

Workshop Meeting
Lamar County Board of Commissioners
4-13-2023
12:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on April 13th, 2023. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson.

Fire Department Presentation-Fire Hydrant App

Fire Chief Matthews gave a presentation to the board regarding the Fire Hydrant App (app) they use in the County and the Cities. The active emergency call goes to 911 dispatch, and the app sends the address. The call's details include the addresses of those initiating, who responded, and who is going to the emergency call. The app features show the fire hydrants' location in trailer parks, subdivisions, commercial buildings, and residential areas. The County is paying approximately \$500.00 for 50 people to use the app, including the ambulance service. If a road is closed, he can drop a pin, and everyone on the app receives the information simultaneously. Fire Chief Matthews stated that having house numbers, blue signs with house numbers, gate codes, and emergency contacts from the public would help the Fire Department in case of a fire or other emergencies.

County Allocation to Fire Hydrants Flow Test

County Administrator Townsend presented a quote from Wachs Water Services which will provide the City of Barnesville, GA multi, hydrant flow test fire hydrant condition assessment services, light repairs, and GPS (for productivity tracking) to perform approximately forty-three (43) days of condition assessment services on a minimum 500 hydrants. The Multi Hydrant Flow Test Fire Hydrant Condition Assessment includes 500 units for \$70,000.00. The Fire Hydrant Lead Value Assessment consists of 500 units for \$32,500.00. Fire Chief Matthews stated that about 800 known fire hydrants have been marked, and they continue to find unmarked fire hydrants. The board agreed to contribute \$35,000.00 at the Board of Commissioners retreat in Athens, Georgia. The ISO rating is affected by not having the fire hydrants tested.

Commissioner Lovett stated that the estimated cost is around \$100,000.00 and inquired how often the fire hydrants must be inspected. Fire Chief Matthews noted that they would need to be inspected every five years with 100 percent coverage. Commissioner Lovett said that this is the City of Barnesville's asset, they get the revenue from this, and it now is the County's problem. Fire Chief Matthews said that the claims the fire hydrants as the County's because if there is a fire in the County, then the Fire Department is the one that uses them. If none of the fire hydrants are tested, then the ISO rating will affect the taxpayers. Commissioner Lovett asked what the County gets for paying for the fire hydrant testing and suggested that they fund the \$100,000.00 and the City of Barnesville reimburse the County over the next three years. He said he would agree to contribute \$70,000.00 plus the extra \$70,000.00 and recoup all of this over three years because the citizens deserve to have the fire hydrants working in addition to the ISO rating. County Administrator Townsend said that the City of Barnesville had already allocated \$70,000.00 for the Multi Hydrant Flow Test Fire Hydrant Condition Assessment and \$32,500.00 for the Fire Hydrant Lead Value Assessment.

Commissioner Gilles asked about the Traffic Control/per day costs of \$1,500.00. County Administrator Townsend said that this is on an as-needed basis. The total of the proposed contract with Wachs Water Services is \$104,500.00 for 500 fire hydrants. Commissioner Lovett recommended doing a bridge loan with the City of Barnesville. Fire Chief Matthews said that they also have around 100 fire hydrants in the

City of Milner and they provide services for them as well. Commissioner Gilles noted that this quote was just for the hydrants in the County and said that since the City of Barnesville is testing their fire hydrants, why not borrow their equipment and have the Fire Department test the fire hydrants in the County? Fire Chief Matthews said that it would be timely and costly for them to do this. Based on the company's prediction, it will take 10-hour days at four days a week for a total of 48 days. Fire Chief Matthews said they would be running two fire engines and two fire cars and doing the fire inspections, and they needed more time to complete this for the ISO rating. He said that you also cannot park a fire truck on the side of the road.

Chairman Traylor liked the idea of a bridge loan for the City of Barnesville and suggested that they set up a meeting with them. Vice-Chair Thrash joined the meeting via telephone. She said this was not repairing the equipment but flushing the fire hydrant and doing inspections. She said they have a vested interest in this because they want to ensure it works when the Fire Department goes on an emergency call and hooks up to the fire hydrant. Vice-Chair Thrash said Lamar County should be financially interested in servicing the fire hydrants.

Legislative Update

No update

Other Business

Lamar County Retirement-Retirement Services from the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG).

County Administrator Townsend suggested that a committee of two Commissioners, Fire Chief Matthews, a Constitutional Officer, and a Department Head discuss ideas regarding retirement options for Lamar County. Ryran Reynolds, the Regional Client Manager for the ACCG retirement services, addressed the board. Lamar County has a defined benefit pension plan with ACCG, a traditional pension plan. If someone works for Lamar County for several years and reaches age 65, they can start a distribution from the plan that is a lifetime benefit with a survivorship option. Lamar County also has a 457-defined contribution plan for employees to contribute each pay period. It is similar to an IRA, but the limits are more significant. The average retirement age is 65, but the retirement benefit can be reduced early with ten years of service and age 60. Mr. Reynolds stated that most counties have an earlier, unreduced retirement age for Public Safety employees. He said that you can start your retirement benefit if you are 50 years old and have 25 years of service in Spalding County. Spalding County has a 2 percent multiplier, and Lamar County has a 1.5 percent multiplier. Spalding County has a contributory plan where general employees contribute 2 percent, and public safety employees contribute 4 percent. Moving the average employee retirement age down to unreduced creates an increased cost because the plan has to adjust actuarially. Mr. Reynolds suggested that they design a retirement plan that is conducive to the employees of Lamar County. A matching program for the 457-defined contribution plan is much like a traditional 401K plan in the public sector. Mr. Reynolds stated that the actuarial formula for the retirement benefit plan is based on a rate of return based on five years, and it can be customized in many different methods that affect everyone in the County. Mr. Reynolds stated that Pike County implemented a pension plan and gave everyone past credited service with a 2 percent multiplier, and the cost was around \$500,000.00. County Administrator Townsend stated that Lamar County is currently paying around \$423,000.00.

Regular Business Meeting Agenda Discussion

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation-Minister from Christ Chappel will give the invocation.
4. Recess for Public Hearing

Planning and Community Development Director Buice (Ms. Buice) explained that there is a Public Hearing for a Rezoning from Agriculture-Residential to Residential (Tax Map 097, Parcel 007). The applicants, Amanda Gamez and Billy Butler Smith's grandfather, have several hundred acres. There is currently a manufactured home on the property that her parents lived in when they first got married, but they have since built a house on Brent Road on a one-acre tract. A family member also has another one-acre tract on Brent Road. They are asking for two acres, and the property has an existing well and septic tank. The manufactured home will be removed, and a stick-built home will be built if approved. The Planning Commission recommended approval. No one spoke against this rezoning.

Ms. Buice explained that NBC Homes at Fox Crossing, LLC has applied for final approval for phase 3B of Fox Crossing. The subdivision has roads, storm drains, and retention ponds. The final should state that the roads and the storm drains were put in correctly and are functioning. The City of Barnesville looks at the water lines and makes sure those are working correctly. They have sent letters to property owners within 300 ft. of the property line. If there are any outstanding issues between the property owners and the developer, then the Board of Commissioners is made aware before the final is approved, so the developer can sell the lots. This is the final phase of Fox Crossing. There are 63 lots, four new roads, bonds for the roads, bonds for stormwater drainage, and bonds for landscaping that are all good for two years. There will be around 100 homes for the entire subdivision.

Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about the issues with Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and if Zeke Harvey's issues with them had been resolved. Ms. Buice said that she had heard from EPD this morning, and they said everything looked good to them. They are sending her a letter of confirmation. She said that she had not heard from Mr. Harvey in about a year, but he received a letter about two weeks ago. Vice-Chair Thrash said that if EPD signs off, then Zeke will be okay with any erosion problems. Ms. Buice said she would contact Mr. Harvey to ensure that there were no issues. Charles Abbott and Associates reviewed the storm drainage system and sent a letter stating that they were built according to plan. Chairman Traylor noted that there had been issues with the silt fencing and erosion control. Ms. Buice explained that the lots are laid out after the preliminary plat is brought to the board for approval. If approved, the staff sits down with the developer, the Public Works Director and the Fire Chief to discuss construction plans. Ms. Buice said that The Public Works Director feels strongly that when building a subdivision and heavy trucks come in with materials, you will damage a new road more. Therefore, he thinks that you should have a base layer, and once the subdivision is almost 100 percent complete, you put on the top-level coating for the road. The developer pays for the top coating, and if the build-out still needs to be there, Public Works will decide about the topcoat and the use of the bond. The bond is set at \$100.00 per linear foot. Chairman Traylor asked about the length of the bonds and said that if they expire after two years and the subdivision is under foreclosure, the bonds could never be used for paving. Ms. Buice said that if the subdivision is foreclosed on in six months and they don't use the bond within two years, the roads can still be unfinished; therefore, plans should be made so that everything runs smoothly. Ms. Buice explained that the developer's goal is to sell lots, and he can only do this once the board approves the final subdivision. The builder's goal is to sell the house. When a home purchaser goes to get a loan, it is much harder to get a loan on a private road than on a County maintained road.

5. Reconvene Regular Meeting
6. Approval of Agenda
7. Minutes Approval
 - i. Workshop Minutes-March 16th, 2023
 - ii. Public Hearing Minutes-March 21st, 2023
 - iii. Regular Business Meeting Minutes-March 21st, 2023
8. 2nd Reading Ordinance 2023-02 Amendment for County Insurance
9. Ordinance 2023-05 Rezoning from Agriculture-Residential to Residential (Tax Map 097, Parcel 007)
10. Subdivision Final: Fox Crossing Phase 3B (040001)
 - i. Resolution 2023-01 Acceptance of Final Plat for Fox Crossing Phase 32B

- ii. Resolution 2023-02 Acceptance of Roads in Fox Crossing Phase 3B
- iii. Resolution 2023-03 Acceptance of Storm Drain Structures in Fox Crossing Phase 3B
- 11. Resolution 2023-04 Engineering Study from DOT for the Widening of Rock Springs Road
- 12. Surplus Vehicles for the Sheriff's Office
- 13. County Allocation for Fire Hydrants Flow Test
- 14. Administrator's Report

County Administrator Townsend reported that the revenues were off about \$70,000.00. The expenditure is around 20 percent and should be around 25 percent.

- 15. Public Comment
- 16. Round Table

Commissioner Gilles said that she visited the gym and said it did not look great. She said that the paint looked like secondhand smoke yellow. Commissioner Gilles said they requested black and were told that white would be good. County Administrator Townsend said Recreation Department Director Lowe requested black, but they went with white paint. Commissioner Gilles explained that the RFP required closed-cell foam on the roof and closed-cell foam on the walls. There is open cell foam on the roof and closed cell foam on the walls, pulling away and cracking. She said some of the stuff was ridiculous when putting wood against the medal. Commissioner Gilles said kids could put their fingers in it, which was not safe. She said that upon further investigation when she and County Administrator Townsend were looking around, they found the paint used was not the best. Her concern was that open cell foam would absorb and retain water which could cause mold and mildew. Commissioner Gilles said she would like a second opinion because it should not be separating like this. She said that if it is pulling away, then it means that the whole thing is compromised, which means it could fall. Commissioner Gilles explained that the RFP said that they needed closed-cell foam. She said that she spoke to a professional, and they did not spray the fire retardant stuff on it. She said it was a clear coat, and most fire retardant paint that is used is ether white or grey. He said that he had requested receipts and pictures. Commissioner Gilles said she wanted to know what thermal fire-retardant paint was used. She said that the company that did it came out, and they said it was okay, but every place she called said you have to have closed cell foam. Commissioner Gilles said this is a lot of money they are spending.

County Administrator Townsend said he is getting Fire Chief Matthews to check on this. He said that he does not believe that fire retardant paint was used because when they paint it white, it is white. Commissioner Gilles said that when she was reviewing invoices, there were charges that were supposed to be included, but they were shown on the invoice as extra charges, and she did not see miscellaneous. Commissioner Gilles was concerned about a charge of \$200.00 on the invoice for kerosene that was used for heat during the past election. Commissioner Gilles said they need to look at things that save the County money. She said that there were things that were done that were not on the original RFP, and she would like to see a contract or a change order. She said she does not feel they are getting the work for what is being paid for and wondered how many other things will go wrong.

County Administrator said that a budget of \$491,000.00 was approved and said that he was staying within that budget amount. He said that Scott Leverett, the contractor with Blue Bear Restoration, and Recreation Director Lowe, were coming up with different ideas. County Administrator explained that an RFP was not done, but quotes were submitted for the project. He said they received quotes for the roof because that was one of the biggest issues. Then they received quotes for the insulation because 2 x 4s were holding it up. Recreation Director Lowe had a quote for the bleachers and the basketball goals. County Administrator Townsend said the original project would cost \$1,500,000.00 to \$3,000,000.00 for an entirely new building. They previously had paid a down payment for a gym of \$53,800.00. But with the price increase in the steel market, they gave the money back because the same building with no lights or concrete would cost \$600,000.00 to \$800,000.00. Therefore, they decided to renovate the old gym.

Planning Commission board member Dwight Fleming (Mr. Fleming) said that he had done two spray foam jobs in metal buildings, and both jobs specified open cell foam on the roof and closed cell foam on

the wall. He said if you have a leak, the water comes out near where the leak is located, and if you have a closed cell foam, it migrates to the bottom. He said the code required two coats of flame retardant paint; the first was a smoke coat, and the second was thermal. One job was done in black, and the other job was done in grey. He said that he had never heard of translucent. Mr. Fleming said that his suggestion was to make the contractor furnish an invoice of where they bought the paint. He said that if the code requires two coats of paint, then every one of the buckets will say 300 to 400 ft. to the gallon. Based on the square footage, you can tell if they bought enough paint or the correct paint. County Administrator Townsend said that he met with Mr. Leverett and said he put the flame retardant paint on there. He said that it was translucent or a clear coat. County Administrator Townsend said that he had spoken with several other contractors, and they told him that their manufacturers only have white, black, and grey. He said that he requested a picture of the can of material or the receipt where he purchased the paint. Vice-Chair Thrash said they needed to investigate this to ensure it was done correctly.

Chairman Traylor thanked Commissioner Gilles for checking on this issue. He said that good practice is to have the contractor sign off on the project so that they have documentation of agreement for anything that was done. He said that the Boys and Girls Club and the Women's Club House were done in-house to save money, much like they are doing with the gym's renovation. Chairman Traylor said that without a contractor on site, you take some risks, but with a bigger contractor such as Hogan Construction, you pay \$3,000,000.00. He said that the challenging part about this is that it delays being able to use the gym and disrupts the process. Commissioner Gilles said she would rather get it right. Chairman Traylor agreed that they needed to get these things fixed so they could have closure with the gym renovation.

Mr. Fleming said having the Code Enforcement Officer inspect the building would be a good idea, even though it is in the City of Barnesville. He said having a good set of specs for everyone to sign off on is a good idea. County Administrator Townsend said Mr. Hearn, the roofing contractor, inspected the roof at the Court Office for \$400.00. He said that Mr. Hearn will also create a Request for Proposal (RFP) for \$2,500.00. Commissioner Lovett said that he agreed with what County Administrator Townsend is doing to save money but noted that there are many irons in the fire, so an involved third party would be well worth the money.

County Administrator Townsend reported on the roof at the Courthouse. He said that the biggest issue is over the courtroom, and the recommendation is to remove it and see what decking needs to be replaced. He said new decking and TPO are recommended with silicon on the rest of the areas.

Chairman Traylor announced that the Towaliga meeting for the Board of Commissioners is on April 20th, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at the Barnesville-Lamar County Library. Chairman Traylor stated that they are getting phone calls from church members and neighbors regarding the traffic on Rock Springs Road. There is an opportunity to partner with getting some of the funds covered towards widening Rock Springs Road. A resolution will require the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) to evaluate and assess the road. It does not commit them to move forward with the project, but it allows them to evaluate the road and give them a price for how much it will cost. Then they can see how much State Funds will cover the cost. Vice-Chair Thrash said that the Lt. Governor committed that the DOT would assist with this. They also will discuss a public/private partnership on this project along with some fundraising from Rock Springs Church to contribute to Lamar County's percentage of widening Rock Springs Road. Vice-Chair Thrash said that on Easter Sunday there were 12,000 people in all three church services. She said that with the wear and tear on the road, they would have to do something, and having DOT on board, they would not have to pay EXP for their evaluation services. County Administrator Townsend said that EXP had already started evaluating Rock Springs Road because they will evaluate roads monthly, and Rock Springs Road was on the list to evaluate the cost for widening the road. Vice-Chair Thrash requested that EXP stop since they will use the DOT. Chairman Traylor requested that the Resolution to allow the DOT to engage their assistance for evaluating the road be put on the agenda of the April Regular Business Meeting. Chairman

Traylor reported that Tax Assessor Haddock reported the Sales Ratio is 31 percent and should be 38 percent. Therefore, there will be another reassessment of property values.

17. **Executive Session**

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Real Estate at approximately 2:37 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

18. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to adjourn the Workshop Meeting at approximately 2:40 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

Jarrold Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk