



You Are Why We Are Here

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
November 30, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

BOC: Chairman Dr. Jason K. Macomson
District 1 Commissioner Robert Franklin
District 2 Commissioner Kyle Foster
District 4 Commissioner Eddie Wester

Absent: District 3 Commissioner Ryan Swails

Media: Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen Leader
MJ Kneiser, WLHR via zoom

Staff: County Manager, Derrick Turner
County Clerk, Kayla Finger
Tax Commissioner, Bobby Martin

Item 1: **Call meeting to order** - Chairman Macomson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Chairman Macomson announced that the county was saddened to learn of former Lavonia Mayor Ralph Owens' passing. He asked everyone to join in a moment of silence for Mr. Owens' family.

Item 2: **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance** - Commissioner Wester led the invocation and pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

Item 3: **Approval of the Agenda** - Commissioner Foster motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. All were in favor, 3-0.

Item 4: **Public Comment:** None.

Item 5: **Personnel:** No update at this time.

Item 6: **Items for discussion**

A. Gateway Park Distributions - Tax Commissioner Bobby Martin addressed the board regarding the portion of property taxes distributed to Franklin County as part of the Gateway Industrial Park Project with Hart and Stephens County. Mr. Martin reviewed



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a brief history of the intergovernmental agreement originally signed in 2000 to give context to the board. According to the agreement, Hart County should be collecting the taxes from the properties within the park on behalf of the group and distributing them based on each county's investment. Franklin County originally contributed only 25% and Hart County's was 75%. According to Mr. Martin's notes the last distribution Franklin County received was in 2016 and was only at 9.2%, showing that Franklin County's share has greatly diminished. A check in the amount of \$10,671.80 was remitted to Franklin County for taxes collected in the years 2007-2010. Mr. Martin had several discussions with then- Hart County Tax Commissioner Lynn Allen and Former County Manager Billy Morse. Mr. Martin was directed to give the check to Mr. Morse.

The next instance involved then-Tax Commissioner Pierce asking who to make the next disbursement payable to. Then-County Manager Beth Thomas discussed the matter with Mr. Martin and instructed checks be made payable to the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, and subsequently sent a letter to the Hart County Tax Commissioner, Mr. Pierce detailing these instructions. Mr. Martin expressed that he believed that the checks should've been directed to the Tax Commissioners Office for distribution. The Board voted last year to cut a check in the amount of \$129,477.77 in disbursement funds based on the millage rate of each entity in its respective year. The initial payment of \$10,671.80 was not included in this amount and has not yet been disbursed. Mr. Martin referenced a memo from June 4, 2020 stating Hart County was able to confirm the check was written to the board of commissioners.

Chairman Macomson noted that Ms. Thomas had worked to locate more information about the \$10,671.80 check, and that the board agreed to postpone making a decision until more information could be provided and they directed all future disbursements to the Tax Commissioner's Office. Records could not be located to document the deposit of those funds.

The board reached consensus to revisit this item at the December 6th regular board meeting next Monday evening with the



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possibility of cutting a check to the Tax Commissioner's Office for the \$10,671.80.

Mr. Martin and Franklin County Superintendent Chris Forrer revisited the issue of the original investment in the project dropping from 25% to about 9.2%. There is also the question of what properties in the industrial park are actually in Franklin County. The board reached a consensus to have the county manager have the county attorney to review the original intergovernmental agreement to determine if renegotiation is possible and if the original agreement provides for a termination clause. Manager Turner stated there was a possibility for termination within the contract. The board also reached a consensus to discuss this matter at a future joint meeting with the Hart County Board of Commissioners.

- B. Industrial Building Authority Update - Commissioner Foster serves as the board's liaison for the IBA. At the IBA's November meeting Clinical Research Labs will be closing on the property on December 3rd and will be coming to the industrial park in Carnesville. They are estimated to bring 150 jobs to the area. Signage for the industrial park in Carnesville was also discussed. There were delays on materials and fabrication, but the project remains ongoing. IBA Director, Tonya Powers also announced that there are four more projects ongoing, but that is all the information that could be released at this time.
- C. Qualifying Fees 2022 Elections - Chairman Macomson announce that the board will need to approve a resolution setting the qualifying fees for the elected offices coming up for election/re-election in 2022. Staff provided the board with a proposal keeping the qualifying fees the same as they were for the years 2018 and 2020, at a rate of 3% of the base salary for each office. Chairman Macomson explained that qualifying fees are paid by each candidate when they qualify for a seat at the beginning of the election period. The fees are then split in half, between the county and the political party of the respective candidate. There are five seats up for election in 2022: Board of Commissioner posts for District 3 and District 4, the base salary for each BOC



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post is \$7,200.00, and 3% of the base salary is \$216.00; and Board of Education posts for seats 3, 4, and 5, the base salary for each BOE post is \$1,200.00 and 3% of the base salary is \$36.00. The board agreed to keep the qualifying fee at 3%, and vote on the proposed resolution at the next regular board meeting.

- D. Budget Modifications - Manager Turner presented the board with a resolution proposing budget modifications for the FY21 budget. The budget modifications are required by law and are necessary to complete the audit for FY21. Rushton will be presenting the FY21 audit findings to the board at next regular board meeting. Commissioner Wester motioned to approve the proposed budget modification resolution for FY21 for the Chairman to sign. Commissioner Foster seconded the motion. No further discussion. All were in favor, 3-0.
- E. Fire Department Training - Commissioner Wester addressed the board with a request for a letter to be written to our state representatives explaining the ongoing issues many volunteer firefighters are facing with increasing state mandated training hours. Volunteer firefighters are already strained with the everyday responsibilities of their day jobs and family life. It is hard to maintain balance and find time to complete the additional training. Commissioner Wester asked that the letter be written with the joint efforts of the board of commissioners and the fire fighter's association. Commissioner Wester asked that the letter be sent out before the next legislative session in January.

Item 7: Manager's Report:

A. Audit - Manager Turner reiterated that a representative from Rushton & Associates will be at the meeting Monday night to present the findings of the audit for FY21. He also thanked finance staff for their hard work on completing the audit in a timely fashion.

Item 8: Announcements:

Manager Turner announced four open positions on the Recreation



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Board. These positions will be advertised for 30 days and applications can be submitted the county clerk, Ms. Finger. Mr. Turner also thanked all volunteers, staff, and community partners who helped out with the Hometown Heroes event.

Chairman Macomson thanked county staff for their hard work organizing the Hometown Heroes event. He also thanked Richard Roberts for helping organize, promote, and raise funds for the memorial plaza, including the Blue and Gold Star By-ways, which are beautiful and important additions to the memorial. He also thanked the board of commissioners for their leadership in approving and funding the Veterans Memorial Plaza. The Veterans Memorial Plaza has greatly enhanced the courthouse appearance. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, he also thanked former Chairman Thomas Bridges and former County Manager Beth Thomas for their important contributions to the memorial plaza. The county has had four public events this year, including the dedication of the recreational gymnasium in honor and memory of Mr. Mayfield, the Memorial Day Service, the 911 Memorial Service, and the Veterans Day Service and Event (Hometown Heroes event). The county has reached out this year to bring the county together to celebrate these important events, and the board is grateful to Mr. Turner and the rest of the county staff for spearheading these events. It is the hope of the board that in the coming year we will continue to promote and hold these types of events.

Chairman Macomson reminded everyone that the board will meet next for a public hearing and regular board meeting next Monday beginning at 5:30 pm at the Franklin County Justice Center.

Commissioner Wester thanked everyone for their help with the Hometown Heroes event, and he thanked everyone from the community who participated.

Commissioner Foster thanked the county staff for their work with the Hometown Heroes event.

Commissioner Franklin also thanked the county staff for helping to organize the Hometown Heroes event.

Item 9: Adjournment

Commissioner Wester made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Foster gave the second. No discussion. All were in favor, 3-0.



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Signed on the 6th day of December, 2021

Jason K. Macomson
Chairman Jason K. Macomson

Robert L. Franklin
Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

Kyle Foster
Kyle Foster, District 2 Commissioner

Ryan Swails
Ryan Swails, District 3 Commissioner

Eddie Wester
Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

Kayla Finger
Kayla Finger, County Clerk