

Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Regular Business Meeting
July 19th, 2016

Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Commissioners Horton, Heiney, Baker, and Thrash, County Administrator Zellner, County Clerk Davidson and County Attorney Mayfield.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Glass called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

Everyone said the pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Kevin Thomas from the Nazarene Church gave the invocation.

III. Proclamation-2016 6U Girls' Softball Team

Chairman Glass read a Proclamation recognizing the 6U Girls' Softball team who won the Georgia State Champions title and will represent Georgia in the World Series on July 29th. The Lamar County Board of Commissioners acknowledged the outstanding season, the tremendous sacrifices, the total dedication, and the remarkable skill that makes the whole population proud to be associated with the team. The 2016 Lamar County 6U Coach Pitch Softball Team includes the following players and coaches:

Scarlette Bryan	Kayleigh McClendon	Sara Errera
Ja'Ziyah Foster	Diondria Fletcher	Ellie Kate Moore
River Evans	Amiyah Hord	Bailee Martin
Nyah Settles	Jayla Robinson	Makayla Watts

Manager: Brad Bryan

Coaches: Brittany Martin, Jeremy Robinson, Kimberly Smith

IV. Recess for Public Hearing

Chairman Glass recessed for a Public Hearing regarding Minor Subdivision App. #2016-01 by Bowen Jones

V. Reconvene Regular Meeting

Chairman Glass reconvened the regular meeting at approximately 7:25 p.m.

VI. Agenda Approval

Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the agenda. Vice-Chairman Thrash

seconded the motion the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Minutes Approval

Vice-Chairman Thrash made a motion to approve the following minutes.

Commissioner Baker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. Workshop Meeting-June 16th, 2016 Workshop
- ii. Public Hearing Meeting-June 21st,2016
- iii. Regular Business Meeting-June 21st,2016
- iv. Budget Workshop-June 27th, 2016
- v. Budget Workshop-June 28th, 2016
- vi. Budget Workshop-June 29th, 2016

VIII. Resolution 2016-10-Minor Sub-Division App. #2016-01 by Bowen Jones

Resolution 2016-10-Minor Sub-Division App. # 2016-01 by Bowen Jones was not addressed because the application was declined by the Building and Zoning Planning Commission.

IX. Storage System Superior Court Clerk

Chairman Glass reported that the Clerk of Superior is interested in purchasing a new manual storage system because the one they have is thirty years old and falling apart. Chairman Glass stated that they have enough detailed information to send out a Request for Proposal (RFP) so that they can approve the bids at the meeting next month. Chairman Glass noted that this will be funded out of SPLOST dollars. The board looked at several options presented to them and County Administrator Zellner noted that one option would provide seven years of storage space and another option would provide 20 years of storage space. Chairman Glass noted that 20 years of storage space is a lot and record keeping may change during that time. The board discussed upgrading the computer system for the clerk's office and agreed to get with the IT Director regarding this issue. County Administrator Zellner noted that the system was recently been upgraded by the State. Commissioner Baker revisited the storage system request and asked how much space would be needed. County Administrator Zellner noted that there used to be a vault between the main entrance and the Clerk's office. They have refurbished that area for the filing system. The clerk will have at least half of the space in the vault available for future expansion. Chairman Glass noted that this system is much like the ones seen in doctors' offices and is a storage system that can hold double the capacity, be moved around, pushed up against a wall and it can be locked. Vice-Chairman Thrash inquired about removing a sink from the office. County Administrator Zellner explained that there is an issue with taking the sink out because of the old plumbing, and having to replace the carpet.

X. Public Comments

Beverly Eskridge of 130 Holmes Street Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board stating that she is the Publicity Chairman for the Barnesville Lamar County Humane Society but she was not there as an animal's right activist but as a concerned citizen and stated that she has been betrayed by elected officials. Ms. Eskridge said, "Back in 2014 the board voted to build an animal shelter but rumor has it that some of the board members want to renege on their support and one Commissioner even said that he would never vote for an animal shelter on a SPLOST Referendum. Never say Never. Quite a few of them that are here tonight are your law abiding, tax paying citizens and voters in the community. We are the people that you are here to serve. As Commissioner Horton has said in many meetings if you don't feel like your elected official is listening to you then vote them out. This might be the only way our voices will be heard." Ms. Eskridge went on to say that for years and years she has urged and pleaded that the construction of the Animal Shelter be a part of the upcoming SPLOST referendum and it fell on death ears. She said it was even suggested that SPLOST funds couldn't be used for such a project. Ms. Eskridge stated that she has done some research and SPLOST funds are meant for Capital Outlay projects. In 2008, Ms. Eskridge stated that Clayton County included animal control officers and kennels in their SPLOST in the amount of \$4,100,000.00. In 2014, the amount was \$ 250,000.00 for county wide dog parks. In Henry County, the SPLOST included \$1,152, 555.00 for new construction of an Animal Shelter and their SPLOST IV included \$100,000 for animal control renovations. Ms. Eskridge said, "I know that Lamar County isn't as large or prosperous as these counties are but it is well past time that our county have a humane, welcoming animal shelter. Reducing the number of strays and abandoned animals will save the county taxpayers in the long run. This morning I stumbled on the counties ideas for the SPLOST project and while there are some really worthwhile items on the list, an Animal Shelter ranks higher than replacing court house windows. I found out that in 2012 Lamar County allotted \$3,261,131 to roads and bridges. Roads and Bridges are important but was SPLOST really intended for this use. I may be confused but I thought that SPLOST was intended for capital outlay projects. I may not completely understand SPLOST but aren't there funds for roads and bridges from the State? I don't know how it works but I do know that it would be a way without increasing tax payer's taxes for a community animal shelter that would benefit both the animal and the citizen." Thanks to Linda Litteken "Here is my sign". Ms. Eskridge concluded by saying that they are really serious and really hurt that they have been led astray by their officials who have promised them that they would look into having a new animal shelter.

Joyce Farmer of 159 Yatesville Road Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board stating that she has worked for animal causes for over 38 years in Lamar County and be for that she lived in Norfolk, Virginia and helped with animals and their shelter. Mrs. Farmer stated that she is 66 years old and she is not interested in running any animal shelter. Mrs. Farmer said that they closed their shelter in December 2015. She said she has her own animals to feed and water and she has to clean pens and that takes her at least 4 hours a day. Mrs. Farmer said,

“Remember old witches won’t euthanize animals so I must be an old witch because I won’t euthanize animals unless they are hurt. There is no such thing as a no kill shelter.” Mrs. Framer said that she has a 19 year old lab and he is alive because of the care that he has been given. Mrs. Farmer said that she does not want to be involved in the running of the shelter but she will support it in any way that she can. She will hit the streets and do whatever is necessary to get the shelter going. Mrs. Farmer said that she would like to see the SPLOST funds given to the animal shelter. She concluded by saying, “We have a nice Fine Arts building, a Senior Center and a swimming pool but animals are the lowest on the totem pole and we need to raise up an Animal Shelter.”

Linda Littiken of 113 Big Oak Drive Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board and said that she has lived in Lamar County for 16 years. She requested a show of hands for those that had actually been to the dog pound. Ms. Littiken stated that she had actually been there on Friday and it is not a welcoming place but a scary place. Ms. Littiken said, “Rescue groups such as “Angels Amount Us” have cleaned up the pound twice by rescuing dogs. In Northern States they spay and neuter their dogs. They have a shortage of adoptable dogs and cats. These organizations come in and they pick up the animals and they put them up for adoption. They transport them and they might drive them three states away and meet up with someone else who is going to bring the dog to the person who is adopting the dog.” Ms. Littiken said that she supports the animal shelter and she hopes all of the board members listen.

Dr. Mark Hocking of 1481 Hwy 341 South Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board stating that he is a veterinarian who runs a local kennel and has worked in shelters elsewhere. Mr. Hocking said that he is a transplant from Washington D.C. and Southern Maryland. He said that they revamped an outdated facility and made major changes. He said that the impact on the community was of low dollar expenditure. Dr. Hockings said, “We have a unique opportunity, given where this parcel of land is located, to involve school children in some of the day to day projects.” I am sure that you have seen online where these projects are for young elementary children where they go in and read to some of the nervous dogs. This helps the children to expand their confidence, making for better pet ownership and the families to understand it better as well. With the animal shelter there are plans to include a public meeting room where they have the opportunity to have dog training courses. There is opportunity to involve inmate labor with the construction to help cuts cost. There is potential to involve inmates and socialize dogs in order to help dogs get adopted. This is an amazing opportunity and I would hate to see it go by and be shoveled under the rug as if it was less important.” Dr. Hockings said he was surprised to find that the burden of rescuing dogs and finding homes for them has fallen on individual citizens which he feels like is a county responsibility. Dr. Hockings spoke of social media involvement and stated that you can adopt a lot more out if they appear on social media. Dr. Hockings said, “You can help the people who do the rescue work to say “Hey, I don’t have to worry about bringing in six dogs who

have immediate needs.” No, you can sit back and say, “I can help that one and I can work with that one and rescue groups from all over can come and look at these as well.” This tremendously increases the rate of dogs that can be adopted and decreases the rate of dogs that can be euthanized.” Dr. Hocking said that it could be reassuring to know that if his dog got frightened off by fireworks and he can’t find it and if he wants to know whether or not it has been put in the shelter he doesn’t have to go down there every day looking for his dog. He can look for his dog online at the animal shelter. Dr. Hockings concluded by saying, “I am speaking to make you aware, to strongly make you see, what is needed here.’

Commissioner Baker said that everyone in the room needs to understand that Dr. Hocking has volunteered and is a very special asset in the fact that he has already gone down this road. Commissioner Baker said that the committee, which he headed up, has visited a number of animal shelters that other counties have built and on these visits, Dr. Hocking quickly pointed out the mistakes that they had made and said that Lamar County is not going to make that same mistake. Commissioner Baker stated that Dr. Hocking is someone that has volunteered his time and has already done this and no one else in the room has ever done this. Commissioner Baker thanked Dr. Hocking for all that he has done.

XI. Administrator’s Report

County Administrator Zellner gave a report to the board as follows.

1. Reported that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) had been advertised in the paper. There are two advertisements for Request for Qualifications (RFQ). One is for the Administrative & Related Grant Services and the other is for the Architectural Services.
2. Public Works has resurfaced Bucksnot Road, Short Road, Shawnee Trail, and McClain Road.
3. Reported that he had met with the engineers regarding Industrial Drive.
4. Reported that he had worked with Code Enforcement in regards to the International Building Code which will address issues with neglected properties. The first reading will be on the agenda next month for potential approval.

XII. Round Table

Commissioner Baker stated that over the years concerned individuals have taken on the rescue process and the spaying and neutering of animals and this has made a tremendous impact on the number of animals that have been picked up and it shows that spaying and neutering works. Commissioner Baker stated that over the last 12 years the number of animals collected has gone from 1200 a year down to 78. Commissioner Heiney reported that in the past year it was down to 480 animals that have been collected and 232 animals that have been euthanized and through April, 144 animals have been collected and 38 animals

have been euthanized. Commissioner Baker read an email from Pat Peurifoy, the founding owner of Dolly Goodpuppy Society, with her thoughts on the shelter. "Every community needs an animal control shelter that functions as an animal control for a variety of health and safety issues. Animals left to fend for themselves can spread diseases and damage property and pose a threat to pets, livestock and even people. Communities need effective ways to deal with pet population. Shelters are necessary and they need to be large enough to adequately collect and process these animals. State law prohibits rescue groups from picking up stray animals. They must be processed through animal control so that lost pets and owners can be reunited. Our current animal shelter has served the community for many years but was not designed to handle the number of strays for both the city and the county. A larger and highly visible shelter would provide much needed relief for the city shelter and animal rescue organizations. Spay and neuter is necessary to reduce the number of unwanted pets. The county and city services and manages our waters, our roads, our trash and our safety. Shouldn't proper handling of unwanted animals be included? Shelters protect people, property, and pets. I was just a little girl when my beautiful pony, Jubilee, who hated being locked in a stall, was attacked by a pack of feral dogs. He died from his injuries. Heartbroken doesn't begin to describe how I felt. I loved dogs, how could they do that to me? Over time, I realized that it was not the fault of dogs but of those individuals who had abandoned them. Many people dump animals every day and most die but some survive and become feral. Unfortunately, we have animals that are dumped every day. As long as we have so many unwanted animals, we need a place that can accommodate them for evaluation and hopefully rescue and adoption. It is the lack of owner responsibility that creates this problem. Maybe it's time we take this opportunity to set an example of compassion and responsibility."

Vice-Chairman Thrash stated that she hears the talk about Barnesville not having adequate place for our animals but also noted that Barnesville has done a great job with the resources that they have. The new animal shelter will not be a no kill shelter. If we get an animal in that is sick we may have to put that animal down. Vice-Chairman Thrash said that she has answered the phone at the county office on occasion and when an elderly lady is reporting that a dog is on her porch and she is scared to go outside. She calls the Sheriff's Office and they tell her that the pound is full and they can't come get it. Vice-Chairman Thrash said that if the animal shelter is run properly hopefully they won't run into this same kind of issue as they bring the dogs in and adopt them out. Vice-Chairman Thrash gave kudos to the Georgia Department of Transportation on the Industrial Drive project. Vice-Chairman Thrash also introduced and thanked Tracey Alford, in attendance at the meeting, for being the newly elected city council woman in Milner and announced that Ms. Alford is also heading up the BBQ and Blues festival this year.

Chairman Glass reported on the changes for the Grove Street intersection. He said that the changes will make it much safer and it will also cut down on the number of collisions. This

will not impede traffic going North and South and it will allow for a left or right turn on the four lane onto Grove Street. It will prevent people from going straight across onto Grove Street. You will have to go out on the four lane and take a right off of Grove Street onto the four lane and go down to the next U turn and cross over and then come back in the other direction. This has been done in several places and the one in Henry County, over a 15 month period, has allowed for them to have zero collisions. Chairman Glass reported that the cones are out there now and the plan is to start this quickly. It may slow you down a little bit if you are crossing Grove Street but added that hopefully everyone involved will be safe. Chairman Glass thanked the Police and Law Enforcement across the country and those here in Lamar County. Chairman Glass thanked and recognized Interim Fire Chief Matthews, who was in attendance for the meeting, and stated that he has compassion for our Fire Department and Law Enforcement because we depend on them for our safety. Chairman Glass said that his heart goes out to those families who have suffered tragedies across the country. Chairman Glass stated that it is disappointing to know that there is this kind of hate out there and requested we support our law enforcement and emergency agents.

XIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Baker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:50 p.m. and Vice-Chairman Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles Glass, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chairman

Bennie Horton, Commissioner

Robert Heiney, Commissioner

Van Baker, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk