



Fannin County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Jury Assembly Room
March 28, 2017 6:00 PM

OPENING REGULAR MEETING:

Chairman Stan Helton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The Invocation was led by Lane Bishop and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Earl Johnson.

Chairman Helton stated the first item on the agenda was to appoint Ms. Denise M. Duncan as the new County Clerk. Motion made first by Chairman Helton. Second made by L. Sosebee; motion passed unanimously. Chairman Helton expressed appreciation to Mrs. Kristen Stone for filling in the last three months and wished her luck with the upcoming birth of her first child.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Helton noted next item would be approval of the March 14, 2017 regular meeting. Motion made first by Commissioner Sosebee. Second made by Commissioner Johnson; motion passed by unanimous decision. (Attachment A, 3 Pages)

PUBLIC COMMENTARY:

GL Pruitt approached the podium and began to address the board regarding his objections to the board approving the variance request for Lot 282, David Bryan and Deborah Lou Marshall. Chairman Helton interrupted Mr. Pruitt explaining he would be given an opportunity to voice his objections during that portion of the agenda; Chairman Helton continued to explain, this was the time for public commentary. Mr. Pruitt apologized and returned to his seat.

GL Pruitt returned to the podium stating that something needed to be done about roads where one road turns left and one road goes straight. Mr. Pruitt gave an example of the road at the Mexican Restaurant and Conoco which does not have an arrow. He was in the second lane, turning left and "road rage in Blue Ridge".

Mike Raven of Blue Ridge addressed the board in regards to the corner of Sugar Creek Road and Scenic Drive; Mr. Raven stated he had sent pictures of the area awhile back but wasn't sure who exactly the pictures were sent to. Mr. Raven went on to explain when you come up to Scenic Road, there are so many signs as well as a big storage building, you almost go out into the road to be able to see if there is anything coming. Since cars have the right away, they are moving along at a good speed. Mr. Raven stated, aside from this being hazardous, because of the storage building, all the signs make the whole corner unsightly. Mr. Raven suggested whether the roads are in the county or the city, people are putting up signs of all type everywhere and anywhere and making the beautiful mountain roads unsightly and it needs to be addressed. Chairman Helton clarified the issue was coming out of Sugar Creek onto Scenic Drive, looking back to the left is where the view was block? Mr. Raven confirmed that was correct.

Public Commentary closed at 6:13 PM.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Helton referred to the next item on the agenda, approve invoices over \$4,500. Motion to approve made first by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made second by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous vote. (Attachment B, 20 Pages)

Chairman Helton stated item number five (5) on the agenda was basically a housekeeping issue to approve the change of signatures on the Treasury Account to include the current Board of Commissioners and new Financial Director. Motion to approve made first by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made second by Chairman Helton; motion passed by unanimous vote. (Attachment C, 2 Pages)

Chairman Helton moved to item number six (6) on the agenda, variance request. Chairman Helton stated the first variance request is from David Bryan and Deborah Lou Marshall located off Dragon Fly Drive. Chairman Helton inquired as to if there was anyone present who was representing the Marshalls; Daniel Kaylor was present and declined any comments. GL Pruitt was invited to the podium to present his objections to the board approving requested variance. There was a lengthy discussion as to his objection to the variance with input from all members of the board, Keith Nicholson, Land Development Building Inspector and Mr. Pruitt. Following discussion, Chairman Helton stated the board of commissioners was ready to vote. Motion made first by Commission Chair Helton. Second made by Commissioner Johnson; motion passed by unanimous decision. (Attachment D, 6 Pages)

Chairman Helton announced the next variance, MAW Investments Properties, LLC to build a new home 45 feet from the centerline of Sundance Ridge in Big Sky Subdivision. Chairman Helton stated he had been there and looked at the property which is very steep. The request is only to move in a very short distance to make more stable. Commissioner Helton stated he had no problem with it. Commissioner Helton referred to Keith Nicholson, Land Development Building Inspector who had also been out to the property and agreed he had no problem with it. Motion made first by Commissioner Johnson. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous decision. (Attachment E, 5 Pages)

The last variance on the agenda was Michael and Paula Raven; Chairman Helton stated he had visited this location and it is a very nice place. Chairman Helton referred to Mr. and Mrs. Raven, stating he was happy they could sell their other home and move fulltime to Fannin County. Chairman Helton stated he understands

the reason they are requesting to place their garage where they are was because it is the only place possible. Therefore, the request is to place the garage 1 foot from the property line instead of the 15-foot setback requirement. Chairman Helton pointed out Mr. and Mrs. Raven have a letter from their neighbors who agree and suggested the location of the garage. As it has been done in the past, with approvals from neighbors, permission has been granted. Keith Nicholson, Land Development Building Inspector spoke and stated he was fine with it; however, he feels that moving forward, the county should not allow less than a 5-foot buffer with Chairman Helton agreeing to this footage limit. Commissioner Sosebee spoke stating although he agrees that in the past, if a property owner has a support letter from the neighbor that permission had been granted, he doesn't think anyone should ever build that close due to not knowing who might eventually move in beside you. Motion to approve made first by Commissioner Chair Helton. Motion made second by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous vote. Following the vote Mr. Raven asked to make a comment, Chairman Helton approved. Mr. Raven stated they would stay as far away from the property line and think that it may be possible to keep it at least three or more feet. Chairman Helton thanked Mr. Raven for his willingness to do so. (Attachment F, 6 Pages)

Chairman Helton called Robert Graham, EMA Director and Larry Thomas, Fire Chief to the podium to begin Department Reports. R. Graham began stating total personnel training hours for Fire/EMS and Rescue for the first quarter of 2017 were approximately 400 hours. Over the last two months they have had several calls for help from hikers on the area trails and expect these calls to increase as the weather gets warmer. During the storms that passed through our area last Tuesday, the 911 center received eight reports of lightning strikes to buildings and multiple areas with trees across roadways. They also received several reports of hail from pea sized up to golf ball sized but no one reported any damage from the hail to 911.

The plans for the Public Safety Complex are being revised to bring it within budget. They have reduced the size of the truck bays, taken part of the living space away and changed the type of building to a pre-engineered metal building with the 911 and EOC area still bunkered. They are leaving plans for the lost living space in the bid package as an option to consider if within budget.

The engineers are presently providing updates to plumbing, electrical and fixtures to cut more costs. It is expected that they will have the revised plans ready to review and send out for bids within the next two weeks. Following R. Graham's report, Chairman Helton followed up by stating the plans of sending out for bids within the next two weeks is big news as these plans were changed at the Board of Commissioners first workshop of the year held January 2.

Chairman Helton stated based on this report, at the first April Board of Commissioners meeting, we should be ready to go out for bid. R. Graham confirmed that is what they were shooting for and what they had told the engineers. Commissioner Johnson inquired as to if the engineers understood how important it is that they meet the requested deadline? R. Graham confirmed that they did. Commissioner Johnson looked to Chairman Helton and Commissioner Sosebee to confirm they agreed this deadline was important and it was time to move forward. All members of the Board of Commissioners agreed.

R. Graham turned the podium over to Larry Thomas, Fire Chief. L. Thomas reported that Station #3 construction is well underway and coming right along. L. Thomas stated due to the recent storms, there were six structures that were affected, one being the hospital and five were houses (two of which were total losses).

L. Thomas made a request to the board to get the bid process started for new fire trucks, stating that for the past 21 years, every seven years the fire department tries to buy three new trucks. Commissioner Johnson inquired as to what L. Thomas was looking to replace. L. Thomas stated, some of the older engines and the engines that these are replacing could be auctioned. L. Sosebee inquired as to if these being replaced were the oldest? L. Thomas stated that they would be. L. Sosebee inquired about the Epsworth station. L. Thomas stated that Station 5 will be upgraded to maintain ISO guidelines.

Commissioner Johnson pointed out with the new SPLOST, there are funds for public safety. Further discussion was had as to which specific engines were going to be replaced referencing the Fannin County Fire Department Vehicle List Provided by L. Thomas (Attachment G, 2 Pages).

Chairman Helton referred to more and more houses being built in the Fannin County area, if L. Thomas was considering equipment that was more flexible to get into the areas as necessary. L. Thomas confirmed that this was being done. L. Sosebee inquired as to the reasoning for a recent fire truck getting stuck. L. Thomas explained this was not due to the equipment or road limitations, it was simply due to the driver pulling off a little onto wet ground. Chairman Helton inquired about the increased number of brush fires and causes. L. Thomas stated although there had been rain, we have not fully recovered from going without for so long and the public did not understand this. L. Thomas stated he felt that it was a matter of public education.

Chairman Helton clarified with L. Thomas that what he was requesting was permission to move forward with getting the bid process started for three new trucks. L. Thomas stated this was correct. R. Graham approached the podium to state that historically when purchasing new trucks, these are done on a seven-year lease purchase agreement and the current seven-year lease agreement has just been paid off.

Commissioner Johnson stated he would suggest at a future workshop, a discussion on what future needs are for the Fire Department. L. Thomas stated they have currently been working on a five-year plan within the fire department. Chairman Helton agreed. Motion made first by Commissioner Chair Helton that Fire Chief begin to get bid process started for new fire trucks. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous decision.

R. Graham approached the podium to state he would like to request that the bids for the purchase of the new ambulance be opened at the Board of Commissioners meeting and recorded, then they be given until the next meeting to decide and announce who would be awarded the bid. Commission Chair confirmed R. Graham's request and stated he agreed this is the best process to follow.

Bids were opened and recorded by County Clerk with assistance from Commissioner Sosebee. Four bids were received and recorded as such:

- 1) Precision Rescue Vehicles = \$129,282.00
- 2) Emergency Vehicles Sales = \$131,836.00
- 3) Ten-8 Fire & Safety Equipment of Georgia = \$123,420.00
- 4) Southeaster Specialty Vehicles = \$134,744.00

Commissioner Johnson recommended for future bids, there be a statement noting all bids should include a final coversheet outlining details including bid amount which is easily located.

Commissioner Johnson clarified for those who have attended previous meetings where bids have been received for new ambulance and the numbers were substantially less, it was due to the fact they were purchasing vehicles with used remount systems. Chairman Johnson went on to explain that they now feel it is necessary to start purchasing new vehicles with new remount systems rather than used which is why the bids are higher.

Chairman Helton stated the bids will be placed in the County Clerk's office when they are ready to begin the review process. L. Sosebee requested that R. Graham email findings to Board of Commissioners after reviewing the bids.

Chairman Helton invited Marie Woody, Land Development Director to the podium to give her report. M. Woody reported 30 new homes as of March 27 and was unable to see if had received any today.

M. Woody gave an update on condemnations from the March 14 Board of Commissioners Meeting:

- M. Woody spoke with Mr. Cook by phone, owner of Old Dial Road property, who stated he would be cleaning up the property within the next 90 days. Chairman Helton requested that M. Woody keep good notes and continue to check status to assure that this is happening. Ms. Woody said that she would. Mr. Helton asked if Mr. Cook stated why it had gotten in such bad condition; M. Woody stated he did not say.
- M. Woody stated she was unable to contact owner of Salem Road, the owner is deceased however County Attorney Lynn Doss had information as the property is now in the hands of legal department. Attorney Doss stated that upon the death of the property owner the land fell to the three children, there was a 1st and a 2nd mortgage. The land is now in the process of being foreclosed on and waiting for it to run in the paper and for the bank to take possession and clean up the property. They are unsure if this will take place in April or May. The three children never responded to anything in the litigation and it had to be served by publication so it is expected that within 90 days it will be owned by the bank and be back up for resale.
- M. Woody stated she spoke to Mr. Greene by phone, owner of Riverside Lane explaining to him the issue with the property. Mr. Greene stated he had not been to the property in several years and stated he appreciated the call. M. Woody asked Mr. Greene his plans to repair the property and he asked what the county planned to do, M. Woody explained that if the property continued to deteriorate the county would place a lien on the property; Mr. Greene again thanked M. Woody for calling. Chairman Helton recommended a letter be sent to Mr. Greene to respond within thirty days, Commissioner Sosebee and Commissioner Johnson in agreement.

M. Woody stated she had two new addresses for review for the Board of Commissioners for possible condemnation:

- 133 East St. - M. Woody stated she had been unable to locate a phone through all resources.
- 4467 Hwy 2 - M. Woody stated same situation with this property as the above property.

Board of Commissioners agreed to have M. Woody send a letter to both property owners requesting a response within thirty days. Chairman Helton stated he felt the new process was allowing progress to be made.

L. Sosebee brought up the increased amount of areas in the county becoming dump sites for old tires and feels that the citizens need to be reminded of the county ordinance by placing an ad in the paper. Chairman Helton reached out to media present requesting that they assist with notifying the public as well reiterating the significance in the health hazards with specific ordinance. L. Sosebee spoke of a previous grant that assisted with the cost for clean-up and disposal of old tires, etc.; M. Woody stated she was currently in the process of researching current and/or future grants similar that she could apply for. S. Helton requested M. Woody compile any information gathered and place in an email to be sent to all Board of Commissioners.

M. Woody gave report of numerous garbage complaints. Chairman Helton stated these would-be violations of county ordinance and instructed M. Woody to send out letters and keep an updated spreadsheet to keep the Board of Commissioners up to date as to the status of each complaint.


EXECUTIVE SESSION:


N/A

CLOSING:

With no further business, Chairman Helton called for a motion to adjourn at 7:00 PM. Commissioner Johnson made first the motion to adjourn. Motion made second by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous decision.


Sean Helton, Chairman


Earl Johnson, Post One Commissioner


Larry Joe Sosebee, Post Two Commissioner

Attest:


Denise M. Duncan, County Clerk