

Lamar County Commissioners Meeting
November 16, 2010
7:00 p.m.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Lamar, State of Georgia, held a Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, November 16th, 2010 at 7:00p.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.

Commissioner Jay Matthews welcomed everyone and apologized for the lack of seating and the use of the smaller court room. He stated the reason was due to the lack of lighting in the bigger court room.

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

Chairman Jay Matthews made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash made a motion that the agenda be amended to put first on the agenda a Proclamation for Dr. Benny Tate from Rock Springs Church. Chairman made a motion to amend the agenda to accept the Proclamation. Commissioner George Brown seconded the motion. The agenda including the addition of the Proclamation was thus approved unanimously.

Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash read and presented the Proclamation for Dr. Benny Tate.

Chairman Jay Matthews wanted to make the proclamation official for the record and called for a motion to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner George R. Brown made the motion to accept the proclamation. Commissioner Jimmy Hearn seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Proclamation was passed by a unanimous decision.

Ordinance 2010-15 was read by County Administrator, Wayne Patterson. Mr. Patterson stated that basically this ordinance provides the standards for outdoor watering of landscaping and the restrictions that have been placed on all the counties in Georgia limiting the watering to the hours of 4 pm to 10 am. He further stated that it shall not fit any limitations upon any agricultural activities or any growing activity. He also stated that the ordinance does not restrict you to watering what you want to water. Chairman Jay Matthews said that this would apply only in times of a drought. Commissioner George R. Brown made the motion to approve the 2nd reading of Ordinance 2010-15. Commissioner Benny Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous decision.

Ordinance 2010-16 was read by County Administrator, Wayne Patterson. Mr. Patterson stated that Building and Zoning Administrator, Dan Gunter, had previously talked about this at the last meeting and the public workshops. Wayne Patterson stated that a lot of this was simply cleaning up the ordinance that was prior to and co-mingling some definitions and things that was brought on by the Lamar county land development regulations. Mr. Patterson stated that we had quite a few people that joined with us when we made these changes. He further stated that it's going to be good for Lamar County. Chairman Jay Matthews called to make a motion to approve this ordinance. Commissioner George R. Brown made the motion to approve the ordinance and Commissioner Nancy M. Trash seconded the motion to approve the 2nd reading of Ordinance 2010-16. The motion passed by unanimous decision.

Commissioner Jay Matthews called for the motion to appoint Gerald Thompson for the planning commission. Commissioner Benny Horton made a motion to re-appoint Gerald Thompson. Commissioner George R. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous decision.

Chairman Jay Matthews made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Gerald Trice to the Council of the Three Rivers Regional Commission/Non-Public Member. Commissioner Benny Horton made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Trice. Commissioner Jimmy Hearn seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous decision.

Chairman Jay Matthews made a motion for the confirmation of the hiring of Financial Analyst, Carlette Davidson. Commissioner Jimmy Hearn made a motion to approve. Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash seconded the motion. Commissioner George R. Brown opposed the motion. The motion carried with approval three to one. Chairman Jay Matthews stated that he was in favor.

County Administrator Wayne Patterson presented the memorandum of agreement for the SAVE program. Mr. Patterson stated that this program verifies the legal status of non U.S. citizens who apply through the county for any federal, state or local public benefits. He stated that it is voluntary to most users but it is mandatory for every county in Georgia to register and use. Counties are required by state law to use both the E-Verify and SAVE program. Failure to register and use these programs may cause counties to loose state appropriations. The annual cost is approximately \$300.00 dollars. Chairman Jay Matthews made a motion to approve the SAVE program. Commissioner George R. Brown made a motion to adopt the SAVE program. Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous decision.

Chairman Jay Matthews called for the motion to approve the Budget Workshop Meetings Minutes dated October 6th, 2010 and the approval of the commissioner's business meeting minutes dated October 19th, 2010. Commissioner George R. Brown made the motion to approve. Commissioner Jimmy Hearn seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous decision.

Public Comments were made by the following people in regards to the Fire and Ambulance Fee.

Brenda M. Ross	Wayne Phillips	Julia S. Thomas	Julia Heidbrink
Bennie Paige	Jane Phillips	Kenneth Phillips	Leon Chapman
Collin Kitchens	Kathleen Faulker	Mark Gooden	Julia Thomas
Charles Lawrence	Merritt Taylor	Randy Vining	Mary Womack
Kathleen Faulkner	Julia Heidbrink	Terry Womack	Marilyn Price
Franklin Lassiter	Danny McKibben	Joe Buice	Jamie Morgan
Preston Foster	Dean Chastain		

Chairman Jay Matthews called for round table discussion. Commissioner Benny Horton stated that he came on board in 2002 and when he ran he said he would not increase taxes. "Maybe 5 or 6 years ago we should have increased taxes but I said no, no, no. I know the economy is rough. I'm asking for everyone here to make a survey of all the surrounding counties, Pike; Monroe; Crawford and you will find that you are still in the lowest brackets." Commissioner George R. Brown stated that we are 24.992. Spalding County is 38 mills and part of this is 4.5 mills for fire. He further stated that Henry County is 37.663. "They have got Plant Sheer down there. They have got all of 75 in relation to what we can afford and what they can afford we are in pretty good shape with the exception of the 2.5 million which is ridiculous, I'll admit. Commissioner Brown stated that it should have never gotten that far. It has built up over the years before I took office and it kept building, kept building, and what Commissioner Horton said is true. We should have raised the mileage rate a quarter mills at a time until we got to where we could handle all of this but, it didn't happen and now we are in this mess and it is a mess." Commissioner Hearn stated that we've wrestled with this extremely hard. "I know how the people feel about a commission board. I hate that I ran for this job two years ago. It absolutely stinks. But, I'm in this job and there is no dignity in quitting. I'm not a person who is not going to take the people in this county at heart and try to do this best thing for the county. We inherited 2.5 million dollar debt and we had to do something with it. We cut \$500,000 off the budget. We stayed with 2010 budget. The 2011 budget proposed \$900,000 we are back at 8 million so; we cut nearly 1 million from the proposed 2011 budget. This is not popular but, it is fair. Commissioner Hearn stated that had we not done something to create revenue, raise some revenue, we would have gone another year and we would have been another million dollars in debt putting us to borrow 3.5 million next year. Commissioner Hear said, "I know it sounds like we are greedy but I promise you we do not have any self-interest. None of us do. I think all of us are honest people trying to do the best for the people in the county. If you were in a surrounding county you would be paying a lot more taxes." If we had raised 2 mills, the flour mill would have had to pay \$6000.00 a year increase or more. Some of the home owners would have had to pay a little more but, roughly \$80.00 a year. We are not trying to rip you off, I'm not. None of these commissioners' are. This county is not. We have got to get back to where we can operate. We cannot go back to where we don't have proper ambulance service, proper law enforcement, and proper fire. We can't go back 25-30 years. We have to go forward. I know it's hard. It's hard on me. I have rental property. I have three houses I wish I could give away. I heard you cheer and clap like

we are the bad guy. But we are not. I'm 70 years old and I've worked 3 jobs most of my life. I'm doing my very best for this county. I would not take anything for my own good. This entire commission is doing the very best thing we know how to do for the people of this county. We tried to cut services we got blasted. It ain't any fun being blasted not continuously when you know you are trying to do the right thing. Now, I would gladly give this \$400.00 job up to anyone who wants it and if I thought there was dignity in quitting but I'm no quitter. "

Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash stated that for years in this county this budget has been forced balanced and the deficits have been rolled over and this commission has said we are not going to do it anymore. "We are going to balance this budget and we are going to start being fiscally responsible with the money. I heard what you said tonight. "

Chairman Jay Matthews stated he appreciated everyone's comments. "We don't always agree and we don't have to be disagreeable. The chairman stated that he appreciated comments from former Sheriff Joe Buice. "It's like turning a big ship around. It probably will take 6 years maybe a little less to turn this around. We are trying to balance the needs of 17,000 people. Jay stated that he hears from people that aren't here tonight. I talk to people on the phone and on the streets."

Chairman Matthews stated that we have a contract for 350,000 dollars a year for ambulance service. The service includes two ambulances, personnel, and all the supplies for the ambulance.

Chairman Matthews called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10pm.
Commissioner Jimmy Hearn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Benny Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous decision.