

Lamar County Commissioners  
December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
6:30 p.m.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Lamar, State of Georgia, held a Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. Present for the meeting were Chairman Jay Matthews, Vice-Chairman Bennie Horton, Commissioner George R. Brown, Commissioner Jimmy Hearn, and Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jay Matthews.

The pledge of allegiance was said by everyone.

Chairman Jay Matthews welcomed everyone.

The invocation was said by Rev. Lonnie Grant of Barnesville Church of the Nazarene.

Various citizens were allowed to voice their concerns in regards to the 2011 proposed budget.

Stan Hambrick voiced concerns about overall spending and ways to save money. He proposed that an outside auditor be brought in for evaluation.

Dr. Kessler a former German recently moved to Barnesville voiced concerns about mismanagement of spending and the failure of the county management. He stated that good management represents the people. Chairman Matthews disagreed with Dr. Kessler stating for the record that our present County Administrator Wayne Patterson is not a failure and does a great job.

Anita Brown a long time resident of Barnesville spoke about the quality of government compared to 35 years ago and stated that she would leave if she could. Anita mentioned that she makes less than \$10,000 dollars a year and pays over \$7000 dollars in taxes. Various spending issues were brought to the commissioners. These issues included evaluating the cost of the law enforcement and maintaining the system; the \$1 million dollars for employee benefits and coverage for the employee's families; the abuse of the 911 service and the overall county fees.

Brenda Ross of Ingram Road came before the commissioners in regards to finding a solution to the budget. Brenda addressed her concerns about the \$10 million dollars owed for the Water Authority and the \$2.5 million dollar debt we have incurred. She was under the impression that the fire fees collected would take care of the \$10 million dollars we owe on the water authority debt.

County Administrator Wayne Patterson stated that we now owe \$421,000 dollars and Chairman Matthews reiterated that the remaining amount would be paid next week.

Chairman Jay Matthews stated that the fire fee collection was used to fund the fire department budget and to pay the \$350,000 dollar contract for the ambulance service and to fund what is in the budget. He also stated that we guaranteed the debt incurred by the water authority. He said, "We have not taken them over but have encouraged them to process and refinance their debt so they can service the full amount." Mrs. Ross stated that it would take a tremendous amount for the customers to pay back this debt and she would like for the water authority to run itself without the help of the County Commissioners. Mrs. Ross stated that we have a spending and a revenue problem and we have to be like minded in our spending.

Commissioner Brown interjected that as of last Tuesday we owe \$8.8 million dollars and we have 1080 customers but the biggest problem is that no one is hooking on. He also addressed Mrs. Brown and stated that the County pays worker's comp, unemployment, medicare, and social security all required by law. The actual cost for employee insurance is \$560,000 dollars and not \$1 million dollars.

Mary Womack of Atlanta Street stated she still had not received her corrected fire and ambulance fee. Mrs. Womack wanted to know what our plan is for paying the loan back. Chairman Matthews stated that we have paid back \$2 million as of today and will pay the rest off next week with revenue from taxes for November and December. Mrs. Womack brought her concerns about paying the volunteer fire departments and who is dispatched when a 911 service call is received. Chairman Matthews stated that he would leave that up to the professionals to make that determination. Commissioner Brown mentioned that many first responders have day time jobs but after 5:30 you may get more responders on the scene. This ensued conversation from Felton Lewis and Dr. Kessler in regards to the fire and ambulance service.

Charles Muise of Eddy Creek Road addressed the audience and the commissioners in regards to the personal charges he incurs for being a first responder. He further explained about the differences between going to the nursing home and responding to a heart attack or a hazardous type wreck. These factors determine which responders, fire fighters and ambulances that may be called.

Greg Martin of Piedmont Road addressed the commissioners in regards to how we are reducing the deficit and the fact that we are expected to have less revenues.

Chairman Matthews stated that we are making cuts by increasing deductibles, thru travel and training expenses, and changing various insurance deductibles.

Felton Lewis asked about the county liability for volunteers who run up and down the road in their personal vehicles. Attorney Scott Mayfield stated that the county covers the volunteer fire fighters. Mr. Lewis addressed the commissioners his concerns about the ambulances and the fire trucks going to the nursing home.

Former Sheriff Joe Buice addressed the commissioners with his thoughts on the water authority and the number of fire and ambulance being dispatched to the nursing home.

He also would like to see us build our own reservoir in the next twenty five years.

Terry Womack of Atlanta Street addressed the commissioners in regards to people being layed off and the reasons why citizens are not living within their means. He addressed the commissioners with possible solutions for serving the senior citizens such as using Church buses.

More discussson by the citizens was heard on the water authority project and legally stopping it. Chairman Matthews addressed the crowd by stating that we are legally obligated to continue the water authority project and pay what has legally been contracted out.

Commissioner Hearn addressed the citizens in regards to the water authority project and the economy. When the project started it was a good thing but as the economy declined the revenue to pay for the project changed. He explained the reasons behind the project and further explained that in order for the county to grow we had to continue with putting the water lines in.

Chairman Matthews thanked everyone for coming and called for the meeting to be adjourned. Commissioner George Brown made a motion to adjorn the meeting. Commissioner Benny Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous decision. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10am.

#### THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Jay Matthews, Chairman

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Bennie Horton, Vice-Chairman

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Jimmy Hearn, Member

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George R. Brown, Member

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Nancy M. Thrash-Member

ATTEST:

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Wayne Patterson  
County Administrator

