

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

August 10, 2022

9:00 A.M.

This meeting was held in person and also by Zoom due to COVID

Commissioners Present: Chairman Beth Neely-Hadley, Vice Chairman Bryan Threadgill, and Commissioner Alfred "Buster" McCoy

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Shirley Hines and Commissioner Rosla Plant

Staff Present: County Administrator Michelle Irizarry, Director of Special Projects Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and Attorney Nathan Lee

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Beth-Neely Hadley

II. INVOCATION

Chairman Beth-Neely Hadley

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to adopt the Agenda with the following additions under New Business: 7. Request to upgrade Tax Commissioners Software to Wingap 8. Change date of Public Hearing for a rezoning matter from August 23, 2022 to September 14, 2022. All were in favor.

V. FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, reported the General Fund was at \$2.2M. We may need to move funds from the Local Government Investment Pool before the end of the fiscal year. The Fire District O&M balance is \$2,051,919.43 and there is plenty in the Fire District Bond to pay the note this month. The 2020 SPLOST balance will take a hit this month due to the 2022 LMIG. The County portion for SPLOST this month was \$150,482.94, which is the second largest amount we have received. The County portion of TSPLOST this month was \$126,344.72 which is the second highest amount we have received. Commissioner McCoy stated he and Mr. Gregory had looked back and 2016 was the last time the County used a Tax Anticipation Note. Mr. Gregory stated it was Tax Millage time and Budget time next month. Last year the Millage Rate was set during the first meeting in September. Mr. Gregory would like to set the Millage Rate this year on September 14, 2022 (should be August 30th). Last year we heard the Budget during the first meeting in September and approved the Budget at the last meeting in September. Mr. Gregory would like to do the same this year and present the Budget for FY2022-2023 on September 14th and set the Budget for FY 2022-2023 on September 27, 2022.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT

None

VII. MINUTES

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to approve the Minutes from the July 26, 2022, 4:00 p.m. Special Called Meeting. All were in favor. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to approve the Minutes from the July 26, 2022, 6:00 p.m. Regular Meeting. All were in favor.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING

None

IX. APPOINTMENTS

1. Appointment to the Pine Mountain Regional Library Board (term expires 6-30-2025)

Motion was made by Chairman Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to appoint Sharon Cuddington to the Pine Mountain Library Board. All were in favor.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Health Department Moisture Test Results and Recommendation

Administrator Irizarry referred the Board to the Issue Paper regarding the Moisture Test results and recommendation. Staff recommended the French drains which should help with the moisture issues in the Greenville Health Department Building as well as outside of the building. The cost is \$37,896 which is a savings of \$19,076 over the first option. Items 1-4 had already been approved and staff recommended the approval of item numbers 5,6,7,8, and 12 and the rejection of item numbers 9 and 10. Bill Cawthorne stated items 9 and 10 are regarding the moisture barrier and grading should correct that. Vice Chairman Threadgill motioned to approve the recommendation from staff for items 5. Replace all acoustical ceiling tiles throughout the facility, 6. Remove chair rail throughout, repair walls and paint, 7. Replace exterior roof gutters and downspouts, 8. Wash building exterior and sidewalks, and 12. Lower finish grades surrounding building to allow for positive drainage away from the facility and to reject items 9. Moisture test the SOG, and if needed apply negative side fluid applied vapor barrier (remediate areas testing 99% moisture readings) and 10. Moisture test the SOG, and if needed apply negative applied vapor barrier (remediate areas testing 96-97% moisture readings). Alfred McCoy seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Mr. Gregory stated the County will pay for this from the Insurance proceeds and from other contingency funds we have.

2. Approval of change order to add Coyote Circle to the 2022 LMIG Contract

Administrator Irizarry stated the change order presented today is regarding the discussion from the July 26th Meeting where the Board voted to add Coyote Circle to the 2022 LMIG contract. Staff had an estimated cost of \$45K to \$50K when it came before the Board and was discussed. The change order came in at \$63,530.88. Bill Cawthorne stated material cost had increased. The estimate was taken by using the current 2022 LMIG and two months have gone by since we asked for a new change order. Mr. Cawthorne stated basically, they are having a hard time getting cement. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated the reason this was added is because we had already voted to spend an

additional \$50K on Forrest Road and that would have been an addition to our LMIG contract. This has come in way above the \$50K and is a concern. The \$50K was already an additional amount and now we would be going up a third more. Mr. Cawthorne stated at the time there was discussion about whether or not to pave Weaver Parks Road and that was some of the trade off to save funds, but Weaver Parks Road has been paved. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated it could still be a part of next year's LMIG. Motion was made by Chairman Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to reject the change order of \$63K. All were in favor. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we need to make sure this is added to the 2023 LMIG.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of change order to add Joshua Lane and John Trammel Road to the LMIG Contract for striping

Administrator Irizarry discussed the change order for striping on Joshua Road and John Trammell Road. Striping for Joshua Road was not included in the 2020 LMIG. The paved section on John Trammell Road is 6,540' in length. Mr. Cawthorne stated Joshua Road was on the 2020 LMIG and he had failed to add striping on the LMIG. Over the years we have not typically tried to stripe subdivision streets, but we did stripe some in 2021. Mr. Cawthorne stated Commissioner Hines had some concerns about striping, so he provided some estimates on the striping. We have had some complaints on John Trammell Road, which has no striping. Public Works has added a temporary 1' center line tape to that road so that people could see to drive on the road at night. Vice Chairman Threadgill motioned to approve the striping as requested for Joshua Road in the amount of \$2,332 and John Trammell Road in the amount of \$14,388 Alfred McCoy seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Vice Chairman Threadgill wanted to make sure the Minutes included adding Coyote Circle to the 2023 LMIG.

2. Recognize Trooper First Class, Haley Jo Lucas, first female pilot in Georgia State Patrol Law enforcement

The Board recognized Meriwether County resident, Haley Jo Lucas, daughter of Public Works employee, Barry Lucas. Her mother, Vicky Lucas, serves on the Warm Springs City Council. Haley Lucas is the first female State Patrol Pilot in Georgia. Ms. Lucas graduated from Lafayette Christian Academy in May, 2013 and started college in August, 2013 where she earned her private helicopter pilots license. The following year she earned her commercial helicopter pilots license. Ms. Lucas graduated from Middle Georgia University with a B.A. in Aviation Management and was accepted to the 104th Georgia State Patrol Troopers School that started June, 2018. Ms. Lucas graduated in February 2019. Following two years of employment with the Georgia State Patrol ground unit she moved to the aviation division and after one year there she was officially transferred as a trooper pilot. She was very thankful for this opportunity to fulfill her dream. A ceremony was held at the Georgia State Patrols headquarters in Atlanta. Chairman Neely-Hadley hoped Trooper Lucas's accomplishments will inspire other young women to pursue their dreams as it was said by the Department of Public Safety. The Board recognized Haley Jo Lucas and was very proud of her accomplishments. Ms. Lucas is a lifelong resident of Meriwether County. Ms. Lucas was unable to attend today's meeting due to work. Chairman Neely-Hadley shared a story from one of the

School Teachers who said Ms. Lucas was visiting one of the schools to talk to the students and when she started to leave, all the children went to the window to see her off. The girls were so impressed that many started wearing their hair in a bun like Ms. Lucas.

3. Water & Sewerage Authority presentation of Budget for 2022-2023 FY

Larry Dunaway, from the Water & Sewerage Authority, presented their FY 2022-2023 Budget to the Board of Commissioners. Adjustments were made for the upcoming year, and they anticipate House Autry may have more water usage than they do now. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated tipping fees on the Budget are listed at \$109K @.25 per ton but the tipping fee estimate for the year reads \$900K. Mr. Dunaway explained they make their bond payment of \$57K per month with the monthly tipping fees. The Intergovernmental Agreement between the Water & Sewerage Authority and the Board of Commissioners allows them to use .25 per ton to operate. Mr. Dunaway stated they are able to do some projects with the tipping fee money. Every quarter they received approximately \$20K more than their bond payment. That is how they have extended the lines coming from Luthersville. Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to approve the Water & Sewerage Authority's FY 2022-2023 Budget. All were in favor. Commissioner McCoy stated the Water & Sewerage Authority does a great job and their work is appreciated.

4. Carolyn McKinley – Information regarding the River Trail

Carolyn McKinley reported on the Flint River Water Trail. The Water Trail has been accepted by the Georgia River Network as a designated Water Trail. This is the first trail on the Flint River in the State of Georgia. Ms. McKinley explained how the project came about. Five years ago, several people in Meriwether County that came together with others from up and down the Flint River, under the guidance of the Georgia Rural Network, to establish a River Trail. They divided into three sectors, upper, middle, and lower Flint River. The group from Meriwether County tried to get the 28-mile section, that flows through Meriwether County, established as a designated trail. Special thanks were given to all Commissioners, Administrator Irizarry, and the local team for their work on this project. The Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, under the leadership of Commissioner McCoy, has agreed to help with this effort by checking the River now and then to make sure it is clean, and debris is removed. Entry and exit points along the River have to be identified and there must be secure parking. Camping sites must also be identified. You must construct a map and a kiosk, so the map and other information is publicly displayed. The group has worked over the last two years going through all the steps. The Georgia Department of Economic Development provided funds through their tourism product development grants. The group petitioned the Georgia River Network and got it officially accepted. At that point they reached out to the surrounding Counties to encourage them to come on board with this project. Five surrounding Counties were identified when the word of this project began to spread to additional Counties. The River Trail helps those who use the River by providing information that may be needed as you cross through our section of the River. This promotes tourism, economic development and promotes environmental stewardship. A package with criteria needed has been developed to provide to any new County who wants to promote a River Trail. The Georgia River Network was very rigid to start with and now personnel has changed, and they have shifted to an entirely different mindset of rather than being the policemen of the River they are now in a more supportive and facilitative role. There is a

representative from the Georgia River Network as well as from the Flint River Keepers who attend the Water Trail meetings. Ms. McKinley provided a map to everyone and showed an award that was received at the Governor's Conference from the Georgia River Networks. Meriwether County was identified as a Water Trail Hero. The Board of Commissioners asked Ms. McKinley to display the award at the Welcome Center for all to see. Ms. McKinley provided a copy of the new rack card. The River Network expects all Counties to provide a digital way to promote and communicate information about their Water Trail since many will not be able to pick up a brochure. A website has been created for the Flint River Water Trail and Ms. McKinley shared information and a video from the website. Chairman Neely-Hadley thanked Ms. McKinley for the update and for all the work she and the team had done to get the Water Trail. Commissioner McCoy stated when they first started the project and using Lake Meriwether to help with the project he felt the draft, and they have gotten the job done. Commissioner McCoy stated Carolyn McKinley is a great service leader.

5. Request from Wargo's Pumpkin Patch to close Johnson Road on specific days and times from September 23, 2022 through November 6, 2022

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to approve the request from Wargo's Pumpkin Patch to close Johnson Road starting September 23, 2022 through November 6, 2022 on the following days and times: Fridays 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Saturdays 9:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m. and Sundays 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. All were in favor.

6. LOST Approval

Chairman Neely-Hadley stated we had a meeting a few weeks ago with our Cities and we came to an agreement on the Local Option Sales Tax. It had to be approved by the City of Manchester and now it has come before the Board of Commissioners for final approval. Administrator Irizarry stated Mr. Gay had done a very pleasant job of not only putting an issue paper together for the approval but he also provided a procedure for the files. Administrator Irizarry stated we were very fortunate to have Mr. Gay assist with this special project and for the most part it went very well. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to approve Local Option Sales Tax documents and notify the Department of Revenue of the completion of the LOST process. All were in favor. Mr. Gay reached out to ACCG and asked them to get with GMA to have Legislation come up with a formula to prevent Counties and Cities from having so much dissension regarding this procedure.

7. Request to upgrade Tax Commissioners Software to Wingap Finance Director, Bill Gregory, stated at the last meeting the Board approved an accounting software upgrade for the Tax Commissioners Office in the amount of \$14,352 from SPLOST. Since that time, the Tax Assessors Office, Tax Commissioners Office, and Mr. Gay have gone through the process of preparing the Tax Digest. Harris Software will not "talk" with the Wingap Software in the Tax Assessors office. Windgap cost \$30K, but with creative financing we can pay \$15K from SPLOST and the remainder from next year's budget. Next years budget will be \$19,500 for annual support of the Harris system. We would replace that with the \$15K. After the year is up we will be in the following fiscal year, and we will start with the regular \$15K annually. Mr. Gregory stated he could make that work pricewise. Tax Commissioner Cruse stated after looking at both systems, and after speaking with other Tax Commissioners who use Wingap they said their Tax Digest

goes much quicker because they can upload the information from the Tax Assessors Office directly to the Tax Commissioners Office. Tax Commissioner Cruse explained some issues with the current system which included uploading information, errors, and not communicating with the Tax Assessor's system. With Wingap, it would only take a few clicks to have their data. Commissioner McCoy asked how we were backing up the data and if it was inhouse as well as off site. Tax Commissioner Cruse stated Wingap will move over as many years of data as requested. There will be a daily backup of all data. Mr. Gay explained the positive aspects of having Wingap for the Tax Commissioners Office. Chairman Neely-Hadley stated this is what happens when County Offices and Constitutional Officers work together for the betterment of the County. This will be a savings for the County and make the process much easier. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill to rescind the Boards action with Harris and to contract with K&G Consulting for \$30K of which \$15K will be paid from SPLOST and remainder from the Budget. Alfred McCoy seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

8. *Change date of Public Hearing for a rezoning matter from August 23, 2022 to September 14, 2022*

Administrator Irizarry stated during the July 26, 2022 Board meeting a Public Hearing was set for a rezoning matter regarding an RV Park. That Public Hearing will need to be moved to the September 14, 2022 morning meeting. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to move the Public Hearing to September 14, 2022. All were in favor.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Irizarry congratulated Danny Stephens who has been named Interim Fire Chief. Administrator Irizarry wished him the best of luck. Administrator Irizarry stated they had processed and published the Chief and Deputy Chief positions and there had been a few changes in those Job Descriptions.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Hines – Absent

Commissioner Plant – Absent

Chairman Neely-Hadley –nothing at this time

Vice Chairman Threadgill – nothing at this time

Commissioner McCoy – Photos were shown of the River Ramp. The initial pour may begin today and will cure in the next few days. They plan to push it out into the River on Monday which will be the base of the foundation.

There was not a quorum at the Lake Meriwether Meeting last night. Live water lines have been stubbed out at the Lake Meriwether RV area. Freeze proof faucets were installed. They are working on the last details at the six new RV sites. They have to pay attention to the earthen dam. They have resurfaced the area as well as through the board launches. Commissioner McCoy stated it looks very nice.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

Stated an Executive Session was needed for Litigation and Real Estate.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Alfred McCoy and seconded by Vice Chairman Threadgill to go into Executive Session at 9:50 a.m. to discuss litigation and real estate. All were in favor. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go out of Executive Session at 10:20 a.m. All were in favor. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to go back into Regular Session at 10:24 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.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Threadgill and seconded by Alfred McCoy to adjourn at 10:24 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners
Attest: Beverly A. Thomas, County Clerk
Date: August 23, 2022

XI. NEW BUSINESS