



You Are Why We Are Here

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

Present: 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
MJ Kneiser, *WLHR*

Staff: County Manager, Beth Thomas
County Attorney, Bubba Samuels

Item 1 & 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Bridges called the January Regular Business Meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He asked Commissioner Swails to lead the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Wester made a motion to approve the minutes, Commissioner Macomson seconded the motion. 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.

Item 4: Items for Discussion

A. Public Hearing Items:

- a. **Conditional Use Permit- Clinton Alexander Hart** - Regarding a request from Clinton Alexander Hart for six new chicken houses.
1. The Planning Commission recommended approval with conditions.
 2. Commissioner Macomson made a motion to approve the permit with conditions as follows:
 - a. Two rows of trees running north/south shall be installed beginning with the t-post on the plat, one row to consist of holly trees and the second row to be a tree of the applicant's choice;



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- b. Applicant shall maintain the existing vegetation except for the building pad, a 50' buffer around the buildings plus an applicable slope needed for best grading practices, and allowing for the best forestry management practice and thinning of trees when necessary, both conditions pending legal review; and
 - c. The driveway should be constructed in a direction away from the adjacent residence.
3. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. 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.

- b. Rezoning and Conditional Use Permit – Robert & Megan Jones -**
- Regarding an application from Robert and Megan Jones to rezone one tract of land from AG to AI and add a Conditional Use Permit for a two-house poultry farm.
1. The Planning Commission recommended approval to rezone tract from AG to AI and approve the Conditional Use Permit.
 2. Commissioner Macomson moved to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation with the condition of requiring a buffer consisting of 3 rows of alternating Leland cypress trees placed across the southern portion of the property where the road will lead into the property to provide additional screening.
 3. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion.
 4. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (1) **NO** vote. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Wester, and Chairman Bridges. The **NO** vote was by Commissioner Swails.

B. Public Comment

1. Angela Whidby- based on a conversation Angela Whidby had with Elaine Evans, Ms. Whidby disagreed with Ms. Evans potentially not being reappointed and the manner in which it was handled.
2. Bobby Martin- Reminded the BOC they voted to approve an increase in senior exemption from 10K to 20K. He approached the school board and Industrial Building Authority to do the same. The School Board will not move forward with the exemption increase, but the Industrial Building Authority voted for the increase. Mr. Martin wants to include these initiatives on the May ballot and wants the local legislation written so that it can be approved by the legislature. Also, Mr. Martin informed the Board that GRP paid their tax bill in December.
3. Ms. Sue Young regarding the approval for the chicken houses in her



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neighborhood: is there another way for the owners of the chicken houses to access property? Chairman Bridges asked her to give comment and not ask questions. Ms. Young offered to sell her property because she will have to move.

4. Wayne Young regarding the approval of the chicken houses in his neighborhood is concerned about the state of the road and the large chicken trucks that will now be using the road to access the chicken farm. He also requested a deputy be stationed at the road to keep the speed down. Chairman Bridges asked Beth Thomas to have the road department look into the road in the neighborhood that leads to the approved chicken farm.

C. Response to request for action

1. **Resolution** regarding GRP: Commissioner Macomson read the Resolution addressing issues raised in the request for action submitted by the Double Churches Community. Commissioner Franklin made motion to adopt the Resolution and Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed to approve the resolution 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
2. **GeoHydro proposal update:** A private environmental firm has been engaged to conduct an air quality and noise study. The cost of the study will be \$16,625.00 with an additional 10K to 12K dollars for an additional continuous seven-day noise study. The company needs 2-3 days of good weather and the county is trying to get that scheduled. The study has already been approved.
3. **Air quality monitoring equipment-** Commissioner Macomson has been measuring sound with his cell phone but wants to conduct air quality testing. An estimate for a portable air quality measurement device is \$2,371.42. Although recognizing that Franklin County is not an authorized entity to pursue enforcement action regarding such issues, evidence of poor air quality can then be turned over to the State of Georgia EPD for action/enforcement by that agency. Commissioner Wester made motion to accept and Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. 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.

- D. Tami Black- GRP Concerns:** Ms. Black thanked the Board for addressing the issues raised in the request for action submitted by the Double Churches Community. Ms. Black asked for clarification on the tax part of the resolution in hopes that the BOC would advocate for lower taxes. County Attorney Bubba Samuels explained that an absolute waiver of ad valorem taxes would be illegal



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under the Georgia Constitution as well as under basic principles of uniformity of taxation and equal protection of the laws, and that citizens must go through the appeals process. Ms. Black reminded the BOC of the promise that GRP made to donate 100K to the county to use at the county's discretion. Ms. Black hopes the money will be collected and used to pay the taxes of the people most affected by GRP. Ms. Black is also concerned that the noise test won't necessarily catch the loud noises made by GRP, and the noise happens at odd hours. She thinks that consistent testing will be important.

- E. Sheila Baker- GRP Concerns:** In support of Ms. Black's tax concerns, Ms. Baker feels like the BOC should have the power to "forgo" their taxes and promises to investigate that further. She also agrees with Ms. Black that there should be consistent sound testing due to the loud noises happening at odd hours. Primarily, she is concerned about the quality of the well water and testing the wells around GRP. She wants 6-8 wells to be given a full spectrum test for a baseline, and then tested yearly thereafter. She wants either the county or GRP to be responsible for paying for the tests. If GRP contaminates the well water in the area, Ms. Baker wants the county to run water lines to the affected houses at the county's expense. Ms. Baker announced a Community Awareness Meeting at the Community Center in Carnesville on January 26, 2020 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. She would like to see all of the commissioners attend.

Commissioner Wester indicated he still has concerns about the weight measurement of railroad ties containing creosote coming into GRP. How can the county be sure that only 20% of what is coming into GRP are the creosote ties? They could be sending in any amount to the plant and the county can't verify. Commissioner Macomson wants to ban creosote burning/chipping everywhere else in the county. Recognizing that it will not apply to the existing operations of GRP, Commissioner Wester makes a motion to instruct County Attorney Bubba Samuels to draft an ordinance banning chipping and burning of all crossties containing creosote and other chemicals in Franklin County by commercial businesses. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Macomson. and the vote was 5-0 in favor of the ordinance.

- 4. Airport Authority request for SPLOST V funds:** The Franklin-Hart Airport Authority has requested disbursement of funds for airport projects. The Airport Authority requested available collected funds and forward funding funds in order to meet the project's local share requirement. Beth Thomas recommends approval to disperse available collected funds in the amount of \$24,778.11. In addition, she recommends the approval of \$34,421.60 of forward funded funds which consists of \$4,005.99 in pro rated cost of issuance and interest and \$30,235.61 available cash flow for the project. Together, the SPLOST V funds will pay the project vendor a total of \$55,013.72. Commissioner Swails made motion to approve, Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands.



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The motion passed to disperse the funds 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.

F. Board Appointments:

1. **Tax Assessor:** Request to appoint Eddie Wayne Grizzle to a 3-year term on the Tax Assessor Board. Motion to appoint by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Macomson. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed to disperse the funds 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.
2. **Planning Commission:** Carolee Coker applied to take over the remainder of Eric Segar's term. Motion to approve by Commissioner Swails, seconded by Commissioner Wester. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed to disperse the funds 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.
3. **Other/Open Position Updates:** Recreation Board currently has no vacancy.

G. Staff Appointments:

1. **County Attorney:** Commissioner Franklin made a motion to reappoint Dale R. "Bubba" Samuels, LLC as County Attorney, seconded by Commissioner Swails. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed to disperse the funds 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.
2. **County Manager:** Recommendation by Chairman Bridges to add a two-year extension to Beth Thomas's contract. Motion to approve by Commissioner Swails, seconded by Commissioner Franklin. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed to disperse the funds 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.
3. **County Clerk:** Commissioner Macomson made a motion to reappoint Elaine Evans as County Clerk and restructure her job duties. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wester. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion did not pass with two (2) **YES** votes to three (3) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Macomson and Commissioner Wester and the **NO** votes were from Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Swails and Chairman Bridges. Commissioner Macomson made a motion to appoint Gina Kesler as Interim Clerk, Commissioner Swails seconded the motion.



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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. Commissioner Macomson thanked Elaine Evans for her service to the county.

Chairman Bridges thanked everyone for attending. Commissioner Wester made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Macomson seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges adjourned the meeting.

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

Gina L. Kesler, Interim County Clerk