

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Business Meeting
Administration Building
September 17, 2024, 7:00 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Traylor at 7:00 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by everyone.

3. Invocation

The invocation was given by Pastor Ann Mann

4. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Fletcher made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

5. Proclamations

Drug and Alcohol Awareness Month: Commissioner Thrash and Towaliga Accountability Court board members Ryran Traylor and Joe Reed presented a proclamation proclaiming October 2024 as Drug and Alcohol Awareness Month.

12 U Girls Fast Pitch Softball Allstar Team: Commissioner Lovett presented a proclamation to the 12 U Girls Fast Pitch Softball Allstar Team recognizing their wins Coley Park in Hampton, Georgia on June 15th-16th where they went undefeated beating both Senoia and Butts County and winning the State Title.

8U Girl's Coach Pitch Softball Allstar Team: Vice-Chair Gilles presented a proclamation to the 8U Girl's Coach Pitch Softball Allstar Team recognizing their accomplishment of becoming the 2024 USSSA coach pitch State champions.

6. Minutes Approval

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the following minutes. Vice-Chair Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Mid-Year Review Budget Workshop - July 17, 2024**
- **Workshop Minutes - August 15, 2024**
- **Regular Business Meeting - August 20, 2024**

7. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

8. New Business

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-07. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 2024-07: Sam Brooks initiated an application to change the zoning classification of the described property from AR (Agricultural Residential) to R-1 (Residential -1).

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-08. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 2024-08: Irene King initiated an application to change the zoning classification of the described property from AR (Agricultural Residential) to R-1 (Residential -1).

Vice-Chair Gilles made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-08. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 2024-09: Lamar County initiated an application to change the zoning classification of the described property from Manufacturing 2 (M2) to Agricultural Residential (AR). The board had no quorum but unofficially recommended approval.

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the Malt Beverage Package License for Luck Samy LLC. Vice-Chair Gilles seconded the motion. The alcohol license meets all of the requirements. The motion passed unanimously.

Malt Beverage Package License - Lucky Sam LLC: New application for Shezan Battiwala at 919 Veterans Parkway which will be called Magic Market.

9. Administrator's Report

September Administrator's Report:

Total Expenditures of \$832,015.44.

Total Revenues of \$405,721.85.

Total Activity for the month of August is \$4,484,673.30.

The August 2024 Cash Flow Chart is running higher than projections due to receiving LMIG and extra funding received for projects.

General Fund as of 9/11/2024 is \$2,067,759.21 includes: General Fund, Sweeping/Reserve, Recreation and Jury Script.

Special Funds as of 9/11/2024 is \$56,521.24

Capital Project Funds as of 9/11/2024 is \$3,060,360.36 includes: SPLOST III and SPLOST IV, Hotel/Motel Tax, E911 Fees, Drug Abuse Treatment and Education (DATE), and ARP.

Projects Include

- Animal Shelter: The exterior is close to being complete, the windows and doors have been installed, the plumbing has been roughed in, low voltage wiring for IT and cameras, duct work, and electrical has been installed. Painting has to be done. Sheet Rock completed and mudded.
- Completion Date for Animal Shelter will be around Mid-December.
- Received a \$1,000,000,000 for two new Fire Trucks and they should be delivered in the two few weeks.
- GADOT State Route 7 (Hwy 41) & Hwy 36; Signal at Hwy 41 and Hwy 36: waiting on the Quick Response Package in Atlanta and construction should start in 2025, Atlanta Street & State Route 7 re-route, R-Cut on State Route 7 at the new intersection, waiting on the Quick Response Package in Atlanta and construction should start in 2025.
- Update on the Solid Waste Engineering: Spoke with Conflict Attorney Amy Cowan. The engineer, Mr. Price should be available at the Solid Waste Authority in mid-October. Once he completes the initial documents he will be able to send out something to the County Authority's. They are hoping to have this ready within the next 10 days and then they will be able to negotiate certain terms. They will be some non-disclosure agreements that will need to be discussed and the Conflict Attorney Cowan said they are hoping to have something ready by mid-October.
- Update on Grants: Received Public Works Grants for Guardrails to be able to do some safety improvements. Applying for a Tire Grant. Conversation with Allen Smith Consultants regarding finding grants and applying for grants. They assisted with the Health Department grant but the grant writer awarded was with Wanda and Alvin Minks.
- Reported that LOST collections for August were \$147,651.69.
- Reported that SPLOST collections for August were \$259,087.88.
- Reported that TSPLOST collections for August were \$236,513.48.
- Reported that in the month of August AmeriPro had 300 requests, 180 transports, 88 refusals, 32 cancellations and the response time was 7 minutes and 20 minutes. Reported that Saturday was

the business day during the month of August. There were 20 automatic aid calls with Upson County.

10. Public Comment

James Hyde of 116 White Oak Drive addressed the board.

- Received a copy of the Oaths of Office from Probate Court via an Open Records Request. Stated that the Oath of Office they took is inconsistent with the law. The State law requires you take the Oath of Office and is explicitly the County Code Section 1-2-27 section D. Mr. Hyde said that is not the language in the Oath that you took. He said no fear, the Good Faith Clause in Georgia, you in Good Faith took the Oath in Good based on what was put in front of you assuming the legal minds of the County new what they were doing. Mr. Hyde said that now that they know, it will be a crime if you continue to function as Commissioners without taking the proper Oath.
- Attended the meeting on the I-75 Development project. Mr. Hyde said he along with many others have fled County after County because of this very thing. They are not fooled by the dollar signs. Yes, the estimate they are going to contribute is 21 million dollars but that burns the County's budget. He asked if they are going to eliminate taxes altogether and asked if they are willing to sign a contract that states if you do not reduce the taxes by 50 percent you will pay the rest of it. Mr. Hyde said he lived in Clayton and Henry County and fled for the same reason. He said his taxes never went down one cent. They brought in a lot of revenue but there is always a need for it somewhere else. Mr. Hyde reminded the Commissioners that they are bound to the will of the people per the Constitution of the State of Georgia. Mr. Hyde asked the Commissioners, before they cast a vote in favor, to be sure they have the constituents backing. He said he has heard comments where people are in favor and said he is not. Mr. Hyde said they do not need anymore warehouses. He said five miles up the road on Exit 205 there are two million square feet of vacant warehouses. He heard there are two maybes from the Commissioners. He said they should not agree to this until they have signed contracts in hand with 25 year leases guaranteeing income otherwise the vacant warehouses will sit there polluting the County. You do get property tax off of this but no one is spending money and there is no revenue anywhere else.

Elaine Hallada of 131 Steeple Chase Redbone addressed the board.

- Thanked County Administrator Townsend for the update on the engineering audit.
- Requested that during Round Table they could be given information on how much was paid to the Conflict Counsel. In the very beginning when it started, the Conflict Counsel was to remedy the problem about who was supposed to vote and who was not supposed to vote as Commissioners on anything to do with the Solid Waste Authority. They have never been given the answer to this question. She understood they may have discussed this in Executive Session and call it legal or whatever but they have to remember the citizens are paying for it and should be the citizens of the County who get the answer.

Donald Hartman of 507 Milner Road addressed the board.

- Thanked County Administrator Townsend for the update on the engineering audit.
- Complained about the railroad tracks on Old Milner Road next to Grain Craft. He saw someone from Grain Craft with a shovel filling up the ruts. Complained about the debris from trash and timber from Langdale Lumber. Complained about the traffic.
- Reported he saw someone with a metal roller with a magnet looking for nails. Requested to work with the Railroad regarding this right of way issue.
- Requested that no hasty decision be made on the upcoming Project on I-75. Requested that they use common sense. Requested to have a traffic study.

Mike Maddox 120 Magnolia Drive addressed the board.

- Agreed with Mr. Hyde and said they will never see taxes come down. He said warehouses are good for him and that is what pays for his retirement. He said it is a good thing because you have a developer from Henry County to come down here to do it. He said 90 percent of the operation will be automative and they will not need to many employees which takes money from the people.
- Thanked Commissioner Fletcher for attending the Lamar County Board of Education meeting. He said that 1 percent of the students from this County scored 100 percent on the milestone testing. There were three or four students that scored a 4 in 4 subjects. Mr. Maddox said this reminds him of what Georga Bulldog graduates call Georgia Tech graduates which is boss.
- Asked if the warehousing will be cross docking. Will they store the stuff at the warehouse or will they cross dock it and ship it out? If not, they will have to store it at the warehouse and they will have to have racking and employees to do it, which means more traffic .
- Inquired about the water and sewage with Butts County and asked if Lamar County has to pay Butts County for this? Is the ones leasing the building paying for the water and sewage?
- Stated it needs to be thought out to make it best for the people in the surrounding areas.

Bonnie Martin of 626 Piedmont Road addressed the board.

- Stated she has not made a decision about the Legacy 75 project.
- Stated she is a transplant from Henry County, Fulton and Clayton County. She taught in Clayton County and lived in Henry County. Progress ran her out of these counties and they need to be careful what they do with this.
- Stated the tax revenue of over 21 million dollars annually sounds phenomenal but it needs to be investigated further because it could cost the County more money in the long run.
- Stated that the Q&A meeting answered important questions but it also brought up other concerns. The project is close to I-75 on both sides of the exit but the trucks have to get on and off the exits. With the projected 100,000 in and outs daily, this really will clog traffic up for residents that go across the interstate and will clog up the flow of traffic. This will impact the whole County. To prove her point, she said it is grid lock in Henry County and she left Henry County 28 years ago because of this.
- Learned that Buck Creek goes through the center of the property and needs to be protected. It also needs to be accessible to kayakers and canoers.
- Stated that High Falls Lake needs to be put into a permanent conservation program rather than being designated as Agriculture-Residential.
- Stated that Lamar County only has three miles of land that borders I-75. They need to make sure it is developed in such a way that it keeps the Quality of Life that the residents want as well as generating the most revenue.
- Stated that warehouses will not generate as much revenue as commercial. High density resident housing will generate costly county services.
- Requested that the Commissioners not rush into approving the project and to consider all aspects of project and that they get it right before approval.

Dwight Fleming of 1011 Van Buren Road addressed the board.

- Praised the County for what they did on the shoulders of Van Buren Road. It did not make the ride smoother but it made the safety better. The bad places where people where dropping their tires off the road. Van Buren and Johnstonville roads are very narrow and when you pass someone and if they go off onto the gravel you will see a cloud of dust.
- Requested they take a lesson based on what Monroe County is doing on Fox Ankle Road. They are doing a full depth reclamation from Johnstonville North to the little Church on the right. They

are grinding up the entire surface and all of the base is mixed with soil cement and putting it back down. They are widening the pavement out to a full 20 ft. where they have 17 to 18 ft. on Van Buren and Johnstonville Road with an additional reinforced shoulder on either side. Mr. Fleming said he realized that it is costly. Requested if they do something else to Van Buren and Johnstonville Road that they do it right and do the full depth reclamation because the base on both of those roads is totally deteriorating.

11. Round Table

Commissioner Fletcher: None

Commissioner Lovett: Addressed Attorney Mayfield with a question. He said in the environment that we live in, is it absolutely necessary for people that speak to give their address. Would it be appropriate for them to just give their name and the County they live in? County Attorney said that the Public Comment is a list that is part of the minutes. Commissioner Lovett said he has heard of other Counties that do not require them to give their address. He said that some of what they are about to go into with Legacy 75 may be volatile. Commissioner Lovett thanked Planning and Community Development Director Buice for hosting the Q&A with the developers from Legacy 75. He said this project is proposed in the District he represents so if anyone has a question or a comment he encouraged them first to see their District Commissioner but always feel like they can come see him anytime to discuss the pros and cons of what is going on and they will absolutely take their advice.

Commissioner Gilles: None

Chairman Traylor:

- Gave kudos to Planning and Community Development Director Buice for having the Q&A for the Legacy 75 project. She did all the research finding out how it should be done; should they do a Special Called Meeting, or a Workshop Meeting. Chairman Traylor thanked her for holding her cool, even when Sheriff White had to address the citizens. Chairman Traylor said he talked to a lot of people who made comments that lived in Butts County and some lived in Monroe County but the entire time she controlled the meeting well and he appreciated her doing that.
- Chairman Traylor announced that this weekend is Buggy Days and is a great time to get together with family and friends but it also a time where people can visit the community, buy gas, and spend money that will bring in tax dollars.
- Chairman Traylor encouraged people to come out to the Car show on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and then some of the participants from the Car Show will be in the Buggy Days parade. He said if someone has a car whether it is an antique or not they are welcome to bring it to the Car Show. The registration is free. Chairman Traylor said he and his son sponsored the Car Show last year with 65 cars in the rain. Currently there are 40 cars registered.
- Chairman Traylor announced that the Barnesville-Lamar County Christmas Parade will be held on December 14th, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. He said that Commissioner Thrash had an idea four years ago of creating the Christmas Parade along with the 100 year Centennial for Lamar County. The Christmas Parade has grown each year and participants can either ride on a float or a golf cart.
- Chairman Traylor reported the grass cutting went from being in house to being contracted out. They started with 2 mowings per year and moved to having 3 mowings per year. The cost per County Administrator Townsend is around \$266,000.00. Chairman Traylor reported that Public Works Director Rigdon said the mowing contractor will take off a month to ensure the grass is cut low in the winter. That will be the last cut for the year. Chairman Traylor announced that the Lamar Arts has artwork from local artist in the Administration Building hallway and is available to be seen or purchased during regular business hours. The artwork is seasonal and will be rotated out.

12. Adjournment and Executive Session

Vice-Chair Gilles made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business to go into Executive Session for litigation at approximately 7:58 p.m. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board came out of Executive Session. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business Meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m. Vice-Chair Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Ashley Gilles, Vice-Chair

Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk