



**Fannin County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Jury Assembly Room
March 14, 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 noted due to the weather predictions, the Fannin County Courthouse would be opening on a two-hour delay on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, 10:00 a.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Helton called for a motion to appoint Lynn Doss as Interim Clerk. Motion made first by Commissioner Johnson. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Helton called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2017 regular meeting. Motion made first by Commissioner Johnson. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous decision. (**Attachment A, 2 Pages**)

PUBLIC COMMENTARY:

GL Pruitt addressed the board stating he had been a resident of Fannin County for 22 years. Pruitt stated, he had lost over \$27,000 due to Easements. Pruitt stated he has also been told by many that he made Blue Ridge what it is today. Mr. Pruitt went on to apologize to the board for the way he had acted at the previous meeting. He explained that he had been prescribed some drugs to go to the dentist and had found out from the Heart Association he was not supposed to take the medication and it had caused a reaction and he wanted to apologize. Mr. Pruitt stated his reason for speaking was to let them know he would be back next time for a hearing on the variance. He said he has two covenants where one says "it" can't be changed and the other says it can be changed and he has given it to Marie with Land Development. Pruitt spoke about roads you cannot go down without having to pull off because of people coming up the road which is supposed to be one way as well as people building too close to his property. Mr. Pruitt stated he would be speaking to an attorney tomorrow about the matter but he would speak further about this matter at the next meeting. Pruitt again expressed his apologies for his strange behavior at the previous meeting due to a prescription given.

Robert Koup addressed Agenda item #11, asking county to condemn property located at 180 Riverside Lane, Blue Ridge. Mr. Koup stated the property is dilapidated and feels it is a health hazard to the community. Chairman confirmed he had been out to the property today with the building inspector.

Ralph Garner referenced the March 8 editorial in the News Observer whereas they were questioning the county's reasoning for lowering the split on lodging revenue with the Chamber of Commerce (COC). Mr. Garner stated that the writer of the editorial is the past Chairman of the Board of Director of the Chamber of Commerce and a current Chamber Board Member. Garner went on to say the News Observer failed to report that the COC received 1.1 million dollars in 2016 with its current lodging revenue and \$303,000 more in 2013. Garner stated the News Observer made accusations that the Commissioners made the decision to cut funding, they did so without a plan or knowing how they plan to use the funds. Garner suggested someone from the News Observer participate in one of the workshops to get up to date, and pointed out nothing has been said as to why the Chambers needs that much money. Mr. Garner commended Chamber President, Jan Hackett for her job in promoting Blue Ridge and Fannin County as well as pointing out the contributions made by Railroad to the Chamber

Public Commentary closed at 6:12 PM.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Helton called for a motion to 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, 22 Pages**)

Chairman Helton invited Sheriff Kirby to the podium. Sheriff Kirby explained the current lease purchase is ending this month. Sheriff Kirby stated the new lease purchase would be a single payment annually, 36 month at a 2.27% interest. Commissioner Sosebee clarified with Sheriff Kirby the reason for the request was due to the current lease expiring this month. Sheriff Kirby confirmed that was correct. Commissioner Sosebee asked if he would be adding to or replacing vehicles. Sheriff Kirby stated he would be replacing, therefore eight vehicles would come back to the county for use or to sell. Chairman Helton called for a motion to approve Sheriff Kirby's request for new lease purchase of vehicles. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous decision. (**Attachment C, 7 Pages**)

Chairman Helton called for a motion to appoint David Falls to the Fannin County Water Authority. Second made by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed unanimously. Mr. Falls will be filling the term of Tim Smith whose term will expire March, 2018. (**Attachment D, 2 Pages**)

Chairman Helton moved to the approval of the variance request from Arnold Postell. Motion made first by Commissioner Johnson. Second made by Commissioner Johnson; motion passed by unanimous decision. (**Attachment E, 8 Pages**)

Chairman Helton apologized for an additional variance request not be included on the agenda, request by Harold Meeks, Jr. Chairman Helton moved to the approval of the variance request from Harold Meeks, Jr. Commissioner Johnson stated he had not been there. Motion made second by Commissioner Sosebee; Commissioner Johnson stated he would take the word of others; motion passed unanimously. **(Attachment F, 13 Pages)**

Chairman Helton stated all paperwork and permits had been received as requested and required for Project Chimps. Chairman Helton called for a motion for approval of Project Chimps. Motion to approve made first by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made second by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous vote. **(Attachment G, 4 Pages)**

Chairman Helton announced the month of March to be American Red Cross Month and stated the county had been asked to sign a Proclamation stating this. Chairman Helton continued to state he wanted to do something a little different than most Proclamation signings and invited all Red Cross attendees to step forward to the podium. Chairman Helton invited each person to say a few words on behalf of the American Red Cross. Fred Cory spoke stating Red Cross covers thirteen counties including Fannin. He currently leads a team of 12 volunteers that are on call, 24/7 in Fannin County. In addition to him, three others were in attendance. Mr. Cory thanks the county for their support. Chairman signed the Proclamation and words of appreciation were expressed to the American Red Cross for their service to Fannin County. Chairman

Helton moved to the department head update from Zack Ratcliff, Director of Public Works. Ratcliff stated he had located a chip sealer which would save the county a substantial amount of time and money. By using this machine, the county could save half of what would be spent on asphalt. Chip would create a harder surface. Mr. Ratcliff stated he had checked with other companies on line in Florida and Ohio with hours and conditions and they cannot compare at all. **(Attachment H, 1 Pages)**

It is a 2004 Rosco SPRH-H, Hydrostatic, 4-wheel drive, 12' spread hopper, computer controls, Cummins Diesel, and the cost is \$66,500. It includes a 60-day main component warranty.

Mr. Ratcliff stated the cost per mile is approximately \$30,000 to \$35,000. Chairman Helton replied with this process the county could save 25-50% per mile.

Chairman Helton explained although the county is to bid this size purchase there is an allowance for Commissioners discretion if declared an emergency. Commissioner Johnson stated the county should move on this. That with this type of equipment you cannot bid out because used equipment such as this are so old and worn out they are worthless. Commissioner Johnson recommended the county should move forward because quality used machines are not available, he has personally inspected and feels the window of opportunity is such that the county declare an emergency purchase of the equipment due to availability and timing.

Motion to approve made first by Chairman Helton. Motion made second by Commissioner Sosebee; motion passed by unanimous vote. **(Attachment I, 1 Pages)**

Mr. Ratcliff explained there is an unfunded federal mandate concerning signage that will become effective in 2018. A sample of what the new signage vs current signage was presented, they are larger, will be higher, reflective and rather than sharp corners they are rounded edges.

Steve Stanly spoke on behalf of the sign department and stated the example sign was made with equipment from Pickens County which is the same equipment used in Cobb and Cherokee. The estimated cost is \$14,000 for the software, cutter and press. He and Mr. Ratcliff stated although this is a large upfront expense, both agreed the cost is by far less than purchasing from a third-party vendor.

In addition, the new equipment will make signs more effectively and once they have mastered the program it will be more time efficient. They will also store the history of what signs have been made thus no duplication of input, thus reducing production by half.

Motion to approve purchase of new sign equipment made first by Commissioner Sosebee. Motion made second by Chairman Helton; motion passed by unanimous vote. **(Attachment I, 1 Pages)**

Commissioner Johnson brought up the need for a Fannin County logo and that it needed to be used uniformly throughout. Commissioner Sosebee and Chairman Helton appointed Commissioner Johnson a committee of one to consider logo and make a recommendation to the board.

Chairman Helton shifted the department head update to Eddie O'Neal, Recreation Director. O'Neal stated the adult leagues are moving forward as well as rentals under way. O'Neal addressed the board in regards to the lawncare bids previously discussed at the February meeting reminding there were two bids, one of which was the current business providing the service. Chairman Helton referred to his previous statement at the February meeting that he would abstain from voting due to his personal business with one of the business owners therefore it was up to the other two Commissioners to make the decision.

Commissioner Sosebee stated he was happy with the current provided, has had no complaints and even though the bid was higher he feels "you get what you pay for" as thus far, has had a good track record. Commissioner Johnson stated he is always looking at ways to save money and feels it is hard to defend not utilizing the lowest bid. Discussion between all confirmed by O'Neal that both had references, confirmed equipment, the new bid has provided lawn care to schools.

Chairman Helton inquired as to if the board waited until the following meeting, March 28, 2017 if this would put Mr. O'Neal in a bind. O'Neal stated he needed to have the restrooms open by the first of April. Chairman Helton then turned back to both Commissioners stating that meant they would need to decide. Commissioner Sosebee stated he would be willing to agree to the lower bid company, SDC Lawn Care, for a two-month trial period. Commissioner Johnson agreed with O'Neal willing to present this agreement to both companies.

Motion to approve SD Lawncare for a two-month trial contract by Commissioner Sosebee. Motion made second by Commissioner Johnson; Chairman Helton abstained from vote.

Eddie O'Neal stated he had requested surveys be completed regarding afternoon/after-school program for the youth through the recreation department and it had received very positive response. Members of the Kiwanis Club were present explaining they have been present in Fannin County for 86 years with a goal of "taking care of kids". Steve Miracle and Tommy Vanoy presented a donation to the ~~Recreation~~ ^{Recreation} County Recreation Department for playground equipment to be placed on the softball side of the facility in the amount of \$30,920.52. Commissioner Johnson commended those present for the donation stating very seldom does anyone come to the county meetings to contribute.

Marie Woody approached the podium providing the Land Development Report. There have been 57 new home applications to date in 2017; 23 in January, 16 in February and 18 in March. (Attachment J, 1 Pages)

Three condemnations were presented to the board:

- Old Dial Road
- Riverside Lane
- Salem Road

Chairman Helton inquired as to if any contacted had been made to the property owners. Woody stated there had not. Chairman Helton recommended a process be put in place where a courtesy call be made and property owner be given 30 days to clean up the area. Woody would report back to the board at the next meeting. March 28, 2017 result of the call and if any progress had been made. Commissioner Sosebee and Commissioner Johnson agreed with this process.

Chairman Helton requested Woody bring three more properties for review at the next meeting to begin same process.

Chairman Helton addressed both Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Sosebee as to having a March Workshop. Commissioner Sosebee stated he was unsure as to if he would be able to make this month due to his schedule. Chairman Helton stated he didn't want to meet "just to meet" and if there was not a pressing issue they could hold off until the following month or should something arise they could have a called meeting. Everyone agreed; no March Workshop was scheduled.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

N/A


CLOSING:

With no further business, Chairman Helton called for a motion to adjourn at 7:13 PM. Commissioner Sosebee made first the motion to adjourn. Motion made second by Commissioner Johnson; motion passed by unanimous decision.

Attest:


Lynn Doss, Interim County Clerk


Stan Helton, Chairman


Earl Johnson, Post One Commissioner


Larry Joe Sosebee, Post Two Commissioner

3/28/17