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**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 2, 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
County Attorney Bubba Samuels

Item 1: Call meeting to order – Chairman Bridges called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

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

Item 3: Approval of Minutes

November 4, 2019 public hearing
November 4, 2019 regular meeting
November 15, 2019 special called meeting

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for November. Commissioner Wester made the motion to approve the November minutes as written. 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 Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Franklin and Commissioner Swails.

Item 4: Items for discussion

A. **Public Comment**
None.

B. **Public Hearing items**

Conditional Use for Telecommunications Tower – Verizon Wireless – Mrs.



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Thomas said Verizon Wireless applied for a conditional use permit for a 255-foot self-supporting cell tower located on the Cabe property on Hwy 106. The applicant attended all public hearings for this request. Mrs. Thomas gave the recommendation from the Planning Commission for approval of the conditional use permit for Verizon Wireless. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept. Commissioner Franklin made the motion to accept. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Macomson 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, Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Swails and Chairman Bridges.

Conditional Use for Additional Poultry Houses – Minh Anh Dinh – Mrs. Thomas said Mr. Dinh applied for two additional poultry houses to an existing six house farm. The original farm was granted a conditional use permit by unanimous vote by the Board of Commissioners on December 5, 2016. The applicant attended all public hearings. Mrs. Thomas gave the recommendation from the Planning Commission to approve the additional two houses to the existing farm. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept. Commissioner Wester made the motion to accept based on the recommendation from the Planning Commission. 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 Wester, Commissioner Swails, Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Macomson and Commissioner Franklin.

Conditional Use and Variance for Additional Poultry Houses – Nguyet-Hang Dinh – Mrs. Thomas said Ms. Dinh applied for a conditional use permit for two additional poultry houses for an existing six-acre farm and a variance from the required side yard setback of 200 feet to 120 feet in the direction of her sibling's farm. The applicant attended all the public hearings. Mrs. Thomas gave the recommendation from the Planning Commission for approval for both the conditional use permit and variance. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept. Commissioner Swails made the motion to approve the request including the variance. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded. 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, Commissioner Swails, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Macomson and Chairman Bridges.

C. Franklin County Fire Association

Barry Thornton, President of the Franklin County Fire Association came forward and thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to give an update. He stated this has been an unusual year for fire calls and services. This past summer a drought was experienced that increased the number of fire calls. There were several structural fires throughout the County. There was a flood rescue in the Bold Springs/Double Churches area this year. The Fire Association was involved with the drowning on Lake Hartwell. There were several wrecks on I-85 with fatalities of children and the Fire Association provided debriefings to the firefighters involved. Seven fire stations went through ISO audits and five successfully lowered their rating. The SOG's (Standard Operating Guidelines) were



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also updated this year.

Firefighter Weekend was hosted by the City of Lavonia Fire Department this year with over 200 in attendance and was paid for in part by a grant from Hart EMC. The Fire Association plans to apply again next year for grants to help pay for this training. Mr. Thornton said the automatic aid and maps are in process of being updated with backup maps and zones for 911. The Fire Association is working on agreements with Stephens County for areas classified as class 10, residences further than five miles from a county fire department. The class 10 rating causes a homeowner's insurance to be higher.

Mr. Thornton said the Fire Association met in October and voted to request the Board of Commissioners adopt an ordinance for nuisance/false alarms because the number of false alarms continues to grow. A copy of the City of Lavonia's ordinance as an example was presented to the Commissioners. Mr. Thornton said the fire departments will consider if the alarm goes off due to a power outage or storms. The alarms that are causing the problems are the ones with continuing malfunctions.

The training facility needs to be updated and remolded to meet state specifications. Mr. Thornton said the ISO requires each firefighter to have 18 hours of facility training each year. The Fire Association has a training center committee and they are looking into grants and other funding opportunities. Mr. Thornton said this coming fiscal year the Fire Association may request funding for the training facility in the amount equal to the allocation for the fire departments. It is time for renewal of the County fire department contracts. Mr. Thornton said these are five-year contracts and this will be done right before the start of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Swails questioned if the citizens are contacted when the ISO ratings are lowered in their areas. Mr. Thornton said it is up to each department to notify the citizens. He stated some of the departments have run the announcement in the local paper. Commissioner Swails asked which departments were lowed. Mr. Thornton said City of Canon Fire Department, City of Franklin Springs Fire Department, Five Area, Double Churches and Sandy Cross. Red Hill has a solid five rating throughout their district. Commissioner Swails asked if the Fire Association has any estimated costs for the training facility. Mr. Thornton said \$200,000 easy but they are planning to use as much of the existing materials to do the update so the cost will be less.

Mrs. Thomas said part of the ISO improved ratings were due to the enhanced 911 reporting system. The fire departments are to be commended as they gave up part of their SPLOST allocations to help pay for the 911 system. Mr. Thornton said because of the new system the rating was able to drop almost a whole class.

Commissioner Wester questioned who would be responsible for the false alarm fines; the homeowners or the alarm company. Mr. Thornton said it would be the owner. At this time the problem is mainly with the businesses and not residential. The fire departments would be lenient with the ordinance.

Chairman Bridges said he appreciates the Fire Association for applying for grants and



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seeking funding. He also expressed thanks for the outstanding services they provide to Franklin County.

D. Tax Commissioner Bobby Martin – Tax issues

Mr. Martin expressed appreciation for the opportunity to come before the Board of Commissioners. He said the collections for 2019 are better than 87% and for 2018 the collections are 99.8%. There was a tax increase this year due to inflationary growth; for the unincorporated it was about 4.4 % and for the incorporated it was 3.5%. The inflationary growth tax increase made a hardship on a lot of citizens, in particular seniors.

During times of the senior citizens discussing the hardship placed on them by the inflationary growth tax increase, the question was asked why are they paying school taxes because in other counties seniors don't. Mr. Martin said he explained to them due to the limited base of commercial, industrial and retail it was not possible to exempt 65 and older and continue to run the County. He stated a way to help the seniors is to increase the local exemption. Under the authority of the State of Georgia Constitution, local governments are authorized to provide increased exemption amounts. Local government homestead exemptions require separate State legislation and then approval by a local referendum and only applies to particular government's property tax.

Mr. Martin stated Franklin County has a local exemption that was voted on in 1992 which passed by 81% of the voters. Each resident of Franklin County who is 65 years of age or older as of January 1st is granted an exemption on that person's homestead from all Franklin County School District ad valorem taxes for education purposes in the amount of \$10,00 and from all Franklin County ad valorem taxes for county purposes in the amount of \$10,00 of the assessed value of that homestead. Mr. Martin proposed to increase the exemption from \$10,000 to \$20,000. He would like for this to go before the legislature as soon as possible so it could be placed on next year's ballot. Statistics were shown by Mr. Martin that the impact to the County's budget would be less than \$200,000 per year to increase this exemption. The annual savings to the seniors in the unincorporated area would be \$108.13 and in the incorporated area would be \$119.60. Mr. Martin said Stephens County has a county exemption of \$37,000 and school exemption of \$33,000. Banks County has \$20,000 for the school and \$20,000 for the county. A lot of metro counties do not charge school taxes to those citizens 65 and older.

The numbers presented by Mr. Martin were based on the 2019 digest. He stated this is not a projection, this is what it will be except for those houses that will not meet the maximum homestead. Currently a senior with a home valued at \$25,000 or less are not paying taxes at all because of the exemption in place. Mr. Martin told the Commissioners if the exemption increases to \$20,000 then a home valued at \$50,000 or less would not pay county taxes. There are a number of houses which would not meet the \$50,000 which would not make the impact to the County go up. Mr. Martin said he hopes this is taken seriously and he is on the schedule to go before the Board of Education work session this coming Thursday to make this presentation and again next Tuesday to give the same information. He stated he would also like for the IBA to consider this.



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Chairman Bridges asked what the deadline is for the Commissioners to act on this. Mr. Martin said this needs to be presented in the legislature. Chairman Bridges questioned what date. Mr. Martin said the county attorney might have a better understanding than he has. Mr. Samuels said the session will be an election year and will be quick so the sooner the better if you want legislation passed. Commissioner Wester stated he is ready to vote on this in January or sooner if needed. He receives phone calls from senior citizens and they are hurting and it is up to the Commissioners to help. Mr. Martin stated it would be helpful to him when he goes before the Board of Education this Thursday and next Tuesday if he could say the Board of Commissioners acted on this.

*Mr. Martin told the Commissioners that this will go before the voters and if they want it, they will vote for it. Mr. Samuels said what is needed is for the Board of Commissioners to pass a resolution to authorize the presentation of the local legislation to the General Assembly. The County would work with Representative Alan Powell's office for this. Commissioner Franklin asked what would be wrong with voting on it tonight. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept this. Commissioner Wester made the motion to accept and send to a referendum to be voted on. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. There was no additional 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, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Swails, Commissioner Macomson and Chairman Bridges. Mr. Martin expressed thanks on behalf of the senior citizens of Franklin County.*

E. Gerry Wilson – GRP issues

Mrs. Wilson said she attended a meeting with the Madison County IDA a few weeks ago with several other Franklin County citizens to learn about their issues with GRP. Senator Frank Ginn stated GRP is a great neighbor in Madison County. Mrs. Wilson questioned Senator Ginn how they were a good neighbor because she hasn't seen evidence of this in Franklin County. Senator Ginn said GRP has done \$175,000 worth of work on adjoining property to address the property owner's concerns. Mrs. Wilson said Senator Ginn did not disclose the reason for the \$175,000 of work was because of a lawsuit brought by that property owner. The environmental engineer for GRP, Pierre Sahyoun told Mrs. Wilson litigation is ongoing in Madison County because they do not have a permit for water runoff. Mrs. Wilson said during this conversation Mr. Sahyoun told her it is a little strange for a company to not have all the permits in place before they start operations.

At this same Madison County IDA meeting the Madison County Board of Commissioners Chairman told Mrs. Wilson they really like GRP because they are supplying a great amount of taxes to them although people next to the plant are probably complaining. Mrs. Wilson asked how good a neighbor is GRP in Franklin County? Have they paid their taxes for this year? Did they pay last year's taxes on time? Chairman Bridges said GRP has been sent a bill but he does not know if they paid them. Mrs. Wilson said her deadline was November 15th and she paid her taxes. She then asked the Commissioners if any of them know if GRP has paid their taxes that were due November 15, 2019.

Commissioner Wester asked Mr. Samuels if the Commissioners are allowed to answer this. Mr. Samuels said this is public record but he hasn't researched the Open Records Act.



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Commissioner Macomson stated this information is online. Commissioner Wester said the answer is no, they have not paid their taxes. Mrs. Wilson asked if Tax Commissioner Bobby Martin could give the history of GRP from 2018 to 2019. Chairman Bridges said that is up to Mr. Martin. Mr. Martin said GRP is delinquent with their taxes and because they are a large tax payer, he has personally visited them. During his visit Mr. Martin spoke with the plant manager who was under the impression the taxes had already been paid. Mr. Martin then called the controller for GRP who said the County would be paid early December. For prior years, Mr. Martin said they have been late. Mrs. Wilson asked when the 2018 taxes were paid. Mr. Martin stated after they were scheduled for a tax sale. A tax sale is scheduled for March 2019 for any tax payer owing over \$30,000.

Commissioner Swails asked Mr. Martin what the penalty is for GRP not paying. Mr. Martin stated they are paying interest monthly of about \$7,000. If they go over 120 days delinquent, they will pay a 5% penalty, each additional is another 5% penalty and maxes out at 20%. Mr. Martin said the maximum this will not be allowed to happen.

Mrs. Wilson referenced an article from the Madison County Journal that the IDA said GRP owes \$206,500 in construction costs and \$173,000 in past due water bills which included \$64,000 in past due fees. GRP has been contacted and Senator Ginn said there is no question or concern that GRP will settle its debt but no timeline was offered. The Madison County IDA voted to get a good faith statement from GRP asking when this will be repaid. In this same article Senator Ginn was quoted as wanting to put in more waterlines so GRP would have more available water and water could go to Comer. In the article Madison County Commissioner Mahoney stated it would be irresponsible to go down this road incurring more debt.

At this time Mrs. Wilson said it seems this company is teetering on a shoestring. She said she was told they will install a valve for the steam but based on their history it is difficult to believe them. GRP had stated initially that \$100,000 would be given each year to Franklin County. Mrs. Wilson asked if this was to be an investment in the County or if this was money to be given to the Commissioners. Chairman Bridges said this statement was made in the presence of the Commissioners but he hasn't seen it in writing. Mrs. Wilson said it was reported in the Franklin County Citizen. Harris Little told Mrs. Wilson that GRP was planning on building a chipping plant for railroad ties in Lavonia. She said if this is the case, who would regulate it. Chairman Bridges said this would be up to the IBA but the County is over the zoning.

F. Milton Bellamy – GRP issues
Mr. Bellamy was unable to attend.

G. Tami & Rodney Black – GRP issues
Rodney Black thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak and expressed appreciation for being an American citizen from the State of Georgia, born and raised in Franklin County. He said he and his wife, Tami live on Burke Road and are approximately 4,045 feet from GRP.

The Bible states that God puts men in office. Mr. Black said it is God's will that each of the



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Commissioners are in office and it is not by happenstance. The Bible also states that God removes men from government and God expects each of us to make proper decisions. Mr. Black reminded the Commissioners that each of them took a vow to protect the citizens of Franklin County and the citizens in the Double Churches community are not being protected. Mr. Black asked Commissioner Franklin if he has visited the power plant and heard the sound. Commissioner Franklin said he has visited and has heard the sound. He said the biggest mistake he made was believing the statement from the tour guide of the power plant that there would not be any noise, it might sound like a chicken house fan. Mr. Black stated as God is his witness that man is a liar. He told the Commissioners that you really have to live there to understand, the sound is different at different times of the year because of the leaves on the trees.

GRP said they would be good neighbors, there would not be any dust and no smell. Mr. Black said they are absolute liars. He stated he is sure everyone in the room has paid their property taxes but GRP has not so the tax payers money is going toward pumping water for GRP so they can make noise and keep the community awake at night. The question was posed by Mr. Black to the Commissioners to name one thing that Franklin GRP Biomass plant has done for the County that is an asset. He then specifically asked Chairman Bridges to answer. Chairman Bridges said he hasn't heard anything positive. Mr. Black said all GRP has done is cost the County money; waterlines have been built for them and they are not paying their taxes.

Mr. Black told the Commissioners the community is losing sleep at night because of the noise from the plant and they need some relief. He said they are coming to the meetings and being patted on the back and thanked for coming and speaking but nothing is being done. He questioned the Commissioners if they have tried to do anything to help. Beth Thomas sent Mr. Black information at 4:45 this afternoon right before the meeting the first report he has received, saying a suppressor will be put in place at GRP as soon as they get it. This information has been told for weeks but nothing has been done. Mr. Black stated that the Commissioners need to step up to the plate and help the community, something has got to be done. Chairman Bridges told Mr. Black he hears what he is saying and he visited the plant this past Wednesday and he as frustrated as the citizens. This is being looked into for a solution although it won't be a magic cure. The Commissioners are pushing to make GRP lives up to their promises. Mr. Black said EPD has told them that it is totally up to the County Commissioners to create ordinances to deal with noise.

Commissioner Macomson said GRP is in a classified industrial area. He questioned if a noise ordinance was passed would they grandfathered in because of being located there prior to the passing. Mrs. Thomas said there is no specific noise ordinance there is only a nuisance ordinance. The only thing relating to noise is any State nuisance. The State private nuisance is defined as private citizen action against someone else and public nuisance. Mrs. Thomas said a problem with a noise ordinance is it would have to enacted county wide not just in the area of GRP. She said the zoning ordinance does address noise in commercial industrial areas and she does not know how this can be layered. Mr. Samuels said this could be a potential conflict with the zoning ordinance and whatever is being proposed. Commissioner Macomson questioned if there is a more stringent



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ordinance will GRP be able to argue they are grandfathered in. Mr. Samuels said he could not give an answer now that he would have to research it.

Mr. Black read the definition of nuisance from the Franklin County Zoning Ordinance "anything that interferes with the use or enjoyment of property, endangers public health or safety or is offensive to the senses, anything that causes hurt, inconvenience, damage to another even though it may otherwise be lawful." GRP is definitely a nuisance. Micah 6:8 was then read by Mr. Black "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with God." He stated everyone is responsible for their actions and God has placed the Commissioners to protect the citizens, who need help. He begged the Commissioners to take action.

Tami Black *asked if the water bills from GRP have been paid. Mrs. Thomas said water is an enterprise fund and if she releases certain information then all customers information would be released. She said she has asked for legal to look into this. Mrs. Black asked if the cutoff time for GRP is different from residential customers. Mrs. Thomas said GRP is under a contract which allows for 45 days to be subject to cutoff and 60 days for termination. She said she contacts them when they get close to 45 days and they send a check the next day. The County is abiding by the contract with them and they are assessed penalties. Mrs. Black thanked Mrs. Thomas for making an effort to answer her questions although they were not answered 100%.*

Mrs. Black told the Commissioners they have heard, the anger and frustration from the citizens although the full effect of GRP can not be known unless you live there 24 hours a day. She stated the citizens are tired of talking about this and there should be some kind of action taken. It doesn't seem like the Commissioners know what to do but the citizens surrounding GRP took it upon themselves to write a petition with their requests. The petition was signed by about 135 people. Mrs. Black stated she was sure the requests would not be granted but they want this put-on record. The first request was to test the wells within a one-mile radius of GRP to establish a baseline in case of future runoffs. Opting out would be possible for those people not desiring the well testing. This testing should be done every six months with testing paid for by Franklin County. If a well is contaminated then the County is to pay to bring water to those people affected. The second request is for the Commissioners to act upon the State of Georgia Nuisance Law and the Franklin County Zoning Preamble Enactment Clause on page 1, the Noise Hazards on page 11 and Nuisance definition on page 12 and Franklin County Article 12, Section 1200 on page 37. Mrs. Black said the citizens would like to see something done by January 1, 2020. The last request is for those citizens affected by GRP to be exempt from any and all property taxes because of their decline in property value and decline in quality of life. They are asking for the exemption to continue in the year 2020 and continue until GRP closes with no repercussion of back taxes.

Immediate action is being asked by Mrs. Black and the citizens in the Double Churches community for the safety, health, well-being and their quality of life that the Commissioners have vowed to serve and protect in accordance with the Commissioners Mission Statement as published on the Franklin County Government website. Mrs. Black then issued an invitation to the Commissioners to a meeting at Madison County High



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School where scientific information will be presented on the hazards of burning creosote and other contaminates. She said her hope is the Commissioners will take this seriously. Chairman Bridges told Mrs. Black he appreciated her coming. Mrs. Black stated she appreciated everyone listening but would appreciate it more if they will do something.

Commissioner Wester requested permission to ask the County Attorney a question. He said he has been doing a lot of research on biomass plants and talking with experts. The information he has received is every plant sort of takes the same steps starting out burning clean wood then goes to creosote then goes to something else. Commissioner Wester said he would like to have an ordinance banning any incineration of municipal solid waste to include C&D and household trash. This is something that EPA has left up to the state level and the state level has left up to the local governments. Commissioner Wester said the smell is bad enough and he does not want the situation to be worse. He requested when the ordinance is presented that all the Commissioners support it.

*Commissioner Swails said he would like for farm waste including chicken manure to be part of the banned items in this ordinance. Commissioner Wester questioned could the ordinance be retroactive to tonight's meeting date or if not then have a special called meeting. Chairman Bridges said the attorney needs to be do research. Commissioner Wester said he understood that but it needs to be done and voted on as soon as possible. Commissioner Swails asked if a motion is needed to start the process. Mr. Samuels confirmed it would. Commissioner Swails make the motion to start the ordinance process. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. There was no additional discuss. 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 Commissioner Macomson.*

Commissioner Macomson said the commercial and industrial waste ordinance is being looked at for revision, he asked Mr. Samuels if it would be reasonable for the County to ask all of these industries to obtain a conditional use permit and make them tell upfront what permits they will be applying for and planning to use. Then after this if the business decides to change or apply for another permit they have to come before the Board of Commissioners for approval. Commissioner Macomson stated this would give the County a way to monitor businesses so a situation like GRP does not happen again. Mr. Samuels said this is something that could be done by being specific on the conditions. The only potential problem would be if federal or state law preempted it but Mr. Samuels said he would look at it.

Mrs. Thomas read an update on GRP via email from them – the plant is currently online although it has been running at 50% for the past few days because of the Thanksgiving holiday period. Veolia is now in charge of the plant operations. Plant tuning and commissioning continues and the plant remains a few weeks behind Madison. Franklin has completed the required rata emissions performance testing. An engineered design has been presented for water runoff monitoring and treatment and Veolia is obtaining bids to install. Two oxygen aerators have been purchased and will be installed on the outfall ponds. The plant is now monitoring runoff because of the creek event and has had



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zero events to date. The old wood from the fuel yard has been processed. Revisions are being made to the emergency response plan by working with local first responders. Another meeting and site tour are in the process of being planned. Information was given that a silencer is in place in Madison. Mrs. Thomas questioned when the one for Franklin would be in place. GRP stated it was just approved and the purchase order should go out tomorrow. Mrs. Thomas does not have a timeline for installation.

H. Request for Easement – GDOT

Mrs. Thomas said the request information from GDOT was provided to the Commissioners for review. The parcels involved are where the water tank on Hwy 59 was recently taken down and they are odd shaped. GDOT is looking at putting a facility on the old rest stop location. Mrs. Thomas said the proposed access point from GDOT would come directly through these parcels so GDOT is asking for a permanent easement to be able to go in either direction. The recommendation given by Mrs. Thomas is to approve the right of way deeds for parcel 1 and parcel 2 pending legal review. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the recommendation from Mrs. Thomas. Commissioner Wester made the motion to accept the request for easement for GDOT. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Macomson 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 Macomson, Commissioner Franklin and Commissioner Swails.

I. LMIG Off System Safety Project

Mrs. Thomas said there was a bid opening for the 2019 off system safety project on November 14, 2019. Only one bid was received and it was higher than the County's estimate. The County Engineer John Phillips spoke with GDOT and was told although this was higher than anticipated it is still better than most bids from around the state. Mrs. Thomas said because this bid came in higher additional funding will need to come from SPLOST V. The recommendation given was to approve the bid from Brown's Asphalt Maintenance in the amount of \$136,614.55. The LMIG amount for this project is \$100,000. The total project will cost \$150,389.55 which includes the KCI road evaluations. Mrs. Thomas recommended approving the full project list and use SPLOST V funding to pay the extra amount. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept. Commissioner Wester made the motion to accept the bid for the project. 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 Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Swails and Commissioner Macomson.

J. Qualifying Fees

Mrs. Thomas said the resolution provided to the Commissioners is similar to what was approved in 2015 and 2017 to set the qualifying fees at 3% of the minimum base salary of the office paid in the preceding calendar year. The recommendation was given to approve this because it needs to be in effect before January 1, 2020 to begin the elections process. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Swails made the motion to approve the qualifying fees as presented. Chairman Bridges asked for a



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*second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges stated 3% is as low as the qualifying fees can be set. There was no further 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, Commissioner Macomson and Chairman Bridges.*

K. Transportation Funding Intergovernmental Agreement

Mrs. Thomas said the County met with the cities to discuss the possibility of a road and bridge improvement tax funding mechanism. The way the law is written if all the cities and county come to an agreement the tax can be levied at 1%. This will have to go before the voters. Mrs. Thomas said in order for this to be on the March 2020 ballot the Board of Commissioners will have to call for the referendum before December 25, 2019. The first step is to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with each of the cities. Several of the cities are willing to move forward. If all of the cities agree then a special called meeting will need to be held before December 25, 2019.

*Mrs. Thomas asked the Commissioners to approve entering into an intergovernmental agreement with the cities pending legal review. Commissioner Wester made the motion to move forward with the intergovernmental agreement. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Macomson 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, Commissioner Swails, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Macomson and Chairman Bridges.*

*Mrs. Thomas asked the Commissioners to approve using the current SPLOST allocation as the division of funds between Franklin County and the cities. The County will receive 73.2%, City of Carnesville, City of Canon and City of Franklin Springs each receive 4% and the City of Lavonia and the City of Royston each receive 7.4% Commissioner Swails questioned if there is pushback on the allocation amounts. Mrs. Thomas said everyone seems to be satisfied. Commissioner Swails asked Mrs. Thomas if she has heard from all the cities. She said she has heard from everyone except the City of Royston so this will come down to them. Commissioner Macomson made the motion to approve the allocation amounts to be equal to the current SPLOST allocations. 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 Macomson, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Swails, Commissioner Franklin and Chairman Bridges.*

L. Open Board positions

Chairman Bridges informed the public there are several open board positions and the County is currently taking applications to fill them. He said the County is always looking for good people willing to serve in these positions. Mrs. Thomas said there is one open position on the Planning Commission. One application has been received and forwarded to the Commissioners for review. Mrs. Thomas said the County is continuing taking applications for this position.

Mrs. Thomas said the JDA was advertised a while back and applications were received.



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*No one has been appointed because of waiting on clarification and recommendation from the IBA. Mrs. Thomas said from the applications received and reviewed by the Commissioners she is recommending James McFarlin to be appointed to the JDA to fill the open position. She said the JDA confirmed the other position can continue to be served by the person currently holding it, Vernon Cape. She said this position will go through March 2020. The other position needing approval tonight is to approve Courtney Umbehant to replace Mayor Ralph Owens. Mrs. Thomas gave the recommendation to appoint James McFarlin and Courtney Umbehant to replace Mayor Owens. Commissioner Swails made the motion to accept the recommendation for Mr. McFarlin and Mr. Umbehant. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Macomson 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 Swails, Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Franklin and Chairman Bridges.*

Mrs. Thomas said the Tax Assessors Board will have a position open on January 1, 2020. Advertisement has begun for this position. Mrs. Thomas said applications will be sent to the Commissioners as they come in for review and appointment at the January regular board meeting. The Recreation Board has an open position and advertisement has begun for this also. This appointment should be done by the Board of Commissioners and not the Recreation Board. Chairman Bridges said applications are being taken and anyone interested in them, please apply.

M. Executive Session

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to go into executive session. Commissioner Wester made the motion to close the regular session and go into executive session for the purpose of discussing litigation. 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 Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Swails and Commissioner Macomson. The regular session closed at 7:48 p.m.*

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to close the executive session. Commissioner Wester made the motion to close the executive session and give the Chairman the authorization to sign the affidavit where litigation was discussed. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Macomson 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 Franklin, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Swails and Commissioner Macomson.*

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to go back into regular session. Commissioner Macomson made the motion to go back into regular session. 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 Wester, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Swails and Chairman Bridges. The regular session resumed at 8:20 p.m.*



You Are Why We Are Here

N. Announcements

Chairman Bridges announced the passing of former Franklin County Commissioner Roger Roper. He said this was sad news and to keep his family in your prayers.

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wester made the motion to adjourn. 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 Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Swails, Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Franklin and Commissioner Wester. The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.*

Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2020

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