



*You Are Why We Are Here*

**FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

**June 30, 2020**

**5:30 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  
MJ Kneiser, 92.1 WLHR

**Staff:** County Manager Beth Thomas  
County Clerk Kayla Finger

**1. Call Public Hearing Meeting to Order** Chairman Bridges called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He asked people to respect the rules of social distancing.

**2. Items for Discussion**

**a. Public Hearing Items**

- i. **Fiscal Year 2021 Budget:** Chairman Bridges invited a guest speaker from the library board to the floor. Rita Shoemaker apologized to the board for coming in so late with her request for increased funding for the library. She explained that the library board just recently found out the Board of Education is no longer able to fund the library. She also stated that she would be visiting the other cities to request aid with funding as well. Ms. Shoemaker expressed that she would ideally like to see the cities work with the county to split the requested overall amount of \$21k. Initially, the library was only asking for a small increase, but with the unforeseen factors of COVID 19 they need more funding to help with additional cleaning/sanitizing costs. Ms. Shoemaker explained that the two libraries that serve the community of Franklin County operate off of a shoestring budget of approximately \$129k and only one manager operates both facilities. If the library does not receive the additional funds, Ms. Shoemaker stated the only other option would be to cut back hours of operation and lay off staff. She emphasized the importance of



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*having the libraries open because of the educational and technological resources they provide to the community, such as computer usage and internet access. Ms. Shoemaker emailed documents out to the commissioners prior to the meeting detailing the current funding provided to the library from the cities and stated she would be happy to provide any additional information. The documents showed that Lavonia gives \$16k, and Royston gives \$18k, but that is just how much they give to the library budget, the cities own the buildings, so each city pays for insurance on the building and the library pays for insurance on the contents. The cities also cover all maintenance, cleaning, and electric bills. Royston sent a notice stating they actually pay \$43k including the \$18k that goes directly to the budget. Commissioner Swails asked if any of the city leaders said anything yet in response to the request. Ms. Shoemaker stated she spoke to them today to see if they could divide the amount three ways between the two major cities that have the libraries & they didn't say no, but she planned to go back and beg because she believes this is a worthy cause. Commissioner Swails asked how COVID has affected the libraries operations. Ms. Shoemaker explained right now they are offering curbside and the library will start opening up for socially distanced computer use only and one computer will be set aside purely for census purposes. Commissioner Macomson asked how much of the \$21k does she want the county to provide. Ms. Shoemaker responded she would love to get all of it, but reasonably speaking if they could split it with the cities as previously mentioned it would be \$7k each. Ms. Shoemaker explained that the BOE could no longer fund the library because the law states that the funds must be for student use only. Chairman Bridges stated Franklin County has contributed an additional \$6k and he likes the idea coming back with an amendment for the \$7k as part of the 3-way split. Ms. Shoemaker noted that Lavonia would have to come back with a decision early since their fiscal timeline is different from the county's. Commissioner Macomson asked if sales tax revenue had been received for April. County Manager Beth Thomas responded that it had and that it was surprisingly \$30k higher than the last 12 months average, and it is unknown if a certain commodity is driving this until commodity reports are released. Ms. Shoemaker mentioned in closing that the library was able to provide a garden for the kids at the Royston Library through a grant program and the City of Royston installing a fence and providing water. She also reemphasized the importance of the library's computer use to the community, especially rural residents, and how lucky Franklin County is to have two wonderful libraries. Chairman Bridges thanked Ms. Shoemaker and asked for anyone else who would like*

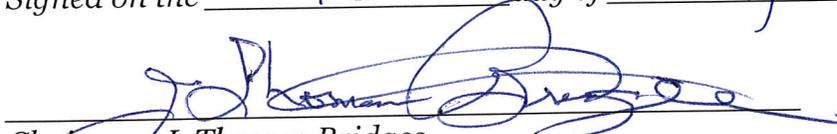


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to speak. Commissioner Wester asked what the tax digest was looking like. Manager Thomas stated she was going to ask Bobby. Tax Commissioner Bobby Martin stated he did not have them. Chairman Bridges asked about Mr. Powers and the Sr. Citizens action. Mr. Martin stated it was approved and it would appear on the Fall ballot. Manager Thomas asked if Mr. Martin could re-run the numbers to know what the impact will be next year based on the most updated tax digest to prepare for next years reduced revenue. Mr. Martin said he could get it on Thursday.

There were no additional comments or questions on the public hearing items. Chairman Bridges closed the public hearing at 6:00 p.m.

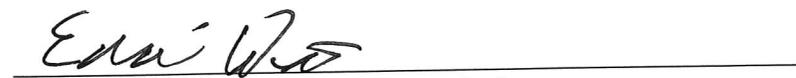
Signed on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2020

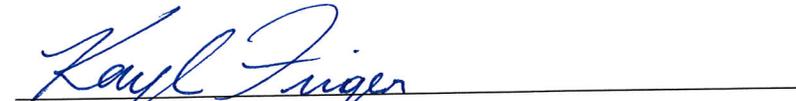
  
Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

  
Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

  
Dr. Jason Macomson, District 2 Commissioner

  
Ryan Swails, District 3 Commissioner

  
Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

  
Kayla Finger, County Clerk