

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
July 27, 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, and Commissioner Rosla Plant

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley

Staff Present: Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects 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 Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to remove #2 and #3 from the Public Hearing (they will be heard during the August 24, 2021 meeting), and correct the numbering order under New Business from #5 to #4. All were in favor.

III MINUTES

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the Minutes from the July 14, 2021, Regular Meeting with the following change. Under Commissioner Comments from Chairman Threadgill, change from Meriwether Development Authority to Manchester Development Authority. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Minutes of the July 21, 2021, Work Session. All were in favor.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS

None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS COMMENTS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

None

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated Butch Oliver and Jodi Sharpe did a great job working on the new Zoning Map. Zoning and various codes have been re-worked. The old map had been in existence for a while and needed to be updated. The update has been completed. We will be expanding commercial categories which will come back before the Board at a later date and time. This Public Hearing was advertised, and the Ordinance had been properly advertised and adopted. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go into a Public Hearing to hear information on updating the Zoning Map. All were in favor. There were no comments from the Commissioners or Public. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to accept and adopt the zoning map as presented. All were in favor.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to table the appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals to fill an unexpired term ending on January 5, 2022. All were in favor.
2. Michael Robertson addressed the Board and asked for financial help for the M.A.R.S. Program. Mr. Robertson stated this outreach program partners with Greenville Middle School, Manchester Middle School and Manchester High School. The objective is to give students an opportunity for a higher education, through College, Armed Services or Technical Programs. Students at that time must meet the following requirements for entering either service to be eligible for taking the test: 1) GPA 3.0 2) Applied to, with receipt, 4 Colleges (Technical, State, or University), or 3) 9th and 10th graders that have taken the ASVAB. The targeted group are 7th – 10th graders. In the public school system in Meriwether County, 11th and 12th graders are given waivers for the SAT and ACT programs. There are up to 10 students selected for each of the 4 time periods (December 4, 2021, March 12, 2022, May 7, 2022, and June 4, 2022). Students who take the tests prior to the 11th and 12th grade know what is expected of them. Mr. Robertson provided more information on the Armed Services program requirements. Mr. Robinson gave information on studies from Stanford regarding continuous test taking. The operating cost per time period for this program is \$790 for a total cost of \$3,950. This amount includes \$3,225 in operation expenses, \$375 in transportation (this is to transport students from Greenville/Manchester to West GA Technical School in LaGrange to take the test), and \$350 in food/beverage (this is to provide food and beverages after the test). The cost to take the ACT is \$4,975, the SAT cost \$3,950. Mr. Robertson stated he was working with Mr. Brown at the School Board regarding transportation. Chairman Threadgill asked how students are chosen to participate. Mr. Robertson gave an example of 40 students, if all 40 fit the category, 10 would be select for each period. Chairman Threadgill asked who had funded this program since its existence in 2017 and asked if the School Board contributes. Mr. Robertson stated they started with three students. The School Board allows M.A.R.S. to work with Mr. Brown and School Counselors work with the students on their needs. Commissioner Hines asked for a copy of the presentation. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, asked for a summary of the organization and a copy of the slide presentation. Mr. Robertson stated the program was State Certified. Commissioner Plant stated Ms. Dawn Woodard, from the Meriwether County Board of Education, has taken the lead on many programs at the school. Commissioner Plant asked Mr. Robertson if the school system program could be in line with his program and how they might be able to support each other. Mr. Robertson stated the Board of Education did a Strategic Plan in November and this was not in there. Commissioner Hines mentioned the Board of Education received a large amount of funds from the American Rescue Plan and part of it is for the Loss Learning Program. Mr. Robertson was advised to see what the Board of Education has in place since their funding changed.
3. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated during the June 22, 2021, Meeting, the Commissioners tabled a proposed change order to the 2021 LMIG contract. That contract included a 1.1-mile section of Mt. Carmel Road at a cost of f\$116,133. After further review of that road section, County staff determined there was a need for a greater level of repair. This road section will need to be rescheduled and funding determined for a full depth reclamation. In conversation with Commissioner Hines, it was determined that improvements to subdivision roads off Beulah Evans Road would be the best use of the funding. Staff presented a couple of scenarios that would closely match the available funding, and the other option would require allocation of additional funding. Commissioner Hines requested the change order to include Turkey Trail Court and Bobcat Trail. This project would require FDR and the estimated cost would be approximately \$185,150, which is \$68K above the previously approved amount. Finance Director, Bill Gregory, explained the project budgeting, SPLOST and advised of funds that could be used. Mr. Gregory confirmed we had the flexibility to fund the difference in this project. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Chairman Threadgill to approve the change order to the 2021 LMIG and pay the difference of \$68K. All were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated the Courthouse has three different types of roofing. The County needs to find out what is needed to repair or replace the roof. The County can get contracts and proposals from various contractors or have a company do this for us similar to what we did when getting proposals for the last Fire Stations. We are unable to write specifications so every proposal will vary. Vice Chairman McCoy confirmed the roofing included copper, metal, and membrane along with an older gutter system. Commissioner Hines wanted to get a roofing company to tell us what needs to be done through an engineering company. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines to allow Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, and Finance Director, Bill Gregory to seek an engineer or professional roofing company to tell us what is needed prior to an RFP. All were in favor.

2. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to accept the addition, 30.1.7, to the Meriwether County Policy and Procedure Book. All were in favor.

3. Ms. Johnsie Reeves presented a copy of a Petition to pave LeRoy Robinson Road. The petition was signed by most of the property owners. There were two signatures missing due to Ms. Reeves not being able to contact the owners and another person who had 2-acres of land. All others signed the petition to have the road paved. Ms. Reeves stated the road is inhabited by people who have lived there all their life. Ms. Reeves stated there are sections of the Petition form that did not make sense.

4. Marcelle Womack addressed the Board regarding the condition of Beulah Evans Road. Ms. Womack presented the Board with a signed Petition, containing over 100 signatures, to have Beulah Evans Road paved. Ms. Womack stated if you include the counts per household and how many trips are made per day it could be upwards of 600. Others traveling on Beulah Evans Road include school buses, public service personnel, UPS, Amazon, etc. Ms. Womack expressed concern over the potential for a school bus accident and the damage the road causes to the vehicles. There are days when the school bus driver cannot navigate and a change in weather can cause the pickup/drop off point to vary. Ms. Womack stated over \$44K in gravel had washed into the ditches over the years. A statement that was written by one of the school bus drivers regarding the road condition was read. Each time residents call Public Works they are told they are next on the list. The narrowness in some areas of the Road is a challenge and buses are being damaged. Ms. Womack stated the County should have previous easements, but she asked everyone if they would sign again for the Petition. Ms. Womack showed pictures in the slide show regarding potholes, poor drainage, narrowness of the road, barely to no visible striping, blind spots, blocked storm drains, and eroded areas. There were pictures on the slideshow of cars that had slid off the road into the ditch. A Stop sign that was not installed at the regulated height was reported. Commissioner Hines thanked Ms. Womack and Ms. Reeves for their comments and due diligence and appreciated the Board developing priorities and procedures to follow. Safety is most important. There were no other comments.

X. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director Bill Gregory reported the General Fund was strong and E-911 had \$330K that could be transferred when needed. Mr. Gregory reviewed the SPLOST report. The County has received \$8K more than budgeted. The 6-month average is \$120,036. The T-SPLOST average is \$100K. We are running \$10K over the monthly budgeted amount.

XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, reported this was the first time that we received a petition to pave roads since the process was implemented. The petitions will be checked to see if they meet the needs and criteria before it is brought back before the Board.

Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, met with the Election Office to discuss space and the condition of the building, met with a few Industrial prospects, met with a Mayor about building, permitting and code, attended some of the budget meetings, prepared for the recent Work Session regarding AR Federal funding, striping of parking spaces has been completed in downtown

Greenville area, we had worked up that contract some time ago, but the guy was waiting on the weather, and we may need a few direction arrows. We met with contractors on the resurfacing program. They are battling the rain too.

Commissioner Hines confirmed Epps as the new subcontractor that was hired by the contractor to finish up the work from the previous LMIG that was not previously completed. Executive Director of Administration and Special Projects, Theron Gay, stated Epps was a large company and will finish the old contract work before starting on the new contracts.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: reminded everyone of the Walk-a-thon this Saturday.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: no report

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: absent

Vice Chairman McCoy: asked the public to be patient regarding the road due to the rain.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: no report

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

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

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Deborah Strozier stated Marcelle Womack did a wonderful job in her report. Ms. Strozier stated she has stood in a mudhole almost knee deep and is not able to drive down Beulah Evans Road in a new truck. Ms. Strozier and her husband had problems turning at the curve in their 26' camper. Another driver refused to back up or stop and wait for them to make the turn and move out of the way. The other driver hit and broke the wheel wall on the camper. There were scared to backup on the muddy road. Ms. Strozier stated she had spoken with the Public Works Director regarding how they grade the road. Some of the issues have been ongoing since 20002.

Diane Green, who had signed up to speak, was not present.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go into Executive Session at 7:10 p.m. to discuss Litigation, Personnel and Real Estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of Executive Session at 7:32 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go back into Regular Session at 7:34 p.m. All were in favor.

Action was taken in Executive Session to accept the resignation of Bradford Vaughan that was tendered on 7-14-2021. The motion had been made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy and all were in favor.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings and notices prior to Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman McCoy announced the Ribbon Opening Ceremony for at the river with the new owner, Ms. Darlene McDaniel.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Beverly Thomas, County Clerk

Date: August 11, 2021