

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
June 9, 2021

This meeting was also held by Zoom due to COVID-19

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Rosla Plant, and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley
Commissioners Absent: Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy
Staff Present: Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects Theron Gay, County Administrator Brad Vaughan, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Nathan Lee

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

INVOCATION – Commissioner Neely-Hadley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to adopt the Agenda. All were in favor.

III MINUTES

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Minutes from the May 25, 2021, 6:00 p.m. Board of Commissioners Meeting. All were in favor.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS

None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS COMMENTS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

None

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

None

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. The Board stated they would come back to this later since Executive Director of Administration, Theron Gay, would be presenting this when he arrived.

* This was later discussed after New Business #9.

2. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to appoint Thom-Canning-Skinner to the DFCS Board, District 2. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to table the appointment to the DFCS Board, District 5. All were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to table the appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals. All were in favor.

2. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to table the appointment to the Water & Sewerage Authority, District 4. All were in favor.

3. Mary Bray, representative from the Recreation Advisory Board, provided a presentation to the Board. The first item discussed was a Walk-A-Thon. Ms. Bray reviewed the goals, purpose, sponsors, time and location of events, participants, volunteers, and application fees including what is covered and to whom it is payable. Ms. Bray asked the County to include the events on the County website and Facebook page. Ms. Bray stated the fundraisers were to raise funds to host non-budgeted activities. The Advisory Board would like to send a donation letter to businesses regarding the event on July 31, 2021, that starts at 9:00 am. Ms. Bray also requested the County close the road from Hwy. 27 to Hwy 100 for four hours and the use of County land on County Farm Road. Ms. Bray announced other monthly events that were on the calendar beginning in May and ending in October. Ms. Bray stated she did not want their recommendations ignored and wanted a response. Chairman Threadgill asked where all the listed events would be held. Ms. Bray stated a designated place had not been determined but it would be centrally located in Greenville.

Chairman Threadgill stated when the Recreation Board was formed the Recreation Advisory Board was to make recommendations before the Board of Commissioners who would make decisions on whether to move forward. Chairman Threadgill stated he was disappointed that the Recreation Advisory Board spent \$3,500 for raised beds that were supposed to feed many people and of that cost, \$1,600 was paid for labor to someone outside the County. Chairman Threadgill stated he did not have confidence the money would be spent correctly. The County received two separate quotes from the same company for the raised beds. The Advisory Board must come before the Board of Commissioners when they want to send out notices for fundraising. Ms. Bray stated all the money the County provides what Meriwether County pays to the City of Manchester and there is a lot of money wasted by the County. Ms. Bray stated she wants approval to do the Walk-a-thon and approval to do events and she has not heard from any of the Commissioners. The Advisory Board has been here seven years and has not accomplished anything and it is a joke. Chairman Threadgill asked if Ms. Bray had requested to be on the Agenda to discuss decisions to be made or emails of what they would like to do. Chairman Threadgill stated the Commissioners gave the Advisory Board the freedom to meet without influence in an open forum and then to come back before the Commissioners so the Board could make decisions. Ms. Bray stated they came before the Board in December 2020, and nothing was done or acknowledged. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated she was ok with having a Work Session for Recreation. The garden was a good idea but today it is not producing. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated the Fireworks show is expensive and would cost around \$15K+. Ms. Bray stated they had to put off the Fireworks show and will plan for that next year. Bill Gregory, Finance Director, stated if the Recreation Advisory Board is soliciting funds outside of the County funds, that should come from the Board as the Official, and there needs to be a level of control of funds going out. Executive Director of Administration, Theron Gay, stated the County had worked on the park grant that is in the last stages and it is a big deal in terms of Recreation.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Walk-a-thon and the June Line Dance and Pizza Party. Discussion followed. Commissioner Plant stated she did not realize the email from December was a request and thought it was just a statement. Ms. Bray stated during the Commissioners Meeting she was told there would be a Work Session and that did not happen. Chairman Threadgill stated it has been difficult with the number of Commissioners and Advisory Board Members to meet due to COVID. Ms. Bray was asked to send an email to the County Clerk outlining what they would like to present to the Board so it could be added on an Agenda. Ms. Bray stated they do not have time now to plan activities and will not have the line dancing and pizza party. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to amend the motion to approve the Walk-a-thon and set a Work Session at the next meeting. All were in favor. Executive Director of Administration, Theron Gay, stated the Board will need to vote to allow the road to be closed as requested. The motion was amended to allow the Walk-a-thon, set a Work Session at the next meeting, and allow closure of the County Line Road for the Walk-a-thon. All were in favor. Commissioner Hines researched online parks for Meriwether County and only found Lake Meriwether. Commissioner Hines looked at other Counties and stated many have Parks and Recreation. Out of 159 Counties, none have a Recreation Advisory Board. It would be to our advantage to move to the point of having County wide Recreation and hiring a Director. Commissioner

Neely-Hadley state the new Park is a big start. Chairman Threadgill stated many of the Counties do not have seven Cities and the amount of land we have. Many Cities have parks. Administrator Vaughan will check with other Counties who have like size budgets. Commissioner Hines thanked Ms. Bray for her presentation provided on December 3, 2020, and the calendar of events on March 3, 2021. Any future funds and fund requests will need to come before the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Hines asked if the funding was the same when the County hosted the Country Christmas. Chairman Threadgill stated it was not by the Board or County but was by former Commissioner Bray as an individual.

4. Patty Threadgill, Election Superintendent, stated 6 of 7 Cities would have elections. The Agreement is a little different since we do not have the price to do this on the new equipment. The City of Greenville's Agreement is different because we do their qualifying at a cost of \$500. Executive Director of Administration, Theron Gay, stated the documents have been reviewed and all looks good. The City of Lone Oak is not on the list. Lone Oak may have a Special Election in September and are to advise us if that is the case. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Agreements and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

5. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve and allow the Chairman to sign the Resolution with the State of Georgia Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia State paid County Reimbursed Personnel (SPCR) Contract. All were in favor.

6. Bill Gregory, Finance Director, provided the budget request items for DFCS, DA Office, Public Defender, Health Department, Three Rivers, Library, County Agent, Tourism, Airport, Pathways, City of Manchester, Senior Center, Keep Meriwether Beautiful, and Community Action. Finance Director, Bill Gregory, and Executive Director of Administration Theron Gay will review the Public Defenders request and DFCS will be here at the end of the month when these requests come back before the Board for approval. Commissioner Neely-Hadley wanted the County to continue with the \$10K budgeted amount to CAFI since all other partners contribute.

7. Theron Gay, Executive Director of Administration, updated the Board regarding the Covered Bridge that received damage to some inside beams after a box truck of some type went through the bridge opening and caused the damage. Mr. Gay met with Georgia Trust at the Bridge. The Georgia Trust representative felt the beams were not original and not structural. Georgia Department of Transportation also looked at the Bridge and stated they could not speak about the covered portion of the Bridge, but the Bridge structure was ok. Engineer, Don Porter, inspected the Covered Bridge and stated the beams that were broken were not original and provided no real structural support. The section below the cross beams can be removed since they are not structural or part of the original bridge. That would correct the problem. The County has also reduced the entrance height of the drive thru barricade. With the Board's blessing we will fix and reopen after the work is completed.

8. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the ACCG-IRMA Worksheet and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

9. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve and allow the Chairman to sign the Resolution authorizing Volunteers and Elected Officials to be covered by the ACCG-Group Self-Insurance Workers' Compensation Fund. All were in favor.

*The Board returned to Unfinished Business #1. Executive Director of Administration, Theron Gay, has been looking at funding options for the County Line Road Project since this was an expensive project. A request was made to table discussion of the County Line Road Project until we have more information and other options that can be reviewed in a Work Session. It is a \$1M project with a \$100K grant and a \$150K loan. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Shirley Hines to discuss this in a Work Session on July 27, 2021. All were in favor.

X. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Bill Gregory, Finance Director, stated the General Fund was strong. We have received ½ of the American Recovery Plan Act funds. Another LGIP investment account was added due to maxing the amount in the other account. Mr. Gregory reviewed the SPLOST accounts.

XI. REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Vaughan stated he appreciated the Board and had met with all the Constitutional Officers and most of the Department Heads. He and Executive Director of Administration, Theron Gay, went in the field several times to evaluate roads. Administrator Vaughan concurred with the engineer regarding the Covered Bridge. Two things that have come up after meeting with Department Heads is competitive wages and salaries and infrastructure of offices. Those are mindful items for during the Budget season. The unspoken treasure is the quality of staff we have.

Theron Gay, Executive Director of Administration stated he had worked on the Recreation Grant, completed some forms, and sent them to GDOT, met with the Water & Sewerage Authority and will get with the Board on several other things very soon. A report was given earlier on the Covered Bridge.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: reported this Saturday there will be a youth event at the RD Hill Center. Everyone was encouraged to come out and support this.

A meeting was held with the constituents of Beulah Evans Road and Primrose Road regarding the condition of the roads and some of the roads that lead off the main road. Water is coming over the ditch where Tenny Nelson and Primrose Road come together. A contract was awarded to the same company that has not completed work on one of the roads. Commissioner Hines wanted to know what recourse we had if they do not complete the contract. Theron Gay, Executive Director of Administration, stated he had contacted the company after the last meeting, and they were supposed to be there last week. He will reach out to them again. Commissioner Hines provided a description of the issues on the road and the amount of water running in the middle of the road because of the ditches being full. This should be addressed as soon as possible.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: reminded everyone of Peaches in the Pines on June 12, 2021. The Kids Fishing event held on June 5, 2021, at the Fish Hatchery in Warm Springs was successful.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: asked about State Inmates picking up litter on roads and if the Board could suggest other roads. Executive Director of Administration, Theron Gay stated they would be able to pick up trash where we direct them. Bill Cawthorne met with Beth Neely-Hadley on a road outside the City of Manchester. They cleared it to keep water from running under a house.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley wanted the County to push information to the Public regarding purchasing items in the County rather than going outside the County in order to increase SPLOST. The County will get with the Vindicator and ask them to run an article.

Commissioner Hines stated trucks are being diverted to Forrest Road and Hwy. 54 when there are traffic issues on Hwy. 85. There is a "No Thru Trucks" sign but drivers are turning around in the driveway of the Fire Department. Commissioner Hines stated there needs to be a sign to stay of Hwy. 54 until Luthersville.

A report has come in about the Railroad and the detour on Juke Line Road. Trucks continue to use Juke Line Road. The road at the Bridge will be closed for about two more years. With big trucks on this road, it is a terrible place for vehicles to pull back onto Roosevelt Hwy. A sign would need to be placed at the round-a-bout.

Vice Chairman McCoy: Absent

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: The City of Manchester will have a celebration on July 3rd with fireworks and a band. The new Dollar General is opening a second store and there will be a ribbon cutting this Friday.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

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

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Bray asked about the county purchasing a garden hose to use for the garden behind the Administration Building. They have been bringing water from home to water the plants. The Board confirmed they would allow the purchase.

Carolyn McKinley stated there will be a Disc Golf Tournament at Peaches in the Pines.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Shirley Hines to go into Executive Session at 10:12 a.m. to discuss Litigation, Real Estate, and Personnel. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Shirley Hines to go out of Executive Session at 10:53 a.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to go back into Regular session at 10:54 a.m. All were in favor.

There was no action taken.

Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Rosla Plant to give the name of Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects to Theron Gay. All were in favor.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings prior to Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Shirley Hines to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m. All were in favor.

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

Attest: *Beverly A. Thomas, County Clerk*

Date: *June 22, 2021*