

**MINUTES**  
**MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**July 14, 2021**

**This meeting was held in person and by Zoom due to COVID-19.**

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley  
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 Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to adopt the Agenda with the following additions under New Business: 15. Appointment to Pathways to fill an unexpired term 16. Susan Pritchett-discussion of Flat Shoals Road and the Meriwether County Animal Shelter 17. Request from the Meriwether County Recreation Advisory Board to purchase T-shirts and Water Bottles for the Walk-a-Thon. All were in favor.

**III MINUTES**

Motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Minutes of the June 22, 2021, 6:00 p.m. Regular Meeting with the following changes: Under New Business, 2. Change the Executive Order date from 1395 to 13985. 3. Change from the American Recovery Act to the American Rescue Act. 3. Add the following comments that were made by Administrator Vaughan during the Comments from the Administrator. Administrator Vaughan stated he had attended an online-zoom meeting for the Recreational Water use Classification. The Flint River is on our eastern border and is under consideration to be used as a Tier II Recreational Water Use which would open the opportunity for tourism grants and development. Boat Ramps and Parks could be a part of this. Administrator Vaughan spoke with other jurisdictions regarding a Recreation Authority vs. a Recreation Advisory Board. Jurisdictions similar in size to Meriwether were contacted. There were commonalities on how they got to where they are now. All jurisdictions that were contacted started with a Recreation Department that was operated by the Board of Commissioners. As they became more established it got to the point where it was dominating the Commissioners Meetings, so they created a Recreation Authority. With the Authority they could have their own negotiations for land and park acquisition. Ultimately, they would appoint a Director. Administrator Vaughan stated Executive Director of Administration and Projects, Theron Gay, was further along working on another recreation project. Administrator Vaughan stated he would gather some more information and stated the main point was it started with the Board of Commissioners in control before it became a department, and most were based on heavy input from the Board of Commissioners and at least one major City. 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. This was postponed until later in the Commission Meeting. (following New Business #7)
2. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Shirley Hines to table the appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals to fill an unexpired term ending on January 5, 2022. All were in favor.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Alan Smith, Fire/EMS Chief, stated they had found a used Tanker/Pumper for \$25K. It is a 1995 International 4900 Pumper Fire Truck that will carry 1,800 gallons of water and can be used as a backup pumper. This may help improve the ISO rating. The Pumper would be placed at the Lone Oak Fire Station. The truck was retired from Bowden, GA. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to purchase the Tanker/Pumper. All were in favor. The motion was amended by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to purchase the Tanker/Pumper with SPLOST funds. All were in favor.
2. Alan Smith, Fire/EMS Chief, stated the County has not had an EMS service fee increase since 2005. Chief Smith explained what Medicare pays and gave the top three insurance providers. We are not charging the amount the insurance company will pay. We need to increase our fees according to our third-party billing company who recommended 20% over what Blue Cross/Blue Shield pays since most people have a secondary insurance. We continue to write off 50% due to people not having the money to pay their bill. Motion was made by Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to allow an increase of EMS fees per the outline. All were in favor.
3. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to confirm the Elected Official Letter of Support for CAFI. All were in favor.
4. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the corrected FY 2021-2022 Budget for the Extension Office in the amount of \$53,526. The original amount approved was \$308 less. All were in favor.
5. The County received notification that Mr. Robertson was unable to attend today's Meeting. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to table the request from Michael Robertson for funding for the M.A.R.S. program. All were in favor.
6. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the Change Order in the amount of \$25,175 for additional pipe quantities needed for the Mt. Pilgrim Road and Peaceful Lane T-SPOLST Project. All were in favor.
7. Administrator Vaughan received a written request from the City of Grantville for Annexation. The Annexation included a parcel of land within unincorporated Meriwether County. The City of Grantville received the request from a property owner to annex an unincorporated parcel into the City limits of Grantville. The property is located in the northwest section of Meriwether County and is 103.70 acres in size. It is owned by Minnie Sewell Land, LLC and is accessed via common contiguous parcel with road access to Minnie Sewell Road in Coweta County. The property is defined as Parcel ID #001-013. The subject property is currently undeveloped and is zoned industrial. The adjacent property in the City of Grantville is zoned General Industrial. Administrator Vaughan stated he and Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, had no objections and recommended the Board not object to the request for annexation. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated he had an updated legal description, and this was part of a 500-acre tract they are putting together on the other side of I-85. Commissioner Hines stated she had checked into this, and the property is land locked and the CUVA will expire December 2021. It is easier to deal with one Municipality if there is a zoning or other issue. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Annexation request. All were in favor.

The Board returned to Unfinished Business #1.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to appoint Kelly Stephens to the DFACS Board, District 5, to fill an unexpired term that will end on 6-30-2022. All were in favor.

8. Administrator Vaughan stated he and Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, had met with Jimmy Gill of Custom Truck and Body Works regarding the purchase price of a new ambulance. The cost of the new ambulance is \$179,880.05. This includes a savings of \$7,800 by selecting a gas engine rather than a diesel engine. This is down from the original price of \$211K. Administrator Vaughan asked the Board for permission to look for and purchase three used ambulances to help alleviate the burden on the existing fleet. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to allow the purchase of a new gas engine ambulance as discussed, look for three used ambulances, and bring the information on the three used ambulances back before the Board. All were in favor.

9. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, reported the Right-of-Way Ordinance requires any utility company to get a utility permit for placement of utilities for County Right of Way, and provides for the utility company to be responsible for relocation costs in the event of needed road improvements. The other is a Broadband Ready Ordinance which will streamline the permitting process for Broadband Expansion and will be a positive component for grant applications. There will be a fee associated with the permits and that will need to be approved as well. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, asked the Board to set the two Public Hearings for these Ordinances. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to set the two Public Hearings for August 24, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. All were in favor. Commissioner Hines wanted the County to gather information on Impact Fees. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, recommended Franchise Fees as opposed to Impact Fees.

10. Administrator Vaughan met with Jane Fryer, IDA Executive Director, and several other members of the Broadband Community. The NTIA Grant is part of Federal Program with \$288M of Federal funds that will be awarded in blocks of \$5M to \$30M. Diverse Power is willing to partner with the IDA and will pay any initial cost for the grant including the grant writing and cost of materials. It is suggested in the Grant package that it be a 10% match at least. We will be looking at an \$18M grant. The grant application is due by August 16, 2021. We will hear back from them in November 2021. The IDA must partner with Diverse Power and will need our blessing to apply for the grant to bring Broadband to Meriwether County. Chairman Threadgill asked if anyone would be reaching out to the other Utility providers to see what they would bring to the table as well. Jane Fryer, IDA Executive Director, stated yes, this grant would cover the County from Hogansville to Greenville. This began when we were trying to get internet at the Airport. We met with Windstream, and they are interested in meeting to discuss expanding their service. There were meetings with the Mayor of Woodbury and Diverse regarding their service. There may be 3-4 companies that could help provide more coverage throughout the County. Ms. Fryer explained what areas would have coverage. They will also look at other companies that can provide service. This will be a Public-Private partnership with Diverse Power. Commissioner Plant stated Southern Rivers rolled out their program a year ago and it was part of a different funding source. Theirs will come from the North end area around the Alvaton area and Commissioner Plant was unsure of how far down it will come. Commissioner Plant made a request to get a copy of the map where we can see where Broadband would provide coverage. The County has four different power companies that provide service. We can look at what the types of service they offer. Diverse Power is specifically fiber optic. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated the only cost to the County, if the grant is awarded, is performing a single audit because of the Grant amount. This is time sensitive. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to authorize the Industrial Development Authority to move forward with Diverse Power. All were in favor.

11. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated the County will pick up \$70,458.81 more in LMIG for 2022. We will talk about the projects soon and the local match is 30%. Recommendations will be brought back after the Work Session.

12. Administrator Vaughan stated the City of Greenville disbanded their Volunteer Fire Department as of July 6, 2021. Fire Chief Alan Smith stated that Greenville Station 1 and our Station 1 has always been on the same alert calls. The Volunteers that are at Greenville are on the County roster and basically this is a paperwork issue. It will make it easier on our ISO and easier on Greenville from having to maintain a separate set of records and equipment. The County received the equipment and will maintain the Station which will be a mile and a half closer. There was no action required from the Board.

13. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to set a Public Hearing for August 24, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. to hear the request from Edwin Madan to close a section of road on the east end of Jones Mill Road, which is about 2,400'. Mr. Madan owns property on both sides and there is a lot of hunting and trash being dumped on this section of road. This is in District 3. All were in favor.

14. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve and allow the Chairman to sign the contract with the Department of Health to provide Employee Biometric Screening Services. The effective date of the contract is from July 1, 2021, to July 1, 2022. All were in favor.

15. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to appoint Jennifer Jones to the Pathways Board, District 5. All were in favor.

16. Susan Pritchett stated Animal Shelter Director, George Richmond, was doing a great job. Ms. Pritchett stated she had not heard back from the Board regarding the movement and housing of large animals. The Board agreed they had slipped. Vice Chairman McCoy stated they had talked about an area and what was needed. Ms. Pritchett stated she was willing to help put in T-post if needed. Ms. Pritchett provided a rough count of animals she has held for the County over the last 5-yers.

Ms. Pritchett was concerned of the heavy truck traffic on Flat Shoals Road and potholes along the road. Many truckers are using Flat Shoals Road to dodge the law in Molena. Pike County has also directed trucks to use Flat Shoals Road and it is not wide enough for Semi Trucks. Following further discussion, Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, will call the GDOT Traffic Operations again regarding this type of traffic.

17. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, spoke with Mary Bray from the Meriwether County Recreation Advisory Board, regarding the purchase of T-Shirts and water bottles, etc. for the Walk-Thon. It was recommended that the Board allow Staff to work with Ms. Bray within their Budget amount, for the purchase of the T-Shirts, water bottles etc. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to allow the County staff to work within the Budgeted amount to order T-Shirts, water bottles, etc. for the Walk-a-Thon. All were in favor.

#### **X. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Finance Director Bill Gregory reported the bank balances were strong but will decrease in the next few months. In October we will receive the Insurance check from the State that will be close to \$1M. Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act have been received. We will present a plan and gather thoughts at the Work Session next week.

#### **XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Administrator Vaughan stated he and Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, had met with Mike Stewart, Manchester Interim City Manager. Administrator Vaughan attended their City Council Meeting and will have follow up meetings in the future. A meeting was held with Mayor Cuttie from Luthersville regarding elements of the Comprehensive Plan. concerns of roads, Recreation and Zoning were also discussed.

It was a team effort working with Jimmy Gill and Meriwether County Staff regarding the purchase of the new ambulance.

A meeting was held with the Airport Authority and the Broadband providers to try and figure out multiple options for coverage.

A meeting was held with the City of Woodbury and Mayor Ledbetter regarding Broadband and what coverage would be available. Some of the Pike County representatives were present at that meeting. A meeting was held with the Finance and Human Resource Director regarding salaries. More information will be available during Budget Meetings.

An email was received from Dr. Joe Morrow regarding restoration of the pools at the Little White House in Warm Springs, GA. They will be pursuing a large Federal Grant for this project. Board members were invited to come and see the proposed project. Dr. Morrow has not requested funding from the County but may need a letter of support to help with the grant.

A meeting was held with representatives of the landfill and weekly meetings may follow to discuss a pretreatment facility.

Administrator Vaughan attended the Water & Sewerage Meeting and the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board meeting.

## **XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Shirley Hines: reported Larry Johnson, Commissioner in DeKalb County, was sworn in as a National Association of Commissioners member. This is the first time someone from Georgia has held that position.

A Town Hall Meeting will be held on July 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in Luthersville. Commissioner Hines invited everyone to attend.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: thanked Public Works for their work during the recent issues with roads due to rain. Commissioner Plant asked the public to please be patient until the rain moves out. Commissioner Plant stated when a request is made, she leaves it up to the County to know what the best time is to perform the work. Thanks were expressed to all staff who worked diligently on recent road issues.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: announced Saturday, July 31, 2021, there would be a Back-to-School Bash in Manchester from 10:00 am – 12:00 p.m. and in Greenville from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There will be Back Packs, Food, and prizes for the children.

Vice Chairman McCoy: thanked everyone for the calls, cards, and prayers during his recent illness and while he is recovering. The new signs that were installed on Luthersville Road look good. The Lake Meriwether Advisory Board met last night. The Park looks good, and people are still talking about Peaches in the Pines. There was discussion of having a shed built to store maintenance equipment at the Lake.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: reported the City of Manchester had a great turn out on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. The *Manchester Development Authority* took over the event and Manchester continues to pay for this event. Chairman Threadgill found out the cost for the Firework Event was \$12K. Chairman Threadgill was appreciative of Manchester continuing to have the Fireworks celebration.

## **XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

County Attorney Nathan Lee stated there was need for Executive Session to discuss Litigation, Personnel, and Real Estate.

## **XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go into Executive Session at 10:09 a.m. to discuss Litigation, Personnel and Real Estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to go out of Executive Session at 11:38 a.m. All were in favor. Commissioner Hines and Vice Chairman McCoy left the meeting at 11:38 a.m.

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to go back into Regular Session at 11:41 a.m. 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 Beth Neely-Hadley to adjourn the meeting at 11:41 am. All were in favor.

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

Attest: *Beauclay A. Thomas, County Clerk*

Date: *July 27, 2021*