

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**July 13, 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, Commissioner Shirley Hines,  
Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Alfred "Buster" McCoy

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chairman Bryan Threadgill

Staff Present: County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Director of Special Projects Theron Gay,  
Attorney Nathan Lee

Staff Absent: County Administrator Michelle Irizarry, Finance Director Bill Gregory

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Beth-Neely Hadley

**II. INVOCATION**

Vice-Chairman Alfred McCoy

**III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

All

**IV. ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to adopt the Agenda with the following changes: remove under New Business 1. New Representative with Georgia Power – Socorro Rodriquez, Add under Appointments: 2. Appointment to the Department of Public Health to fill the unexpired term of Ms. Norma Phillips, Add under New Business: 6. Review request from the Sheriff's Office to surplus vehicles, 7. Authorize Chairman to sign pre-application for a Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant  
All were in favor.

**V. FINANCE REPORT**

Chairman Neely-Hadley stated Mr. Gregory was absent. Commissioner Hines stated the County had received the second round of the ARP funds and she would like to see a breakdown of what has been spent. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated she thought Board members had received a list from Mr. Gregory at the last meeting.

Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the General Fund looks good and both SPLOST and TSPLOST are ahead of our projection.

**VI. CITIZEN COMMENT**

None

**VII. MINUTES**

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to change the wording from June to July under Future Meetings and Notices then approve the Minutes from the June 28, 2022, 6:00 p.m. Regular Meeting. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Minutes from the June 30, 2022, 10:00 a.m. Work Session. All were in favor.

#### **VIII. PUBLIC HEARING**

None

#### **IX. APPOINTMENTS**

1. Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to table the appointment to the Library Board. All were in favor.
2. *Motion was made by Chairman Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to appoint Renee Dukes Smith to the Department of Health to fill the unexpired term of Ms. Norma Phillips. All were in favor.*

#### **X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

#### **XI. NEW BUSINESS**

1. *New Representative with Georgia Power – Socorro Rodriguez (REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA- unable to attend)*

2. **Update and Discussion on Meriwether County Road Projects**

Theron Gay, Director of Special Projects, stated at the last meeting he had spoken about reaching out to GDOT for funding. Mr. Gay made the call to GDOT and the GDOT Commissioner is very busy right now. Mr. Gay received a call back from the State Aid Administrator who has requested the County submit our request to him so that he can analyze our request and see what he can do for us with our projects. He will also see what he can do to help and get an appointment with the Commissioner if needed.

At the last meeting the Board spoke of trying to find projects that would connect from one State Route to another. We had Luthersville Road, which was priority, and Forrest Road. Mr. Cawthorne produced some maps that show other projects that the County would recommend as well. We would take the projects and maps to GDOT. We have accident data on all of the roads and a cost estimate on the five roads. We are looking at Forrest Road and have added Primrose Road. The N.W. half of Primrose Road was done two-years ago but the portion that comes back to Hwy. 27/41 is in bad shape as far as pavement rating. Coleman Creek Road will be used heavily as a by-pass when the Bridge work starts, and we will ask for funding for this road in a different manner to see if they will help since it will be a detour. River Road connects to Whitehouse Parkway and Hwy. 85. It has a lot of traffic and connects two State Routes. The Luthersville Road section up to Hwy. 362 and the section from SR 362 to SR 85. Staff had spoken about adding a culvert on Strickland Town Road if the Board would like that as well. If the Board agrees, Staff will prioritize the projects. Luthersville Road and Forrest Road rank one and two and the Board could prioritize the others. Mr. Gay suggested pulling Coleman Creek out of the list and talk to GDOT about possibly funding along with Bridge Replacement. The GDOT representative had asked about safety and that was discussed. Staff had gathered accident data and wanted the Board to consider adding width to the road rather than just adding signage and striping. Mr. Gay again, recommended that the Board prioritize the roads. The list would need to be typed up and

the Chairman would need to sign the letter for GDOT's consideration. Mr. Cawthorne provided the following roads and the amount needed for improvement: Luthersville Road - \$4,508,811, Forrest Road, \$2,100,000, River Road \$920,513, Primrose Road - \$1,574,848, Colman Creek Circle \$1,575,800 (not for deep patch process) and Strickland Town Road Culvert Project is estimated at \$267,000-\$300,000. Mr. Gay explained how the County would present the request to GDOT and provided more on the conversation that was had with GDOT. Mr. Gay discussed funding and stated funds that can be used for the projects would be available from GDOT, SPLOST and TSPLOST. Commissioner McCoy asked where we were with LMIG. Mr. Gay stated we had finished John B. Alford Road, McClain Road, Lake Meriwether Road and will start next week with Hughley Road and we will have King Road, Hawks Nest Drive, and Coyote Circle. Mr. Cawthorne stated they are different processes, and it will depend on the equipment availability. Luthersville Road, Hawks Nest Drive and Coyote Circle are full depth reclamation projects.

Mr. Gay stated if we substitute roads we will need a change order to the contract and will need the Board's authorization to exchange Weaver Parks Road for Coyote Circle.

Commissioner Hines asked if they would finish this year or if it would go into next year.

Mr. Cawthorne stated the way the contractor is talking they would finish soon.

Commissioner Hines asked what roads they need to finish, and Mr. Cawthorne is communicating with Piedmont regarding those repairs. Chairman Neely-Hadley asked for a recommendation if Coleman Creek Circle is taken out. Mr. Gay felt Strickland Town Road may come from other GDOT funding due to being a structure replacement. Primrose Road and River Cove Road could be joint projects. There was additional discussion. Commissioner Hines stated the culvert on Strickland Town Road had been out for 3.5 years and they have been very patient. Mr. Gay stated he wanted the County to take advantage of each State funding source for different projects and we will talk about the other Federal Grants we can take advantage of. Maps have been gathered and enlarged with the actual projects to show distances including the accident data and priorities. This will be put into a priority list the Board discussed. Mr. Gay wants GDOT to add Coleman Creek to their Bridge projects. The County will discuss with them the possibility of doing some work on the road before the detour and completing the finish work once the road is no longer needed as the detour.

There was discussion of LMIG and the exchange of King Road. If we put that back on the list, what do we need to do with Weaver Parks Road, take off and put Coyote Circle on the list. Coyote Circle is less expensive. The Board will need to decide. Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to get the list to GDOT and allow the Chairman to sign. 1. Luthersville Road 2. Forrest Road, 3. River Road 4. Primrose Road and a separate request would be Coleman Creek and Strickland Town Road.

All were in favor.

LMIG Discussion – Commissioner Plant checked out the roads last week. Commissioner Plant rode down Weaver Parks Road which divides District 1 and 3. There she noticed alligating and potholes on the road. Commissioner Plant got to that road off GA 85 then across the Railroad Track. That road probably has one house but where you take the 90 degree turn on Beaver Lake Rd. there are a lot on houses on that end and they use that that road to access GA 85. Some of the dirt roads need maintenance. There was concerns about a wash out at the bridge that needs to be addressed. A lot of nice homes are being

built on the Mt. Carmel end and that will be in District 1 next year. Mt. Carmel has had some issues in the past and that Bridge has been out. It has been closed several times. Commissioner Plant stated if we don't move forward on Weaver Parks Road, and it continues to deteriorate, it will be more expensive next year. Commissioner Plant stated since we have everything in place with the LMIG she thought it was best to leave the list as it is and keep the less expensive Road on the list for next year. Commissioner Plant thought that Weaver Parks Road needed to be addressed for those living on the Beaver Lake end. Bill Cawthorne stated the bridge on Beaver Lake Road was under consideration for a low impact bridge program. We are in competition with three other Counties. That will be reviewed in September.

Commissioner Hines provided Skip Richmond, IT Director, a video showing pictures of Coyote Road. Even though Weaver Parks Road may go into a different District, it is still now in District 1. Commissioner McCoy stated it was between District 1 and 3.

Commissioner Hines explained the photos of Coyote Circle which runs into Beulah Evans Road, it is a short road that goes into a subdivision. There are about 40 homes, and the homes may not be \$300K homes but people have lived in that area for 20-years. They have been asking to have Beulah Evans Road paved. There is one section of this short road where there is no more paving, and it is almost dirt. The County will be at Hawks Nest Drive which is the Road over so we can finish that out. When we get ready to do Beulah Evans Road, all of the roads going into the subdivision would have been completed. Commissioner Hines feels this is a better use of our dollars, it covers more area, will not cost as much as Weaver Parks Road, and will meet the needs of several people in that area. The citizens have been asking for help and Ms. Womack has come before the Board several times. Ms. Womack has worked on getting the signatures to pave Beulah Evans Road and those residents deserve to have that road taken care of.

Commissioner Hines stated she preferred the Board remove Weaver Parks Road and add Coyote Circle. There are so many roads that need to be addressed and the Board decided to do it based on the need of roads. Commissioner Hines felt this would be a better fit for right now. That section of Weaver Road going off of Hwy.85 stops into a dead end and turns. People have options. Commissioner Hines motioned to take Weaver Parks Road off the LMIG and add Coyote Circle. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner McCoy spoke regarding Weaver Parks Road. There are two other roads coming in there including Beaver Lakes and there is a major railroad crossing for people to get in and out and the area is growing. Chairman Neely-Hadley confirmed that Beulah Evans would be done and asked if Coyote Circle could be done at the same time that Beulah Evans Road is done. Commissioner Hines stated that road was in terrible shape. Commissioner Hines stated she wanted to be fair and transparent, and the people deserve to have Coyote Circle paved and it should be done now. They have been asking and many calls have been received. This is a shorter section than Weaver Parks Road. One half of Weaver Parks Road has been closed and it runs into a private area. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we would not be doing that part. Commissioner Hines stated it is no longer a thru road. More homes go into the subdivision where Coyote Circle is than go into Weaver Parks Road and just because you don't have a \$300K house doesn't mean we should not do their road. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated absolutely, we had asked staff to come to us with the worse roads when we were setting the LMIG. Mr. Cawthorne had provided a list and the Board did not pick out which roads to do. If we are doing

Beulah Evans, why not do both at the same time. Commissioner Hines disagreed and asked if Weaver Parks Road was worse than Coyote Circle. Mr. Cawthorne stated Coyote Circle is a full depth reclamation project and Weaver Parks Road could be repaired before it becomes a full depth reclamation. That is why it was selected. Commissioner Hines stated the cost to do Coyote Circle was \$48-\$50K and Weaver Parks Road is \$80K - \$90K. There was additional discussion of doing one road over another one.

Commissioner Hines discussed the homes located in the subdivision and stated we will be there doing Hawks Nest Drive which is a full depth reclamation so why not do Coyote Circle. We did Bobcat Trail and Turkey Trail last year. Mr. Gay stated if Weaver Parks Road got to a full depth reclamation, the cost will double. Commissioner Hines stated she did not have the vote or support of the Board and it was a shame to pave a road with one house and a dead-end versus paving a road with over 200 homes. We have been talking about paving Beulah Evans Road. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we were waiting on signatures. Commissioner Hines again motioned to take Weaver Parks off the LMIG and add Coyote Circle. There was no second and the motion failed. Commissioner Hines stated she was appalled that she did not get a second and it was a shame and disgrace of the lack of transparency. Commissioner Hines stated it was a shame that she could not get what she asked for and will make this issue well known. Commissioner Hines felt this was done on a personal basis. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated it was not personal and was looked at from an economic standpoint and we would have to spend more money later. We asked staff to bring to the Board the greatest need. We can put Coyote Circle on the list for next year's LMIG when Beulah Evans Road is done. Commissioner Hines stated she had been on the Board for eight years and had been disrespected the last three years. Commissioner Plant stated she was sorry, but this was a matter of economics. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, and it is nothing personal and only a matter of economics for the County and saving taxpayers money up front. Commissioner Plant encouraged any landowner to sign the right of way deed for Beulah Evans Road because that was what is needed for us to pave. The County will not buy the right of way. Commissioner Plant stated that she wants to work together. Commissioner Hines appreciated Commissioner Plant's statement of working together and put in her motion to allow Coyote Circle to be paved. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, this was taken personal, and is a slap in the face for those living in that district. There was additional conversation regarding the cost and timeframe to pave Coyote Circle. Commissioner Hines stated Bill Cawthorne provided a list of prioritized roads and Weaver Parks Road was not on the first list. Mr. Cawthorne stated it was on the LMIG list that was submitted to the Board. Mr. Gay stated the Board approved it as part of the contract. Mr. Gay stated that is why staff needs the Board to either exchange it or keep it since a change order would be needed to make it a reality. Commissioner Hines stated since the vote is not there to get it done it stays like it is which is a shame.

### **3. Set Date for Special Called LOST Meeting that was cancelled on June 30, 2022.**

Theron Gay, Special Projects Manager, stated he had recalculated everything to get a breakdown on the contributions of LOST. There was a spike in 2022 Revenues verse 2021. The Cities would do as good or better with the new proposal than 2021 and support data will be ready for the Board. The population methodology was recalculated using the entire population as the County then calculating the Cities. Mr. Gay recommended using

the Countywide population if an agreement is not reached. A meeting would need to be held in the next few weeks in order to meet the deadline. Attorney Nathan Lee explained the process and stated if the County and Cities could not reach an agreement there would be no LOST since it is no longer a Judicial process. The Cities are asking for 60% for the County and 40% to be shared between the Cities. The population method at the suggestion of ACCG which would be 75% for the County. Mr. Gay does not believe the Cities meet the eight criteria for additional funding consideration. Commissioner McCoy stated LOST was designed to give the taxpayers a break. Following further discussion, motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to set a meeting for Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. to discuss LOST negotiations with the Cities. All were in favor.

#### **4. Change Order for Health Department Repairs and Restoration**

Jay Johnson, representative with Principle Construction, provided an update on the repairs at the Greenville Health Department. A spreadsheet was provided to the Board that showed additional cost above the amount that will be covered by the Insurance Company. Mr. Johnson stated since the work was being done the additional items would upgrade the building to a finished remodeled space. Commissioner Hines left the meeting. Items identified and discussed in detail were the installation of a hard ceiling in the water heater closet which was the source of the damage due to a valve failing and the hot water heater exploding, (Commissioner Hines returned to the meeting) Installation of LVT plank tiles throughout the facility (credit would be given for carpet tiles and VCT if the Board approved the LVT plank tiles), replacing acoustical ceiling tiles throughout the facility, remove chair rail throughout, replace exterior roof gutters and downspouts, wash building exterior and sidewalks, moisture test the SOG, and if needed apply negative side fluid applied vapor barrier, and insulate all piping above the ceiling. The additional cost not including the vapor barrier and insulation on the piping above the ceiling was \$48,913. This amount included the credits for carpet and VCT. Mr. Johnson stated they had already removed the chair rail at the request of the Health Department and cleaned the exterior and sidewalks. He only wanted to recover the cost of the material and there was not much labor. He stated they would have cleaned the outside regardless and the amount requested is only for labor.

Mr. Johnson reviewed each of the items above and suggested the County allow his staff to cut the ceiling tiles around the borders due to the skillset and have the County install the full-size tiles. Mr. Johnson was providing the tiles at cost with no markup.

Employees at the Health Department complained that boxes were getting damp on the bottoms when they were placed on the floors. Mr. Johnson's team has drilled to get a moisture test on the barrier and feels it will be discovered that we have a failed moisture barrier. Mr. Johnson explained the process and stated until the tests results come back he would not know which product would need to be used to reseal the floors and the cost would vary depending on the product that would need to be used. There was additional discussion of drainage around the building and additional issues due to the gutters. There was discussion of insulating the pipes in the attic since that had been the cause of a previous claim where pipes froze and burst during the winter months.

Following additional discussion, motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to allow spending up to \$20K with Bill Gregory, Finance Director, determining what funding source to use, and allow Principle Construction to proceed

with LVT throughout the building and add a hard ceiling in the water closet. This includes the credits given. All were in favor.

Mr. Johnson stated he should have the floor moisture results within 48 hours.

**5. Courthouse Roof Drain Repairs**

Jay Johnson, representative from Principle Construction, reported on the Courthouse roof drain system and re-roofing plans. Due to the age of the roof and the state of failure, especially on the third-floor courtroom on the north-west corner there has been a steady leak. There is a complex roof system due to many surfaces not being installed at the same time. Mr. Johnson recommended a consultant who does evaluations on these types of buildings and makes recommendations for repairs. Emergency repairs were made to stop leaks that were coming into the Jury Box on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor. The biggest issue with the roof is that it holds water, and the gutter system is not draining. Mr. Johnson provided information on the current interior drains and his recommendation to fix the issue. The first step is to open the drains and get the standing water off the roof. It was discussed to use SPLOST funds and let the consultant determine what to do for immediate and long-term repairs. Mr. Gay stated the cost is \$169,938 which includes patching the roof, flashing and the roof drain. Mr. Johnson explained the process and the west side of the building would need to be excavated to be able to work on the pipe. Mr. Johnson stated they would have localized demolition and will not know what some of this will be until they can get their eyes on it. A 10% contingency is included. There was discussion of using funds from ARPA and maybe SPLOST. Mr. Johnson provided alternatives, but it was more costly, and it would impact the occupants. Motion was made by Alfred McCoy to authorize spending \$169,938 as discussed. Commissioner Hines asked what funding source. The motion was amended by Commissioner McCoy to utilize \$169,938 in SPLOST funds then ARPA funds if more funding was needed and allow the Chairman to sign. Rosla Plant seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

**6. Review request from the Sheriff's Office to surplus vehicles**

*Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to surplus the following vehicles as requested by the Sheriff's Office: 2008 Dodge Charger – VIN 5959, 2021 Dodge Charger – VIN 6830, 2013 Dodge Charger – VIN 7666, 2012 Dodge Charger – VIN 5156, 2010 Dodge Charger VIN – 4527, 2010 Dodge Charger – VIN 4524, Dodge Charger – VIN 5152, 2008 Dodge Charger VIN 5983.*

*All were in favor.*

**7. Authorize Chairman to sign pre-application for a Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant**

*Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to Authorize the Chairman to sign the pre-application for a Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant. All were in favor.*

**XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

absent

**XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**Commissioner Hines** – addressed the people she represents in District 1 and those in the County. Commissioner Hines stated she had been on the Board for eight-years and had worked hard to be transparent, be available, and had listened to the citizens. What is

brought to Commissioner Hines is taken back to the Board. Commissioner Hines stated she was very disappointed today after listening to the citizens and the sense of urgency in getting a certain road paved, and not being able to do that. Commissioner Hines addressed those who live on Beulah Evans Road and those who live off Coyote Circle, stating she had done her best to hear what they had to say, and had brought it to the Board as a whole. It is important as leaders to take time to listen to their constituents and serve them. Commissioner Hines stated we are in our 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> year of our Fire Department Bond and have not had an opening of the new station and we have not moved forward with the one on Primrose. Commissioner Hines plans to serve the people in District 1 and those throughout the County with the best integrity for the next five months that she is on this Board.

**Commissioner Plant** – reminded everyone that at the Courthouse tomorrow morning, at 7:14 a.m., there will be a Statewide Bible reading where all 159 Counties in Georgia participate. The entire Bible will be read across the State. This is referenced in 2 Chronicles 7:14. All were encouraged to come out and participate.

**Chairman Neely-Hadley** – reported she and Vice Chairman Threadgill attended the City Council Meeting in Manchester on Monday. In recognition of the retirement of Vic Dowis following 33 years of service and for his time with the Recreation Department, the City named the Splash Pad in his honor. Mr. Dowis felt he had left the recreation program in good hands.

**Vice Chairman Threadgill** – absent

**Commissioner McCoy** – reported Lake Meriwether has the pipe and plumbing complete for the expansion they are working on. The new drive is in and will allow six new spaces. The County leased the River Ramp to the State about two years ago and the State has plans to install a nice up to date ramp that is ADA complaint. A cable has been installed to keep people from getting on the river while work is being done. People are still trying to bypass this to get on the river. Completion of the work should be within two months and Commissioner McCoy asked that everyone be patient. Mr. Gay reported the State had already shot the elevations and had the area staked. It will cost the Taxpayer money for the State to come back to re-shoot the area and re-install the stakes again if people run over or knock the stakes down.

#### **XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Stated Executive Session was needed for Litigation and Real Estate.

#### **XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go into Executive Session at 11:05 a.m. to discuss Litigation and Real Estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go out of Executive Session at 11:19 a.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go back into Regular Session at 11:20 a.m. All were in favor.

There was no action taken.

**XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES**

Future Meetings and Notices were announced prior to Executive Session.

July 26, 2022. Special Called Meeting 4:00 p.m.

July 26, 2022, Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m.

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Alfred McCoy to adjourn at 11:21 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Beverly D. Thomas, County Clerk

Date: July 26, 2022