

Meeting Summary
Workshop Meeting
Lamar County Board of Commissioners
6/6/2023
10:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on May 11th, 2022. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson. The meeting was recorded and available via Zoom.

The board heard a presentation from James Daniel, the subdivision developer for Coffee Road. The subdivision was established in 1972, and the County adopted the road as a dirt road. Coffee Road is a County road that has not been maintained in several years. The County paved around 185 ft., and then they stopped. The unpaved portion of the road is dirt and grass. There were originally twenty-two lots in the subdivision, and six lots were sold. Mr. Daniel has 16 lots, five through twenty, that are available. The homes could sell for approximately \$400,000.00. He explained that the water line comes up Coffee Road and turns down Johnston Road, and they will need to be extended. The County will need to provide the right of way and water line approval for the extension. The lots are on a septic system. Mr. Daniel asked the board whether they wanted him to finish paving the road or if they wanted him to donate the money to the County and let them pave the road. The board agreed for Mr. Daniel to finish paving the unfinished road during the subdivision process of building new houses and bring it back to the board for maintenance approval. Mr. Daniel noted that it would be in the best interest of everyone to improve the road and bring it up to standard with nice homes. He stated that houses in the Needleleaf subdivision are now selling for over \$300,000.00. Chairman Traylor said that neighbors in his subdivision were complaining about the property taxes, and he explained to them that the influx in growth has led to the increase. The neighbors then turned around and told him they might sell their house for more money and move to the beach if this was the case.

The Lamar County Health Department regulates food trucks, and they set the fees for food trucks, and the Board of Commissioners will need to reaffirm the fees. The fees are \$50.00; if they go out on inspection, it is \$100.00. The Health Department fees will be added to the County fee schedules for the board to approve. The County fees for food trucks will be \$100.00 every Monday and every day of the year except during festivals. The fee that they had been paying was \$25.00 every two weeks. The license for a brick-and-mortar is based on population and typically starts at \$100.00. In Transient Selling, Church and Recreation fundraisers are exempt from fees.

County Administrator Townsend presented the Lamar County Emergency Medical Services (EMS Mutual Aid Agreement between Lamar County and Pike County. He noted that the agreement has non-emergency instead of emergency, so they are working on updating it to emergency only.

Vice-Chair Thrash stated that, in her opinion the Right of Way Mowing crew is not working. She realizes that they are saving on having employees and equipment, but they are not getting the job done. They are not cutting enough so that the citizens are not complaining. This is one of the top three complaints that she gets from the citizens. Vice-Chair Thrash suggested that they hire a crew and purchase more equipment to handle the grass-cutting full-time. Vice-Chair Thrash said that when she was first elected, the County contracted with the State, and the female inmates picked up the trash. This economy cut in 2008-09 was never picked back up. She said she is not saying that the Right of Way Mowing crew is not doing a good job, but they are not giving the citizens the services they deserve. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they cut the North end of the County last, and then the South side

needs cutting again. She suggested they put a Public Works crew in place because she understands why people throw their bud lights out the windows and there is trash everywhere.

Chairman Traylor stated that staffing is the issue. County Administrator Townsend said that the Public Works crew could only cut once or twice a year, and the contracted Right of Way Mowing crew is mowing and picking up trash three times a year. He stated that the Public Works crew mowed but did not pick up trash. The Right of Way Mowing and Trash pickup cost around \$66,000.00 per cut and trash pickup. Vice-Chair Thrash asked if they could put this job under the Maintenance Department. County Administrator Townsend stated that the Maintenance Department handles the mowing for all the County buildings. Chairman Traylor suggested County Administrator Townsend create a spreadsheet of employees and equipment costs for in-house mowing and trash pickup. County Administrator Townsend said that the total cost for the Right of Way Mowing and Trash Pickup is around \$266,000.00 for three times a year.

The board reviewed the Regular Business meeting agenda.

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation

There was a discussion about the invocation. Commissioner Fletcher said he would contact the Pastor of the Church close to Eady Creek Road. County Clerk Davidson stated that she would handle contacting them if he would send her the contact information. Commissioner Lovett said that Tax Assessor Haddock should have a list of Churches in Lamar County. He suggested that they send a letter inviting them to do the invocation. Vice-Chair Thrash suggested that the Pastor giving the invocation give a brief history of their Church or something they have going on in their Church. County Clerk Davidson stated that the Pastoral Association is where she used to pull from for the invocation, but it was suggested that they start inviting other people, such as Major Holmes, to give the invocation. There is always someone to give the invocation unless they do not show up, and then a Commissioner can provide the invocation. Chairman Traylor said he would send a letter to the Churches in Lamar County.

4. Chairman Traylor stated that Vulcan is paving on Hwy 36 tonight and tomorrow. They will begin selling rocks on June 19th, 2023. They have gotten permission from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the trucks to turn right in and right out of the property. Vulcan contacted the Road Department and GDOT, and neither had a map, so they are looking for guidance for the trucks to move forward without having a map. They will need a map or guidance of all the no-thru truck roads. They will need guidance that will take them back to I-75. Chairman Traylor said they would go down to Morgan Dairy, turn on Barnesville Road, and circle back around. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the trucks could not go down Morgan Dairy Road if they were loaded. She said that if you force them to turn right, you are forcing them to have an alternative to get back on Hwy 36 to get to I-75. Vice-Chair Thrash said if they would turn right on Morgan Dairy Road and then try to make the U-turn, they would end up having an accident or stuck trucks. Public Works Director Rigdon joined the meeting via conference call and said that this has always been an issue. They will try to go down Van Buren Road and Chappell Mill to Hwy 36 if they do not stop them. They usually go down High Falls Park Road, but it is temporarily closed. Public Works Director Rigdon said he had had no phone calls or communication with Vulcan, so he does not know who they spoke to. Van Buren Road has signs that state No Thru Trucks. He said that in the Lamar County Code Book, there is a list of all of the No Thru Truck Roads.

Sheriff White joined the meeting via conference call. Sheriff White stated that their only option was to go to Morgan Dairy Road, take Barnesville Road, and come back out left on Hwy 36. Commissioner Lovett said they are killing two roads from a trucker's perspective. He said that from a safety standpoint, there is a curve on Barnesville Road. Vice-Chair Thrash said they could make the trucks go down to the Hwy 36 By-Pass, but it will cost the truckers more money. Sheriff White said that they would not do this.

Chairman Traylor requested a cost estimate for Public Works to put signs out saying No Thru Trucks behind the stop signs. He said that they cost around \$67.00 per sign. Chairman Traylor said that Vulcan might cover this cost. Public Works Director said Barnesville Road and Morgan Dairy Road are not on the No Thru Truck Road list. Vice-Chair Thrash said that trucks could not travel on Morgan Dairy Road loaded. Public Works Director Rigdon said this is not in the Lamar County Code book.

Commissioner Lovett said that Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church on Hwy 36 has a large area in the back of the Church that the trucks could turn around. He suggested that Vulcan could come in and gravel the area and create a parking lot for the Church in return for the use of their services. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the GDOT Commissioner wanted to put a roundabout in that location about seven or eight years ago but could not. Commissioner Lovett said if they could get a temporary entrance, that is not on their graveled parking lot, they could do a roundabout behind the Church. Vulcan would make the agreement with the Church.

Chairman Traylor stated that he did not realize how difficult this would become and said he would speak to Public Works Director Rigdon offline. He said they might have to go down to the Hwy 36 By-Pass, and they could be subject to tickets and fines if they did not follow Vulcan's map. Chairman Traylor requested a cost for detour signs and no-thru truck traffic signs.

4. Approval of Agenda
5. Minutes Approval
 - i. Workshop Minutes May 11th, 2023
 - ii. Regular Business Meeting May 16th, 2023
 - iii. Special Called Meeting May 23rd, 2023
6. Ordinance 2023-07 Robert and Alice Beachamp-Rezoning from Agriculture-Residential to Residential 2-Tax Map 007, Parcel 124

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said the Public Hearing will begin at 6:00 p.m. This is a rezoning on Martin Dairy Road for Robert and Alice Beachamp. The original house near Martin Dairy Road, where they raised their family, was sold to another family when they built their retirement home on the other side of the pond. The family in the Beachamp's original home has a family member who wants to build beside them. They are asking to rezone two acres, and the road frontage goes down to the pond on Martin Dairy Road. They are requesting to rezone from Agriculture-Residential (A-R) to Residential 2 (R-2) so a grandparent can move beside the family. They have a centennial farm where they have been on the property for over 100 years.

7. Ordinance 2023-8 Alphonzo and Mary Watson-Rezoning from Agriculture to Commercial 2-Tax Map 086, Parcel 044

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said they made this zoning request last year and could not make the meeting, so they withdrew it. This is on High Falls Road, where a lot of property is already zoned commercial. A truck parking lot is beside them, and the area is a mix of industrial and commercial zoning. The Watsons do not live in Lamar County and

want to rezone the property to commercial to help sell it. Vice-Chair Thrash said she did not like cart blanche zoning and would like them to sell the property without rezoning. Commissioner Lovett said that most of the area is commercial, and there is so little commercial zoning on the interstate that he would like anything up there to be zoned commercial. Vice-Chair Thrash said they could put conditions on the property, such as no gas stations. Vice-Chair Thrash withdrew her concerns. Commissioner Lovett said that this would be an excellent spot for a gas station, and they could get fuel tax revenue. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this was an example of a condition.

8. Resolution 2023-06 Ivan Minks-Thousand Hills Cattle Ranch-Special Exception in Agriculture-Agritourism and Retail Sales-Tax Map 027-Parcel 034

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said that the Minks had processed their own organic cattle for many years and could not do organic anymore. In Agriculture, you can sell products raised on your property without special permission from the County. They have partnered with other farms and have already built and stocked a farm store on the property. They have since found out that when they bring in other products from other farms, they are required, under the new zoning ordinance, to apply for Agritourism on the Large Scale. They have been selling, but they were not aware of the change so they want to comply with the code.

Chairman Traylor asked if there were others like this in the County. Ms. Buice said that Honeywood Farms is like this, but the ordinance differs. They pulled a few acres around their farm store and went to commercial zoning. The ordinance is zoned now, and you can do that without a rezoning to commercial but with a Special Exception. Ms. Buice said this makes more sense because you would want to avoid random commercial zoning in that area. If they sell the farm, it reverts to Agriculture, and the Special Exception disappears. Rezoning never goes away unless you go through the process again. Commissioner Lovett said he is a huge advocate of farm-to-table and moving away from industrial food; this is a good industry for the community. Ms. Buice said the application fee is \$300.00 for the Special Exception, and a Business License is required for anything Large Scale Agritourism. That cost is \$125.00 a year.

Commissioner Gilles inquired about the difference between Small and Large Scale Agritourism. Ms. Buice said that there are differences, but what the Minks are doing is related to selling products outside of their home and from other farms. It is all retail sales.

9. Resolution 2023-07 Verizon Wireless-Special Exception in Agriculture-Residential to place wireless telecommunication facility-Lamar County Line Road-016-04210.

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) said that this is for a cell tower on County Line Road. Vice-Chair Thrash said that it is on a wooded lot, and you will not be able to see much of the cell tower from the road. Ms. Buice said that cell phone companies did not like to show you their coverage areas years ago, but now they show the coverage area maps. Chairman Traylor said that a person had an issue years ago, and they ended up tabling the cell phone tower request. Ms. Buice said it was approved, but the cell tower was not constructed. One of the residents close by said that she picked up interference from a cell tower on her hearing aids. She had implants, and she could not explain why it was happening. Ms. Buice said that FCC has strict regulations on when you can say no to approving a new cell tower, but it is very limited. There have been no calls or issues with this cell tower request. Vice-Chair Thrash spoke to a neighbor across the street from the cell tower location on County Line Road, and they had no problem with the request. Vice-Chair Thrash said in the past, people had issues with radiation from cell towers, and a lot of research went into the approval process. They discovered that you get more radiation from a microwave oven than from a cell tower.

Vice-Chair Thrash requested that they put a repeater on this cell tower because Hog Mountain is the only one in the County. County Administrator Townsend said that there is one on High Falls Park Road. He said that the repeater on that cell tower is around 280 feet.

10. Administrator's Report

Reported that he has two Request for Proposal (RFP) out for bid; a Roofing bid for the Courthouse and the Animal Shelter. He is working with the roofing contractor, Charlie Hearn, on the specs for the Jail so that they can bid and put it out to bid.

Reported that they are installing new glass front windows and doors in the new Administration Building. They are scheduled to put the temporary units in by the end of the week so that they can put in floors, cabinets, doors, and tiles. He will be meeting with the locksmith tomorrow. The new panels will be installed in the back. Received bids for the concrete pads. Waiting on bids for the metal, which will be painted black.

Reported that Ameripro had 272 responses in May with 164 transports. The average time was 8 minutes and 16 seconds.

Working with the City of Barnesville on High Falls Park Road. They have agreed to move the waterline to raise the culvert according to the recommendation from EXP.

Reported that last year they voted to update the County's financial software program. The process for the migration started yesterday and all of the Administrative staff will be busy with the migration for the next 4 to 8 months. There may be some finance reporting that are late due to the updates.

County Clerk Davidson reported on the Scanning Project with MCCI. The Administration staff reviewed all the records, which was a team effort. Everyone from the County Administrator's and County Clerk's Office, Finance Department, Human Resource/Payroll, Tax Assessors Office, and the Planning and Community Development Office contributed their records to be scanned. All of the documents were reviewed before keeping or shredding. Before the beginning of this project, a Summer Intern from the ACCG Summer Intern Grant program was hired to create a State of Georgia retention manual. They followed the Retention Manual and checked for updates on retentions with the State. County Clerk Davidson and all of the Administration staff went through all of the current and old records and determined which records to keep and which to shred based on the retention schedule. A record of destruction was also recorded. They brought assistance from the Public Works Department to box up the records to be kept and those that they determined could be shredded. After many months, the shredding process was complete, and the records were boxed and labeled to go to the MCCI scanning facility in Atlanta. If a record was needed, a request to the MCCI scanning team could be made and returned to the County Clerk. MCCI scans the records in an optical character recognition (OCR) format so that the record can easily be searched. The records were also scanned so that it appears you are looking at the live record. The previous board voted in 2022 to allow the electronic record to be the original document. To date, 176 out of 204 boxes of records have been scanned, uploaded, and downloaded into the MCCI scanning program.

Chairman Traylor reported on the septic system issue at the new Animal Shelter location. Initially, the hold up on the animal shelter was that the Environmentalist, Eric Cooper (Mr. Cooper) for the Lamar County Health Department could not find virgin soil. This soil was put there when they planned to build a Fire Station in this location. The soil would not perk, so they discovered they would have to purchase a costly system. They went back out and looked at the soil closer to the arena. They found virgin soil but Mr. Cooper put the usage at 48000 gallons a day; County Administrator Townsend noted that it was not a water park. So, they set up a

meeting and used a committee that gathered information from around the surrounding counties, even calling on counter partners. Mr. Cooper wanted to split the usage in half, but the surrounding counties only use 600 to 700 gallons of water a day in their animal shelters. After many conversations, he dropped it down to 600 gallons a day. The book that he used says that a washer uses 500 gallons of water a day, and two employees use 250 gallons of water a day. Chairman Traylor said it was not that he was overestimating this, but he was using the data that he had been given. Chairman Traylor said that the shelter will be green by rinsing and not washing down stalls, picking up heavy poop, and doing all of these things to reduce water. He said they are now having to determine if they have to have a pump because the water goes up the bill.

County Administrator Townsend announced the bid package for the Animal Shelter is on the website, the legal organ, the Georgia Procurement Registry, and the Georgia Local Access Market Place through the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG). Chairman Traylor requested that County Administrator Townsend share how local vendors are chosen. County Administrator Townsend said if they receive a bid within five percent, they can negotiate with the local vendor and bring their bid down to the lowest bid. Commissioner Gilles said that they could accept the bid if it is within the five percent range. Chairman Traylor said that this helps the local vendors to put in a bid. He said that when he became a Commissioner, they had no local vendors bidding, and they were all coming from out of County.

11. Public Comment

Chairman Traylor requested an agenda item to include Commissioner's Comments so they can address anyone who speaks during Public Comment. He said the time limit will now be three instead of four minutes for someone to speak during Public Comment.

12. Round Table

Commissioner Lovett stated that some awards for Park and Recreation Grants from the State and Lamar County were missed. They were due in November, and he wanted to know how the process for Grants works. He said Upson County received 1.46 million dollars with a \$100,000.00 cash match, Butts County received 4.4 million dollars, and Spalding County received 9.35 million dollars. Commissioner Lovett said that he is proactive about Lamar County's Park and Recreation, and he feels very foolish trying to get Elaine Hallada to help him do several thousand-dollar fundraisers to re-do some bathrooms when all three surrounding counties received multi-million dollar grant packages. He said that our State Representatives, both Beth Camp and David Knight, helped Spalding and Upson County with their grants. The Spalding County newspaper congratulated Representative David Knight for helping them to receive the grant. Commissioner Lovett asked if there was a list of grants from the State. He said that as a district representative, his job is to make sure that as little money as possible flows out of there and then get all of it back as you can. Commissioner Lovett said this was a huge miss for Lamar County because the County needs that money. Commissioner Lovett said that moving forward, if Federal and State money does not have a significant cash match, he wants to ensure we get it. Chairman Traylor said that the Departments need to look for these grants. He said he knows they do not have an active Grant Writer on staff. He said that he and County Administrator Townsend are meeting with companies that can start looking for grants. Commissioner Lovett said that he is passionate about economics and suggested that they get in contact with these companies. He also wanted to know what to do about the State Representatives that helped the other counties but not Lamar County, and to say he is angry is a mild statement. Vice-Chair Thrash said David Knight did not carry Lamar County in the last election. County Administrator Townsend suggested that they look at the projects they want to complete to do some engineering and have a plan. He said that on Hwy 36, they have a piece of property that they need to work on swapping. When they sell the current Administration Building, he is looking at doing a land

swap, and he wants to do a lottery with the local real estate agents as to who gets the sale. Commissioner Gilles inquired about ACCG and their involvement with grants. Vice-Chair Thrash said this is the benefit of someone serving on the Board of Managers.

Chairman Traylor requested that everyone send County Clerk Davidson their picture and biography. He said it bothered him when they took the pictures and did not put them out there. He admitted he had not submitted his either. Chairman Traylor requested that they be submitted before the next Regular Business meeting.

Chairman Traylor stated that he sent out an email regarding the Youth Commission. He said that it is in the talking point stages, and they could purchase tee shirts for the group of 10 to 12 students. He said that the goal is to get community sponsors. In Monroe County, Georgia Power is the sponsor for their Youth Commission. Commissioner Fletcher said that the surrounding counties are giving supplements such as money for transportation, food, and snacks. Commissioner Gilles suggested that this could be done through a grant with Give365. Chairman Traylor said that this would be something great to give back and educate the youth of Lamar County and exploit their minds.

Commissioner Lovett inquired about how much the Youth Commission program would cost. Commissioner Fletcher said that surrounding counties give each student around \$750.00 to \$1,000.00 supplement per year, including donations. Commissioner Fletcher said it should cost less than \$15,000.00, and Chairman Traylor said that he was considering the cost to be less than \$2,000.00 to get it started. Commissioner Lovett requested that they send him a sponsorship letter to his company.

Vice-Chair Thrash congratulated the County Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). They now have a program representing all the kids in 159 counties. Commissioner Lovett inquired about the 2.5 percent, the 50 percent of the 5 percent of the Victim's Advocate Program. County Administrator Townsend said the funds will need to be reallocated. He has a line item in the budget, but the Commissioners will need to vote on this in the Regular Business meeting. Chairman Traylor requested that the agenda item be called Reallocation of the Victim's Advocate Funds.

Chairman Traylor announced that there would be a Town Hall meeting for the Republican Party located at Hidden Haven Estate on Van Buren Road on June 8th, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

13. Executive Session

- i. Real Estate
- ii. Litigation
- iii. Personnel

14. Adjournment

Commissioner Gilles made a motion at approximately 11:57 a.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

Jarrold Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk