using spray paint on the bridge and the Sheriff's Office is investigating. This has happened a lot over the years. It was said there was tall grass and that we had ignored that which was not the case. We visited the site recently and there were Pike County Students taking pictures in their caps and gowns. We are working to re-open

and repair the Bridge correctly for long term integrity. Chairman Threadgill stated the entire Board wants the citizens to know they are working to get this repaired like it was. Vice Chairman McCoy stated we have reached out to DCA for help. Commissioner Hines asked if DNR would help. Administrator Gay stated it was a good time to make roof repairs and thinks the beams that were broken were not original to the structure.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: reported food will be distributed tomorrow with USDA. Katherine Powell will oversee this at St. Paul Church on Sewell Road. There were 1,300 boxes of food and this is the end of this program. There will be another program later. Commissioner Hines thanked Ms. Powell for her work. Primrose Road to Hwy. 54 has not been addressed. We have put tape there. Double surface was put on the road and the temperature was too cold and it would not adhere. This happened in October and the company has not come back to do the repair. This contractor continues to do work for the County but has not come back and finished this project. Trucks are detouring off the road. Administrator Gay stated the Contractor does asphalt themselves and they contract out the service treatment. Administrator Gay will call them tomorrow to come back and finish. There was discussion of air and surface temperatures for paving and changes to contracts in the future to prevent something like this from occurring again. Commissioner Hines has people here from Beulah Evans Road to speak. Commissioner Hines went on the road the other day and it is better. The County had scraped Barron Road and there was a concern of dirt that was piled on the side. That is the only road to get in and out since we closed Acers Road. Administrator Gay stated the subdivision streets off Beulah Evans has deep potholes, and we will do repairs later. We are looking at that and will need to obtain Right-of-way.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: thanked Theron Gay. Ms. Sue Ann Reid and Ms. Gail Ellis are very excited about the roads being paved. Lighting assistant has been requested. Commissioner Plant reminded everyone of the Kids Fishing event on June 5, 2021, for children ages 3-12 at the Fish Hatchery in Warm Springs. The Greenville Lions Club received funds upon the passing of former Sheriff Dan Branch, and they would like to use the funds to purchase benches to place at the Courthouse in his memory. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to allow the Greenville Lions Club to purchase benches, with the appropriate plaque in memory of former Sheriff Dan Branch, and place them at the Courthouse. The benches will be like the ones that are currently around the Courthouse. All were in favor. There is an effort to move forward with pavers for adding sidewalks for pedestrians and the City of Greenville will assist.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: announced June 26th will be the Warm Springs Freedom Celebration Parade. All were invited to attend. Striping is needed around the Courthouse for parking. Administrator Gay is working with Bill Cawthorne on the design, and we sought bids. There was additional information and discussion about the need for another entrance to the Courthouse lawn from the parking areas. Commissioner Neely-Hadley thanked Administrator Gay for all of his years of service. Commissioner Neely-Hadley looks forward to moving forward. The County has some good employees, and many here are like family. A lot of good things have happened here.

Vice Chairman McCoy: announced Peaches in the Pines would be held on June 12, 2021.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: No report at this time.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

Reported an Executive Session was needed for Litigation, Personnel and Real Estate.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Katherine Powell spoke on behalf of an organization that is opening in Coweta County. A Ministry School is looking for materials to help and could use anything from the non-profits that are closing. Folding chairs, tables, Television, microphones, and printers are needed. Ms. Powell expressed thanks to Commissioner Hines and the Director of Outreach in Manchester that has supported her in the distribution of food.

2. John and Marcelle Womack of 194 Turkey Court Trail in Greenville, live off Beulah Evans Road and has written emails and made calls to the County regarding not keeping up the dirt roads. Mr. Womack has to pull people out of the ditches 3-4 times per year. Recently the road was graded, and it was like riding on a washboard. There is a high number of potholes that have not been filled and the road is not safe. Administrator Gay stated the County will do square patch cuts on the potholes and hopes Public Works will be out there this week. Administrator Gay stated he had talked with Mr. Sargent, who stated the County did a good job grading. Pins and flags were put out to determine the ROW in the curve. The County will look at the banked curve which causes a lot of wash boarding and slickness on the road. Administrator Gay explained what had been discussed to correct the curve and knew Mr. Womack was interested in having the County pave the road. A form was shared with Mr. Womack of the process to pave a dirt road. Mr. Womack stated he spoke with the owner of both sides of the road at the curve and both agreed to give the County the Right-of Way.

Marcelle Womack stated she is aware the County spoke with Mr. Sargent, and she cannot depend on him to call her. Administrator Gay stated Mr. Sargent told him that he represented the Community. Ms. Womack stated there are people going into the ditches and several have almost had a head on collisions. Administrator Gay stated the County will have to resurface the subdivision streets at some point of time. There were additional comments regarding trash, spraying the ROW for vegetation, and the County's criteria for paving dirt roads including the petition. Commissioner Hines stated we voted at the last meeting when she was present to move forward with repairing the bank.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. to discuss Litigation, Real Estate and Personnel. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of Executive Session at 8:32 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go back into Regular session at 8:33 p.m. All were in favor.

There was no action taken.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings prior to Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*

Attest: *Beverly G. Thomas, County Clerk*

Date: *June 9, 2021*