



You Are Why We Are Here

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
July 30, 2019
6:00 P.M.**

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

Media: Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen Leader

Staff: County Manager Beth Thomas
County Clerk Elaine Evans

Item 1: **Call meeting to order** – Chairman Bridges called the July work session to order and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Item 2: **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance** – Chairman Bridges led the invocation and pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

Item 3: **Items for discussion**

A. Public Comment
None.

B. Judge Ken Eavenson – court collections

Judge Eavenson came forward and gave information on the process for collections. The agency that was being used when Judge Eavenson took office in 2013 was discontinued because of several issues including cases that had warrants with mandatory appearance being in collections. Probation reform was done in 2017 and language was added "upon recommendation of the Court a local governing authority may contract for collections services". Judge Eavenson stated there are two collections vendors that are compatible with the software used at Probate Court. The vendor preference of Judge Eavenson is Perdue, Brandon, Felder, Collins and Mott, a law firm that operates a collections agency.

Judge Eavenson said after negotiations he signed a contract with Perdue, Brandon, Felder, Collins and Mott that gives him the authority to pull back to the Court anything that has been sent in error for collections and for the contract to terminate at the end of his current term. Since 2007 the outstanding fines amount is 1.3 million dollars with about half of the amount being eligible for collections. Judge Eavenson recommended the approval of the contract with Perdue, Brandon, Felder, Collins and Mott and asked for this to be placed on the August regular meeting agenda.



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Chairman Bridges asked what the charge is for this. Judge Eavenson stated there is no charge to the County. The collections firm adds a 30% fee on top of the collection amount but the full fine amount is remitted to the County. Commissioner Wester asked if this would relieve the Probate Court staff. Judge Eavenson said no, it would add more work but it is easier to work with a collection agency that interfaces with their software. The purpose of this is to hold people accountable for their actions and not to raise revenue.

C. Appointment of Ethics Board attorney

*Mrs. Thomas stated the Ethics Board has requested legal counsel be appointed for their use. The county attorney cannot serve the Ethics Board because of a conflict of interest. Mrs. Thomas said the Ethics Board has requested that Kevin Kovalchik be appointed as their attorney and be paid the hourly rate of the county's attorney in accordance with the Ethics Ordinance. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to appoint Kevin Kovalchik as the attorney for the Ethics Board. Dr. Macomson made the motion to appoint Mr. Kovalchik as the Ethics Board counsel. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Swails and Dr. Macomson.*

D. Board of Education – SPLOST/Tax Levy Resolution

*Mrs. Thomas said on July 18, 2019 the Board of Education approved its second supplemental bond resolution related to issuing general obligation bonds that is supported by ESPLOST. As part of this process it is required for the levying authority which is the Board of Commissioners to pass a resolution with language stating if the collections are not enough to cover the ESPLOST debt then a tax levy will be imposed. Mrs. Thomas asked the Board of Commissioners to approve the tax levy resolution for the Board of Education. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve the Tax Levy Resolution for the Board of Education. Commissioner Wester made the motion to approve. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Franklin, Dr. Macomson, Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Swails and Commissioner Wester.*

E. Land/building acquisition

Mrs. Thomas said at the June 3, 2019 meeting an option to purchase the LeCroy building located on the square in Carnesville was approved. This option to purchase is expiring on July 31, 2019. A Phase 1 environmental study was done on the property by GEO Hydro and the results have been received. Mrs. Thomas said their summary states based on the Phase 1 findings the potential for past or present release of hazardous or petroleum substance leading to the contamination of soil or ground water at the subject property is low and no further investigation seems warranted at this time. She then gave her recommendation for a motion be made to exercise the purchase option and authorize the Chairman to execute all closing documents for the LeCroy building in the amount of \$80,000 if it is the desire of the Commission Board. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion. Dr. Macomson made the motion



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to accept the recommendation to move forward with the purchase of the LeCroy building in the amount of \$80,000. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Swails, Commissioner Franklin, Dr. Macomson and Chairman Bridges.

F. GEFA Loan Extension

Mrs. Thomas said the County has a GEFA loan in the amount of 3.5 million dollars with \$500,000 forgiveness at the end. This loan consists of multiple projects with three ongoing ones including well developments, tank construction and an elevated tank. Mrs. Thomas said bids will be opened soon for the take down of the tank on Hwy 59 which is no longer used by the County. Because these projects are incomplete and additional water mains are to be installed the County cannot close the loan. GEFA has agreed to extend the closing date to June 2020. Mrs. Thomas asked the Commissioners to consider this for approval at the August regular meeting.

G. 2019 Millage Rate and Tax Calendar

Mrs. Thomas said the tax digest was later than usual this year and the County is on a tight timeline. The Department of Revenue is scheduled to send a representative to the County on August 23 and this will allow the tax collection date to be November 15 and will not disrupt county operations or cash flow. The Board of Education meeting will take place on August 22 at 5 p.m. The schedule presented by Mrs. Thomas has two public hearings on August 12 at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. The third public hearing and meeting for the vote will be held on August 22 at 7 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Mrs. Thomas said this is the same night as the Board of Education meeting but will give enough time for that meeting to conclude before the Board of Commissioners meetings start.

The press release and advertisement are based on taking all of the inflationary growth. Mrs. Thomas said per State Law the inflationary growth is worth 3.52% of incorporated districts and 4.25% of unincorporated districts. The millage rate is identical to last year's but the inflationary growth has to be advertised as a tax increase unless the millage rate is rolled back. Mrs. Thomas said the increase for the incorporated areas would be \$23.61 and \$25.58 in the unincorporated areas. If the decision is made to take the inflationary growth this would allow for some of the unbudgeted items such as contingency for the capital murder case and building maintenance and other requests. If the Commission Board decides not to take the inflationary growth the millage rate can be set lower when the vote is taken.

Dr. Macomson questioned what the millage rates would be if the inflationary growth was not taken. Mrs. Thomas said the rate she is recommending for the incorporated areas is the same as last year at 11.96. The roll back rate would be 11.553 which is a difference of .407. The recommended rate for the unincorporated areas is 10.813 with the roll back rate at 10.372 with a difference of .4410. Mrs. Thomas said if the inflationary growth is taken the dollar amount is an increase of \$299,621.



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H. 2019 Legislative Leadership Conference voting delegate

Chairman Bridges said ACCG asks each county to appoint a voting delegate for the Legislative Leadership Conference. He stated in the past he has served in this capacity and is willing to serve again or to pass along to someone else. Commissioner Wester said he is pleased with the job Chairman Bridges has done and would be glad for him to serve again. Chairman Bridges said this will be on the August regular board meeting agenda.

I. Road report

Road Superintendent Nick Johnson came forward and thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to share information. Earlier this year KCI was asked to assess all the County's paved roads from information provided by County staff. Each road was assessed and given a grade based on the signs of stress the pavement was showing. Mr. Johnson said the roads were broken down into 363 segments. Out of the 363 segments 55 were below a grade of 60 and 48 were below 70. In the 71 to 80 range there were 52 segments and 83 segments were in the 81 to 90 range.

With the help of these assessments Mr. Johnson said the County will be able to make a better selection of working the roads with the most problems. Commissioner Swails questioned if population density on the road was taken into consideration. Mr. Johnson said no, the roads were just graded based on the condition of the pavement. Commissioner Swails questioned if there is a way of knowing the traffic count. Mrs. Thomas said the roads are also assessed by County staff as to how the road is used. Mr. Johnson said the information from KCI is a base to work off of.

County Engineer John Phillips stated the assessments from KCI not only provide the grade for the worst and best roads but also give information on what can be done in the interim to extend the life of the roads. In recent years most of the road repair money has gone toward resurfacing. This information will allow the County to make repairs with less costly measures before the road gets to the failing grade.

J. Manager's report

Mrs. Thomas said the waste water plant will begin to operate under the County's permit tomorrow (July 31) instead of the permit belonging to the City of Carnesville. The open house will be on August 13 with a tour of the facility at 11:00 a.m. with lunch to follow.

Franklin County along with Stephens County, Hart County and Elbert County won the Market Modification but the opposing stations have filed appeals. Mrs. Thomas said based on the information she has it is her belief the FCC is waiting for all four counties to be at the same place before a decision is made. September 5 is the date all four counties will be level.

Mrs. Thomas thanked the Commissioners for time off and thanked the County staff for keeping everything running smoothly while she was out of the office.

K. Announcements

Commissioner Swails thanked Mrs. Thomas for attending the Georgia Upstate Lakes Board of Realtors meeting earlier this month. He said Mrs. Thomas shared information on



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how Franklin County represents itself and its plans for growth.

Dr. Macomson said several people near the lake have approached him about placing speed bumps on their road. The concern is the amount of traffic because of businesses being operated out of their homes. Mrs. Thomas said the County does not have a policy for placing speed bumps. Dr. Macomson questioned if there was something that could be done.

Commissioner Swails said any community is eligible to add signage, they just need to apply for signs for speed limit, children at play, etc. Mrs. Thomas said for the speed signs an engineer reviews and gives a determination for need. The County will order and post signs at a cost of \$50 per sign. Dr. Macomson questioned if the residents are interested in a sign what steps need to be taken. Mrs. Thomas said to call the Board of Commissioners office and the staff will help them. Commissioner Wester said there is a situation ongoing in Hart County with the City of Bowersville over speed bumps and it would be good for Franklin County to watch this and see how it is handled.

Chairman Bridges reminded everyone of the public hearing and regular meeting for August 5. He then adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2019

Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

Dr. Jason Macomson, District 2 Commissioner

Ryan Swails, District 3 Commissioner

Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

Elaine H. Evans, County Clerk