



FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
April 24, 2017
6:00 P.M.

BOC: Commission Chairman Thomas Bridges
District 1 Commissioner Robert Franklin
District 2 Commissioner Dr. Jason Macomson
District 3 Commissioner Jeff Jacques
District 4 Commissioner Eddie Wester

Media: Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen

Staff: County Manager Beth Thomas
County Clerk Elaine Evans

Item 1: Call meeting to order – Chairman Bridges called the April work session to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone and expressed his appreciation for their attendance.

Item 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Bridges asked Commissioner Jacques to give the invocation and lead the pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

Item 3: Items for discussion

A. Public Comment – Chairman Bridges asked if anyone would like to make a public comment to the Commissioners. There was no one who wished to speak.

B. Road Inventory – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the road inventory items. Mrs. Thomas said that two requests have been received by the County. The first request is from Charles Rogers for a portion of Governors Walk to be added to the Franklin County Road System. The easements for this request have been received. Mrs. Thomas said that a site visit was made and it appears that this request satisfies the current Road Policy. She asked the Commission Board to consider this request to add a portion of Governors Walk to the current roadway system. Chairman Bridges told the Commissioners to look the information over and be prepared to vote at the May regular board meeting.

Mrs. Thomas said that the second request is an abandonment request for Strawberry Lane from Paul and Sharon Laird. All of the land on Strawberry Lane is



owned by the Laird's. Mrs. Thomas said that the abandonment would require public hearings. She asked the Commissioners to consider if they would like to move forward with this request to begin the process of abandonment. Chairman Bridges said that this would be considered at the May regular board meeting.

C. LMIG Patching Bid Approval – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the LMIG patching bids. Mrs. Thomas said that the 2017 LMIG is split into two bids. The first bid included deep base patching. Bids were received from four contractors with the low bid being Stratton and Sons in the amount of \$192,000. The next closest bid was \$267,500. Mrs. Thomas said that this is a good price from Stratton and Sons and she concurs with the recommendation from the County Engineer to award the project to Stratton and Sons in the amount of \$192,000. She said that the roads to be patched are Dove Hill Road; Neal Little Road; Burroughs Road; Stone Bridge Road; and Ridgeview Drive. Mrs. Thomas asked the Commission Board to go over the information and consider giving approval for this project at the May regular board meeting. Chairman Bridges told the Commissioners to look over the information and be ready to accept or turn down on Monday night.

Chairman Bridges said that in addition to the patching there will be some resurfacing of roads for LMIG. He said that the bid opening for the resurfacing will be held on May 11. Mrs. Thomas confirmed that this will be the sealed bid opening for the second phase of the LMIG projects.

D. Board Appointments / Applications –

1. Capital Improvements Subcommittee – Chairman Bridges said that he and Commissioner Wester are a part of the Capital Improvements Subcommittee. He said that they met last week to look at ways to solve the jail overcrowding. Chairman Bridges said that his initial thought is that this should be put out before the citizens and let them help solve it by putting it on a referendum. He invited citizens to join the subcommittee, especially former grand jury members.

Chairman Bridges asked Gina Chappelle, Elections Superintendent what the deadline is for putting this on the ballot. Mrs. Chappelle said that September 1 is the deadline to put this on the ballot for November. Chairman Bridges said that if this date is not chosen then there are others. Mrs. Chappelle said that the next deadline is May 22, 2018. There are only certain elections that allow for questions on the ballot.

Commissioner Wester said that town hall meetings were discussed if this is to be taken to the citizens for a vote. The town hall meetings would be a good place to get information from the citizens along with the Commissioners and Sheriff Steve Thomas. Commissioner Wester said that the desire of the subcommittee is to get the information out to the citizens so that they are well informed before they vote.

Mrs. Thomas said that she will ask Mrs. Chappelle to post on the County website the announcement for the subcommittee. Applications will be taken over the next month using the standard board application. Mrs. Thomas said that these



applications will be given to the Clerk to compile the list for review.

Commissioner Jacques asked for clarification if this would be a non-binding referendum. He said that he is 100% in favor of putting this out to the citizens for a vote. Commissioner Jacques said that he would whole heartedly support anything that was passed by the citizens. Mrs. Thomas said that it would be non-binding as it would allow and authorize the Board to take out the debt but not obligate.

2. Planning Commission (1 resignation) – *Chairman Bridges said that there has been one resignation from the Planning Commission. He asked Mrs. Thomas to go over this further. Mrs. Thomas said that there was one resignation at this past Thursday's meeting. She said that there are several applications on file as they stay on file for one year. Applications for the Planning Commission will be taken for the next month. This will also be posted on the County's website. Mrs. Thomas said that after the one month time limit she will forward the applications to the appointment subcommittee for a recommendation to the Commission Board.*

E. Manager's Report – *Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to give the manager's report. Mrs. Thomas said that news was received this week that Franklin County has been awarded a Hazard Mitigation Grant. She said that County Engineer John Phillips and EMA Director Lyndon Burgess worked on this nineteen page grant to request two generators for the lift station. Mrs. Thomas said that these generators will be used at the current lift station but will also be used at the future waste water treatment facility. She said that the cost estimate for the generators is \$64,000. The County's portion is a 15% match which is \$9,600.*

Mrs. Thomas said that the County is in the process of preparing the Hazardous Mitigation update. She said that this is a joint project with the cities. Mrs. Thomas said that three of five meetings have been held with great participation. The cost estimate for the plan is \$24,000 which a grant was received for. The matching portion from the County is \$6,000 and can be provided in like kind services. Mrs. Thomas said that because of the participation from the various County groups this requirement will be met without any cash outflow. She expressed her thanks for this because the County is ineligible for grant monies if this is not in place.

NBC Weather Proofing Specialists worked over the Easter weekend repairing the courthouse. Mrs. Thomas said that the repairs that were done included the clock faces; dome roof juncture; vertical surfaces; flat roof; and gutters. She said that the weather proofing was done at this time but other issues have been identified. Mrs. Thomas said that she will meet with the team later this week to discuss the findings. She said that she has also requested a quote to repair the stairwell going up to the highest level of the clock tower so the that this can be monitored by County personnel.

Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas if she had a time table for price submission for the repairs. Mrs. Thomas said that she does not at this time. After meeting with NBC later this week she should have more information. In addition to the weather proofing the carpet was replaced this week in the Probation offices. Mrs.



Thomas said that the necessary repairs are being made within the budget constraints.

The telephone network for E911 communications was placed in SPLOST V. Mrs. Thomas said that EMS/E911 Director Terry Harris has been researching the options for the network. She said that the initial company that was looked at has been bought out and the County is awaiting a quote. Mrs. Thomas said that as soon as the numbers are complete she would like to move forward with this project.

Mrs. Thomas said that the final SPLOST IV amount was received in March. She said that the total amount received before any disbursements per intergovernmental agreements was 19.2 billion dollars. A resolution to declare the intent of the excess funds will be needed. Mrs. Thomas said that she will be drafting a resolution to provide to the county attorney for review. She said based on the types of expenditures she recommends that the excess funds be assigned to the Road, Highway and Public Safety categories. Commissioner Jacques asked for clarification on the excess, if this was over the 18 million projected collections. Mrs. Thomas said that it was 18.7 million and she is thankful that it came in over estimates and not under.

The projection for the end of the fiscal year cash flow given by Mrs. Thomas is that it will end positive. This is based on the financials through March and is because of better than budgeted revenue. Mrs. Thomas said that most of the departments maintain their budgets. She gave her projection of the general fund to be \$877,000 positive cash. This is before any transfers. After cash flow timing and adjustments Mrs. Thomas said that the fiscal year should end about \$300,000 positive cash flow. Of the end of fiscal year positive cash flow Mrs. Thomas said that she would like to place 25% into capital expenditures and 75% into operating reserves. Mrs. Thomas said that these investments would save the County in the next fiscal year.

Mrs. Thomas stated that the water rate increase played a major role in the transfers out. She said that based on the water performance the general fund should only have to transfer out \$50,000 which is the minimum requirement by the debt service covenants. Mrs. Thomas said that the drought may have played a part in the water performance increase. She said that non-drought years will have to be looked at and taken into consideration.

As of the end of March most departments are in budget. Mrs. Thomas said that she and the Commission Board can talk with departments as needed. She said that some budget modifications will be needed and she will present them to the Commission Board at a later time for approval. Mrs. Thomas stated that the Sheriff's Department is projected to run over budget by approximately a half million dollars and she has made Sheriff Thomas aware of this. If not for the overage from the Sheriff's Department the County would have about \$800,000 at the end of the fiscal year. Mrs. Thomas said that the majority of the overage in the Sheriff's budget is in salaries. She said that she hopes to meet with the Sheriff to discuss his budget for next year. Mrs. Thomas said that all the other departments seem to be running well.

Commissioner Jacques asked if the property tax digest has been voted on yet by



the Board of Assessors. Mrs. Thomas said that she thought they had but she does not have those numbers yet. She said that she hopes to have this information available the first of May. Commissioner Franklin asked if the timber harvest process was successful. He said that there has been a lot of timber harvesting going on. Mrs. Thomas said that the BOC staff work with the Tax Assessors office on this.

Mrs. Thomas said that the FY18 budget files have been issued to all department heads, elected officials and Boards. Budget meetings are beginning this week and will continue into next week. Mrs. Thomas said that she has invited all elected officials, boards and other organizations that the County taxes fund to present their needs and or wants to the Commission Board at any of the regularly scheduled meetings through May 5. After this the files will be assembled by Mrs. Thomas and sent to the Commissioners electronically. A copy will also be on file in the Clerk's office for citizen review. Mrs. Thomas said that there will be a May 30 public hearing, June regular meeting and the second public hearing at the June work session. She said that the Commissioners will have to vote on the budget at the June work session.

Chairman Bridges said that if any constitutional officers or department heads that need additional time he would be in favor of adding another day. Commissioner Wester said that he had two constitutional officers approach him asking for time to present their needs to the Commission Board. Commissioner Jacques said that it would be the best case to present at the work session but if additional time is needed he doesn't mind another day. Commissioner Franklin said to reach out to all of them. Dr. Macomson was in agreement.

Insurance renewal was the next topic discussed by Mrs. Thomas. She said that changes were made last year and the first five months were on target to be pretty good. Mrs. Thomas said that the claims for January and February exceeded the savings in the prior five months combined. She said that the County continues to run above an average loss run ratio, currently at 105%. This is a five year trend and any insurance carrier will lose money on the County. The largest contributor to this is the prescription cost which is running 30% of the total or \$35,000 per month. The national average for prescriptions is around 10% to 15%.

Mrs. Thomas said that the first look at plan renewal with no changes is a 23% increase at an estimated cost of \$288,000. She said that this renewal was based on 45% from the County and 55% from United Healthcare. The County benefited because it was lower than the pool from United Healthcare. Mrs. Thomas said that her goal is to keep the cost inflation to 10% or \$140,000. This can only be accomplished by changing the plan or passing the cost to the employees. She said that she would like to stay with the same carrier and with similar plans with some tweaks. Quotes were gotten from two national carriers and one regional carrier. Mrs. Thomas is still working with the broker to get the prices down and make the most reasonable plan proposal by the end of the week.

Mrs. Thomas said that 20% of the employee population is driving 80% of the insurance cost and that United Healthcare is losing money on Franklin County. She



said that the trends have stayed the same for the past five years. The changes that were made have only worked a little bit not a lot. Mrs. Thomas said that she needed to know what the Commission Board would like for the insurance to be. She said that her goal is to keep the increase at 10% which can be done by changes. The deductible would increase by \$1,000 and change the drug from a three tier co-pay to a four tier co-pay. She said that by putting the more expensive drugs into the four tier co-pay would put the expense back to the employee.

Commissioner Jacques said that his insurance is a \$1,000 deductible per person per year. He said that this is for catastrophic events. Mrs. Thomas said that insurance is a benefit and not a right. It is there for catastrophic events and not to pay for every doctor visit. She said the employees on the base plan do not pay for this and this is not seen in the private world. Mrs. Thomas said that insurance is not to pay for all costs, it is to protect in catastrophic events.

Commissioner Jacques questioned if ambulance fees have been adjusted in the FY18 budget. Mrs. Thomas said that she did her projections on the rate increase that was put into effect in April. She said based on prior data this will increase by approximately \$60,000. Commissioner Jacques asked if any consideration was given to fees for ambulance calls where no transportation was needed. Mrs. Thomas said that this could be looked at again. She said that the comparison was made against other counties. Commissioner Jacques stated that the number of calls was the reason for the addition of a supervisor unit. He said that there are between 300 to 500 calls where a transport is not done. Commissioner Jacques said that he thought there should be a fee structure for any type of call. Mrs. Thomas said who do you charge? Commissioner Jacques said that if that ambulance went to that resident it is consuming time. This is what is driving the addition of the supervisor truck which added \$200,000 to the budget. He said that would like to see this charged for. Mrs. Thomas said if the Board would like to charge for this she will present it.

Dr. Macomson said that the County should charge for services wherever possible. He said that the County should be able to clear more than the cost but this is not always possible. Dr. Macomson stated otherwise the County cannot keep providing the service. Commissioner Jacques said that eight to 10% of the calls were in this scenario with no billing. He said that some type of fee needed to be charged for these calls. It might also be possible if not for these type of calls that a supervisor unit would not be needed. Mrs. Thomas said that she would check the call volume because eight to 10% sounds really high for no transport. Commissioner Jacques said that he based this on the information that he got from the EMS Director Terry Harris. Commissioner Franklin asked what percent is written off for non-collection. Mrs. Thomas said that she would have to check the number because it is only adjusted annually. She said that she pays for ambulance services in her taxes. In case she has to use it then her insurance kicks in to help pay for it. Commissioner Jacques said that he would like the fees looked into. He said that the way that Mrs. Thomas looks at ambulance fees no one should be charged because it is in the property taxes. Mrs. Thomas said that it is insurance.



Chairman Bridges asked the Commission Board if anyone would like to make a comment before going into executive session. Commissioner Jacques said that he would like to commend the Road Department for all the slope mowing and clearing the back of the right-of-way. He said that it looks really good and has cleared up the intersections. They are doing a really good and making really good progress. Chairman Bridges said he had someone tell him that they got a fast response from the Road Department when the ditches were stopped up.

Commissioner Franklin thanked the Sheriff's Department for taking care of some issues in the Red Hill area. He said that they are doing a great job. Chairman Bridges said that he told one of the deputies that he appreciated that they are watching the roads and not using any fuel and this is a good strategy.

F. Executive Session – *Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to go into executive session. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to go into executive session to discuss land acquisition. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin; Dr. Macomson; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Jacques; and Commissioner Wester. The work session closed to go into executive session at 6:55 p.m.*

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to come out of executive session and resume the work session. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to come out of executive session and back into regular session and give the Chairman authorization to sign the closed meeting affidavit in which land acquisition was discussed. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Chairman Bridges; Dr. Macomson; and Commissioner Franklin. The work resumed at 7:12 p.m.

Chairman Bridges adjourned the work session at 7:13 p.m.



Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2017

Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

Dr. Jason Macomson, District 2 Commissioner

Jeff Jacques, District 3 Commissioner

Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

Elaine H. Evans, County Clerk