

**Lamar County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Business Meeting  
September 20, 2016**

Present for the meeting were Chairman Glass, Commissioners Horton, Heiney, Baker, and Thrash, County Administrator Zellner, and County Clerk Davidson. Absent for the meeting was 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. Vice Chairman Thrash gave the invocation.

**III. Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the agenda and Vice-Chairman Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Minutes Approval**

Vice-Chairman Thrash made a motion to approve the following set of minutes. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. Workshop Meeting-July 12th, 2016
- ii. Workshop Meeting-August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- iii. Public Hearing-August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- iv. Regular Business Meeting-August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**V. Charge on Charge off Report**

Deputy Tax Commissioner Denise Leggett addressed the board with a charge on charge off Report of the State, County, City, School and School Bond. The county's portion of the charge on charge off digest is \$87,834.07 which is down from last year's amount of \$147,670.62. The county property charge off is \$113,902.55 with a total charge off of \$304,269.60 and the county property charge on is \$26,067.58 with a total charge on of \$71,888.27. The charge on charge off report is attached to the minutes. Commissioner Baker made a motion to approve the report and Vice-Chairman Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**VI. Ordinance 2016-02-Adoption of Building Codes and Building Regulations**

Vice-Chairman Thrash made a motion to table Ordinance 2016-02 for the Adoption of Building Codes and Building Regulations indefinitely. Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VII. Architectural Services Bids, Health Department CDBG Project**

County Administrator Zellner presented the board with a list of Architectural Firms that responded to the Architectural Services Bids, Health Department Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The firms were Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC), SRJ Architects, Inc. and Carter Watkins Associates. The administrative staff recommended the Architectural Firm, Carter Watkins Associates based on the Firm History, experience and Qualifications, Experience with CDBG projects focused on Health and Government Projects, Current Workload, Scope and Level of Service Provided, Experience with Similar Projects and References, Fees and or Percentage, Insurance, Statement of Qualification Form, and the DCA Section 3 Solicitation Package. The Administrative Staff recommended to the board that Carter Watkins Associates would best met the necessary requirements. Carter Watkins Associates has worked with over 100 CDBG firms over a 24 year period. Their project interest includes Mental Health Facilities, and Health Departments. Their fees and/or percentages were the lowest of the three with a six percent construction cost with no reimbursable charges. There is no fee for the application stage. Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve Carter Watkins Associates to be the Architectural Firm for the Health Department CDBG project and Vice-Chairman Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VIII. Administrator's Report**

1. Public Works paved the T-Ball parking lot at the Recreation Park with surface treatment.
2. Public Works replaced a 36' cross drain pipe on Ennis Road along with two 15' driveway pipes where the school bus turns in. Total cost \$7,916.54.
3. Received the RFQ for the Engineering Design of the Road Improvement of Industrial Road.
4. Received the Drainage Easement for Rogers Circle from James Butler, County Surveyor. The Public Works Director James Rigdon will review and make necessary changes before proceeding.

## **IX. Public Comments**

Beverly Eskridge of 130 Holmes Street addressed the board with her request to include the Lamar County Animal Shelter on the Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) III ballot. Ms. Eskridge stated that she had researched SPLOST and found out that it is a financial method for capital outlay projects in the State of Georgia. It is an optional one percent sales tax levied by the county for the purpose of building parks, roads and other public facilities. The revenue generated cannot be used for operating expenses or most maintenance projects. The capital outlay project is defined as major projects and permanent long lived projects such as land and structures. Ms. Eskridge stated that building an animal shelter is a perfect use of SPLOST funds because it is a capital outlay project and a public facility. It is also one of the smaller projects on the county's proposed SPLOST project list. Ms. Eskridge understood from some concerned tax payers that they thought that they would have to foot the bill for the construction. Ms. Eskridge told them that by using SPLOST funds, property tax revenue is never touched. Ms. Eskridge also stated that someone told her that they should wait until the

next SPLOST comes up in six years to build the animal shelter. Ms. Eskridge stated that she doesn't believe we should wait another six years because the cost of material and labor will be so much higher and the county already has the property with the infrastructure plus the county could use inmate labor. Ms. Eskridge said "The County used inmate labor to build the Fire Station with a 40 percent cost savings to the county. There are plans for the building and the expertise of Dr. Mark Hocking. Dr. Hocking has experience with designing and building animal shelters and he has volunteered to help with the project so therefore, we are already ahead of the game." Ms. Eskridge stated that she recently attended a concerned citizens meeting and heard that the physical condition of the county is dire. Ms. Eskridge said, "We aren't discussing county tax funds, we are discussing SPLOST money. Ms. Eskridge said," In looking at the county's financial state, this year the county did not raise the millage rate, there is a county contingency set aside, the county isn't covering employee insurance premiums, county employees have been given a raise and the county audit turned up no issues. The county doesn't have an abundance of money but it isn't in dire straits either. However, there is a fear that the county will have to pay for the animal shelter. They don't realize that they are currently having to pay for the current animal shelter. The new animal shelter could use volunteers to help with adoptions and animal training and having your own animal shelter will allow generated income through adoption fees. The new animal shelter would be pro-active in solving the issue with unwanted animals." Ms. Eskridge stated that the one thing that makes her the most hopeful is that she has been approached by a concerned citizen who is considering running for a seat on the Board of County Commissioners because of this issue. Ms. Eskridge said, "People are taking notice of what you do. I may be considered as the crazy old cat lady but there are many other residents who are pet owners and pet lovers. The animals cannot speak for themselves nor can they vote but, we can and we will. Thank You."

Preston Thompson of Hwy 36 East stated that he too agreed with Ms. Eskridge. He also addressed the board with his concerns with trash that was in the road on High Falls Park Road. One night he came around the corner just past English Road and he stated that there were probably 15 to 20 bags of trash in the road. Mr. Thompson stated that if he had been in his truck he would have run over the trash. However, he was in his car and could not do this. He had to go into the other lane to get around the trash. Mr. Thompson inquired about the working hours of the Public Works Department and found out from Commissioner Heiney that they do not work 24 hours. Mr. Thompson was surprised by this news. Mr. Thompson stated that Commissioner Heiney called him back two days later and told him the trash had been picked up. Mr. Thompson requested that something be done about this issue. Mr. Thompson stated that someone in the county needs to be designated to be on call for this type of incident other than the Sheriff's office.

County Administrator Zellner responded to Mr. Thompson by saying that generally the Sheriff will call the Public Works Director Rigdon who will have someone in the Public Works Department handle the situation. Mr. Preston concluded by stating that he would not call the Sheriff's Office to come pick up the trash.

**XVI. Round Table**

Commissioner Baker stated that he agreed with Ms. Eskridge comments. Commissioner Baker reported that the committee for the Lamar County Animal Shelter Project had a booth at buggy days and there was a tremendous amount of interest. They received donations, email addresses and phone numbers. Commissioner Baker stated that SPLOST would be a way of building the animal shelter with minimal impact to the county. Commissioner Baker stated that it will always be a public/private facility even though it will be operated by the county. Commissioner Baker stated that he couldn't think of a better use of SPLOST funds.

Vice-Chairman Thrash stated that she thought that we had a great Buggy Days and that there appeared to be a lot more vendors than in years past. Vice Chairman Thrash stated that the Industrial Development Authority Director (IDA) Missy Kendrick resigned and she will be missed in our community. Vice-Chairman Thrash publically thanked Ms. Kendrick for the job that she had done while she was here in Lamar County.

Chairman Glass pointed out that there had been several tragedies in the community last week and stated that the law enforcement and the first responders had a tough week. Chairman Glass stated that he appreciated all that they did and hoped that everyone else did too. Chairman Glass requested that if anyone sees them to shake their hands and tell them thank you because they are there for all of us every day and we all need to share that appreciation.

**XVII. Adjournment**

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:45 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