



*You Are Why We Are Here*

**FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
February 25, 2020  
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  
MJ Kneiser, WLHR

**Staff:** County Manager Beth Thomas  
Interim County Clerk Gina Kesler

**Item 1: Call meeting to order** – Chairman Bridges called the February Work Session to order and thanked everyone for attending.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to amend the agenda to include public comment at number three. Commissioner Swails made the motion to amend the agenda and place public comment as number three. 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 Macomson, Commissioner Franklin and Commissioner Swails.

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

**Item 3: Public Comment**  
Sheila Baker asked about the C & D Landfill Permit Transfer Appeal item. She stated she was opposed to the landfill because her land backs up to it also.

**Item 4: Items for discussion**

**A. 2020 Census Local Complete Count Committee**

County Manager Beth Thomas stated the Census project is very important to all government entities, educational institutes, state and nationally because of the funding. She informed the Board that the Local Complete Count Committee for Franklin County had not been created. She stated she had been working with the cities, the educational system and representatives from different county groups in Franklin County to establish a committee. This committee would advocate, educate and publicize for hard to reach populations. The board was given a copy of a draft resolution that it could pass at



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Monday's Regular Board meeting but that it was not necessary for it to be passed for the county to proceed with the committee. Mrs. Thomas will be meeting with city and local representatives on Friday, February 28, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the Carnesville Community Center to begin work on the committee.

### **B. GCIP Grant Program Award**

County manager Beth Thomas stated that they had been trying to get the Code of Ordinance updated for several years, but do to lack of staff the project had not been completed. She along with Chairman Bridges applied for the ACCG Civic Affairs Foundation Internship Grant. Franklin County was awarded one of the 2020 summer internship grants. The grant gives 200 hours for a summer intern that the county will advertise, recruit and hire to work on the county's code of ordinances. The ultimate goal is to have the code recodified and posted online for access by everyone. The internship grant does require approval from the board. She asked that the board consider approving the grant.

### **C. 2020 Board Appointments**

County Manager Beth Thomas stated that the list was pulled and will need to be updated. She said there were approximately four boards with positions that will be expiring in 2020. She stated that the county will advertise for all 2020 Board Appointments that will be coming up this year. Also, the Regional 2 EMS Advisory Council is not on the list at the EMS Director, Terry Harris has served on this council as long as he has been the director. Due to a change in the Council's by-laws, he will need to be reappointed by the board. She recommended that the board consider a motion to approve and reappoint Mr. Harris to the Region 2 EMS Advisory Council. His new term would be from July 2020 through June 2023.

### **D. Mental Health Wellness Program**

Commissioner Wester discussed the need for a Mental Health Wellness Program for all county employees, with specific emphasis on law enforcement, EMS personnel and voluntary firemen. He stated they face difficult things on a daily basis that impact their lives and the lives of their families. The aftermath of an event is carried with them long after their shift is completed for the day. He has discussed this need with Sheriff Thomas, EMS Director and EMA Director; Lyndon Burgess. According to his research, in 2019, at least 229 police officers died by suicide. In 2017, 103 firefighters died by suicide compared to 93 firefighters who died in the line of duty. In 2015, there were 63 suicides among EMS workers. There is a limited amount of data available. He would like for the board to look at our insurance program to help provide some type of program for our public health/safety workers. He would like for the board to look into this and make this available as quickly as possible.



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County Manager Beth Thomas stated that in 2018 the Governor signed a bill that offers this public support. She noted the state has groups that are available for incident's like last year's fatal interstate wreck. She also said that the county's health insurance has telehealth counseling available to employees for a fee with no limitations. There may be grant funding options available.

Commissioner Macomson asked if there was a mental health week or month. Mrs. Thomas said there were several and it would be up to the board to decide on what they wanted to focus on. She said the board will need to pick a day or month, adopt a resolution that we feel mental health is important and tie it in with employee appreciation.

### **E. C & D Landfill Permit Transfer Appeal**

County Manager Beth Thomas stated that the county had received an EPD award letter that detailed the transfer of the active C & D Landfill from Earth Resources to Metro Green Franklin, LLC. She also received a new occupational tax application for the new permit holder. According to the EPD letter, the C & D Landfill permit has always been active and that the transfer is currently in effect, however the permit transfer is subject to appeal. She stated that the occupational tax permit has not been approved and would not be approved by her. She stated she had been working with the county attorney who is diligently working on the matter given the 30day deadline on the transfer permit. She stated it was her recommendation that the board take action tonight to approve a motion and to authorize the County Attorney to file an appeal of the permit transfer.

Chairman Bridges asked did he have a recommendation to appeal it. Chairman Franklin made the recommendation to authorize the county attorney to appeal the permit transfer. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion.

Commissioner Macomson said this was a big concern because if the landfill becomes active again, he was afraid somehow the waste would turn up at GRP at some point. So, the board needs to work to make sure there is no link between the two as we go through this process.

William Black asked if they were referring to the C & D Landfill that was near his house. Chairman Bridges stated yes. He stated that he had 1500 feet of property line bordering the landfill. Sheila Baker stated the trucks could drive from the landfill to the GRP plant and never have to access the public road. Tami Black stated that HB 857 was being presented that bans the burning of railroad ties. Chairman Bridges stated he would be visiting the capitol on Thursday morning to speak with Representative Powell about HB 857. Sheila Baker asked for the name of the company that has the permit now. Mrs. Thomas stated it was Metro Green Franklin, LLC. Garvis McElroy asked who the primary owners of the company were. Mrs. Thomas stated that it was not listed., but that the letter was addressed to a Mitchell Stephens.



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Chairman Bridges said that the EPD is saying that the permit stayed active while the landfill has been shut down for years. Mr. Black stated that the landfill was not active when they purchased their land 13 years ago.

Commissioner Macomson stated that the company was not moving forward with operations until the appeal goes through. Mrs. Thomas said the letter states the permit is now in effect, however, under Georgia law there is a 30-day appeal following the issuance.

Mr. McElroy asked wasn't there discussion about the passing of a resolution that if there was a company like the company prior to GRP purchasing the power plant that they would have to start the permit process over. Instead of buying the permit that had already been approved one time.

The stand of the board was that the landfill had been closed, but EPD is saying no it hasn't. Chairman Bridges stated that the county was under the impression that for the last 15 or so years the landfill was closed and would need a new permit to re-open. Commissioner Macomson stated that EPD supersedes the county's authority. Commissioner Swails stated that a landfill permit essentially exists until they take the reins to shut down and close it and relinquish it. He said it was his understanding that this never took place in spite of the operation of it.

Mr. Black stated that when he had his land appraised that the land owner name listed for the landfill property was not Metro Green Franklin, LLC. County Manager, Mrs. Thomas stated that was a unique situation with the land owner being a different person than the permit holder.

Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands to vote on the recommendation to authorize the county attorney to appeal the permit transfer. 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.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.



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Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

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Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

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Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

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Dr. Jason Macomson, District 2 Commissioner

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Ryan Swails, District 3 Commissioner

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Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

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Gina L. Kesler, Interim County Clerk

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