

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Commissioner Meeting Minutes
October 21st, 2014
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Chairman Jay Matthews called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. Present for the meeting was Vice-Chairman Charles Glass, Commissioner Bennie Horton, Commissioner Van Baker, Commissioner Nancy Thrash, County Administrator Robert Zellner, County Clerk Carlette Davidson and Attorney Scott Mayfield.

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

The pledge of allegiance was said by everyone. Johnny Poore gave the invocation.

Reconvene Regular Business Meeting

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

Agenda Amendment

Chairman Matthews called for an amendment to the agenda with the addition of general business from Sheriff White. Commissioner Horton made a motion to amend the agenda with the additions and Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Community Foundation of Central Georgia-Kathryn Dennis and Julia Wood-Animal Shelter Funding

Kathryn Dennis, president of the community foundation of Central Georgia addressed the Board stating that the foundation was established in 1998 and it was designed to build philanthropy in the central Georgia region. The community foundation covers 20 counties and they have been awarded more than 61 million dollars in grants in the surrounding counties and they have over 100 million dollars in assets. They are proud to partner with a group of volunteers from Barnesville and Lamar County to create the Barnesville Lamar County Foundation. They have 15 funds that support Lamar County and they have awarded \$42, 000.00 in community grants along with 3 endowment funds that support the Milner Library, Lamar County School System and Saint George's Elementary School. The board also created a disaster relief fund during the 2011 tornado which allowed for every unmet need to be met for the citizens that were affected by the tornado. Recently, they have joined the newest endeavor called the Lamar 365 Gives which is a community based giving fund. This program allows each member to join for a dollar a day, which is a total of \$365.00, with half of the money going towards an endowment fund and the other half of the money going towards current spending. Ms. Dennis stated

that they have recently opened up to non-profit organizations in the community. Currently, there are 161 Lamar Gives 365 members and The Lamar Community Foundation has awarded \$165,000.00 in grants. Ms. Dennis stated that the Community Foundation does a lot of things and one thing that they do is to partner with government agencies. Ms. Dennis gave an example of when the City of Macon's Animal Shelter had been court ordered for 10 years to move from the gas chamber to lethal injection when euthanizing animals. There was a fund created by the Community Foundation where private individuals raised the money to support the lethal injection process making for a better way to euthanize animals.

Julia Woods with the Community Foundation addressed the board in regards to the animal shelter. Ms. Woods stated that there would be a fund created and then a group established who would define the criteria for grants. Ms. Woods said that they would also create a contingency plan if the shelter never came to fruition. In conclusion Ms. Woods said that once the funds are established individuals can make tax deductible contributions.

The audience was given an opportunity to ask questions and someone asked if there had to be a minimum amount to get the project started. Ms. Woods responded that there would not be a minimum amount but that they would look towards the Commissioners for the amount of money it would take to build the animal shelter. Commissioner Baker stated that part of the problem with building the animal shelter is the County being ready and having the available funds. Chairman Matthews inquired about the timeline for building the shelter. Ms. Dennis stated that there would be bench marks with documents spelling out the details along with the cost factors for building the shelter. Ms. Dennis stated that once the money begins to be raised, there would be a special fund setup along with a safety net in case they didn't meet the goal to build the shelter. Commissioner Baker stated that the goal is to have a contract with the Community Foundation so that people can start giving.

Recommendation and Discussion for Site, County Owned and Operated Animal Shelter.

Chairman Matthews stated that they had identified a location for the potential animal shelter site on Roberta Drive. Commissioner Baker stated that it had been an interesting project and that he had learned a lot about animal shelters and the meaning of a no kill shelter. He stated that Lamar County does not want this type of shelter and the intent of the county owned and operated shelter is to save and protect animal lives. Commissioner Baker stated that the ordinances need to be tweaked and that there are a lot of people who don't think we need an animal shelter but that he feels that we do need an animal shelter. Commissioner Baker stated that he investigated this with other counties and they all are glad that they have built an animal shelter. Commissioner Baker stated that this is going to be a positive project in the community. Commissioner Baker said that when they started looking at the surrounding counties they saw that it would be expensive to operate but that they found out that they could get food donated, volunteers to keep the facility clean, and disease free. They also discovered that they would need a spay and neuter

program but that the costs would need to be covered by donations, volunteers and other forms of grant money. The biggest issue is having the funding to pay for this facility and hope to raise money with private funding. The committee knew that they couldn't go out there and say they are taking tax payer money and have the citizens embrace the project. Commissioner Baker stated that hopefully they will raise all of the money to build the animal shelter but if they don't they will build the animal shelter in stages. Commissioner Baker stated that the important thing was to do something and that now they have a starting point. Commissioner Thrash stated that from everything that they had looked at over this past year it was evident that this was needed for a long time. Commissioner Thrash stated that by building this animal shelter they will not get any calls stating that the animal shelter is full. Chairman Matthews stated that by putting it on Roberta Drive near the Sheriff's Department it will be a focal point for education, training and having an animal shelter rather than a pound. The animal shelter will be a place to adopt a dog, walk the nature trails and learn about animals. Commissioner Thrash stated that the Sheriff is very supportive of this location too. Commissioner Horton asked about a starting time for the animal shelter and Chairman Matthews stated that it depends on the donations that are received within the five year period.

A Resolution for the Lamar County Animal Shelter-Resolution 2014-13

Commissioner Baker read Resolution 2014-13 whereas the Lamar County Board of Commissioners have conducted a yearlong study as to the need and feasibility, along with the cost, to construct and operate a County Animal Shelter and have deemed it in the best interest of the County to pursue the project. During their studies, it became obvious that other sources of funding were available for such a facility, including private donations and grants to help fund the construction and operation of the facility. The purpose of the facility is to provide not only code enforcement for the protection of the Lamar County Citizens, but a clean and humane environment for those homeless and helpless animals, both cats and dogs, with the goal of adopting out as many animals as possible along with a neuter/spay and shots program working with established local and state entities such as the Dolly Goodpuppy Society, the Lamar County Humane Society and other adoption agencies. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve Resolution 2014-13 and Commissioner Baker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes Approval

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the September 16th, 2014 regular business meeting minutes. Vice-Chairman Glass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Special Exception App #2014-01 by Gilmore Center, Inc.

Building and Zoning Director read special exception Application 2014-01 by Gilmore Center, Inc. at the prior public hearing. Commissioner Baker made a motion to approve Resolution 2014-14 granting the special exception 2014-01 by the Gilmore Center, Inc. and Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Victims of Crime Act Assistance Grant (V.O.C.A)

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the V.O.C.A. Grant and Vice-Chairman Glass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Probate Court Appointment of Solicitor

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to table the Probate Court solicitor appointment and Commissioner Baker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Cedar Grove Waste to Energy Project-GEFA Resolution

Mr. Johnny Poore, Executive Director of the Lamar County Regional Solid Waste Authority gave an update on the Waste to Fuels Project. Mr. Poore gave a presentation on the conversion of waste material into a usable source of energy. He gave an overview of the type of technologies used to convert the waste to energy. Mr. Poore showed the Board a sample of natural gasoline liquid converted from waste using the pyrolysis technology. Mr. Poore requested that the Lamar County Board of Commissioners support and participate with the Lamar County Solid Waste Authority and a 27.5 million dollar GEFA Loan for the waste to fuels project for Phase I. County Administrator Zellner read Resolution 2014L08SW which facilitates the acquisition, construction and installation of additions, extension or improvements to the environment facility of Lamar County Regional Solid Waste Management Authority. This resolution will be attached to the minutes. Commissioner Thrash made a motion to approve the Resolution for Loan Number 2014L08SW and Commissioner Baker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Peddler License Ordinance 2014-01–First Reading

County Administrator Zellner read the first reading of Ordinance 2014-01 creating a peddlers ordinance for Lamar County. Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2014-01 and Vice-Chairman Glass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Insurance Increase in Premium for Employees

Vice-Chairman Glass made a motion to leave the insurance deduction for employees the same with no increase in deduction. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Towaliga Budget

Commissioner Horton made a motion to table the Towaliga Budget and Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Domestic Violence Proclamation

Commissioner Thrash read a Proclamation declaring October as Stop Domestic Violence month which marked the 20th anniversary of the Violence against Women Act. Commissioner Thrash and the Board thanked both Sheriff Brad White and Al White with the Victims Advocate program for their hard work against domestic violence. Mr. White stated that he deals with any domestic violence in Lamar County including family violence which is a big issue in the county.

Surplus of Sheriff Vehicle

Commissioner Baker made a motion to surplus a 2011 4 door Chevrolet Malibu automobile used by the Sheriff Department. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Beverly Eskridge of 130 Holmes Street, Barnesville, Georgia thanked the Board for approving the animal shelter. Ms. Eskridge also thanked the merchants and the citizens for their participation in the annual Buggy Days Festival.

Preston Thompson of Hwy 36 East, Milner, Georgia addressed the board stating that he too was in favor of the animal shelter. Mr. Preston thanked the Board for tabling the Hwy 36 highway widening. Mr. Thompson also noted that large trucks and motor homes are having a hard time turning around on Hwy 36 once they miss the road sign directing them to the Flying J truck stop. Vice-Chairman Glass noted that he would look into this issue. Mr. Thompson also addressed the Board with his concerns about ambulance service coverage on the north side of the county.

Cindy Roberts addressed the board as a member of the Leadership Lamar. Ms. Roberts is a high school government teacher and stated that she would take a lot of good information back to her students that she received from the board meeting.

Adjournment

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the Regular Business Meeting at approximately 9:00 p.m. and Commissioner Baker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jay Matthews, Chairman

Charles Glass, Vice-Chairman

Bennie Horton, Commissioner

Van Baker, Commissioner

Nancy M. Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk