

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 3, 2015
6:00 P.M.**

Present: Commission Chairman Thomas Bridges
District 1 Commissioner Robert Franklin
District 2 Commissioner David Strickland
District 3 Commissioner Jeff Jacques
District 4 Commissioner Eddie Wester

Media: Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen

Staff: County Manager, Beth Thomas
County Clerk, Elaine Evans
County Attorney, Bubba Samuels

Item 1 & 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Bridges welcomed everyone and called the August 3rd regular board meeting to order. He then led the invocation and pledge to the American flag. Chairman Bridges welcomed the Chairman of the Tax Assessor Board, Gary Famer to the meeting. He also thanked the people who regularly attend.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes:

July 6, 2015 Regular Board Meeting
July 21, 2015 Public Hearing – 10 a.m.
July 21, 2015 Public Hearing – 6 p.m.
July 28, 2015 Public Hearing
July 28, 2015 Work Session

Chairman Bridges said that there are five sets of minutes to approve. He said that the minutes were sent out to each commissioner for review. He then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Strickland made the motion to approve all of the minutes for July. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Franklin; Commissioner Strickland; Commissioner Wester; and Commissioner Jacques.

Item 4: *Items for discussion:*

A. Public Comment – Chairman Bridges asked if anyone would like to speak in public comment. There was no public comment.

B. Public hearing item – Bryan and Lisa Burns – Chairman Bridges said that each commissioner had received the information from the Planning Committee for the conditional use permit for Bryan and Lisa Burns. The recommendation from the Planning Committee is to approve the conditional use permit to allow Bryan and Lisa Burns to construct two breeder houses. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the recommendation from the Planning Committee. Commissioner Wester made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Strickland; and Commissioner Franklin.

C. Timber Ordinance – Chairman Bridges said that County Manager Beth Thomas presented the timber ordinance at the July work session. He said that a copy of the timber ordinance was given to each commissioner. Franklin County did not finalize the timber ordinance until the State of Georgia had made changes. The timber ordinance was also reviewed by County Attorney Bubba Samuels. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to adopt the timber ordinance. Commissioner Strickland made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin; Commissioner Strickland; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Jacques; and Commissioner Wester.

D. Tractor Lease – Chairman Bridges said that County Manager Beth Thomas presented information at the July work session on the tractor lease. One of the County tractors is in need of repair and has a knocking noise. Chairman Bridges said that he appreciated the work that Mrs. Thomas and County Engineer John Phillips had done on searching out the best option for Franklin County. He said that the tractor will be leased locally from James Short. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to move forward with the tractor lease. Commissioner Strickland made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion. Commissioner Strickland said that more governments are going to leases because of it being more cost effective. He said at the end of the lease the County will be able to keep the tractor or sale it. There was no further discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Jacques; Commissioner Strickland; Commissioner Franklin; Commissioner Wester; and Chairman Bridges.

E. Atkinson Bridge Road – Chairman Bridges said that Atkinson Bridge Road was talked about at the July work session. He said that Mrs. Thomas is currently researching Atkinson Bridge Road. Mrs. Thomas recommended after review of previous minutes that the vote for Atkinson Bridge Road be tabled until after the August work session which will include a public works update, specifically on roads and water. Commissioner Jacques made a motion to table this until further discussion and dialogue could take place in conjunction with the public works update. Mrs. Thomas said that the water superintendent; road superintendent; and public works director will all be at the August work session to give updates. Mrs. Thomas said that the LMIG questions are also being researched and an update will be given at the next work session. Mrs. Thomas thanked Commissioner Jacques for tabling the issue until the public works update. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passes by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Strickland; and Commissioner Franklin.

F. At large voting request – Chairman Bridges said that the at large voting request came from Paul Withers. Mr. Withers would like for the commissioners to be voted on from districts only instead of county wide. Chairman Bridges asked County Manager Beth Thomas to further explain this. Mrs. Thomas said that she does not have all the answers but that this is a very in depth process. There is more involved than just getting the referendum on the ballot. The County votes at large as well as the Board of Education. Mrs. Thomas said that she has spoken with the State Elections office and even if this is put on the November ballot the time period is too short to do the appropriate work. The voters need to be educated on all the different components to at large voting. At this time the County is not able to do the education. There is also a cost associated with changing the way that voting is done. Mrs. Thomas said that her recommendation is to talk with the County Elections Board to see what process needs to be taken and also what the ramifications to the County would be if the voting process changes. She also said that the Commission Board has to be educated before the citizens can be educated.

Chairman Bridges thanked Mrs. Thomas for the update. Commissioner Strickland said that this is the first step in finding out the necessary steps for an at large voting change. Mrs. Thomas said that everyone needs to be educated on the steps before any process to change begins. This decision has to be made at the State level. At this time only one gentleman has asked for the County to change the voting process. There has not been a poll or petition received by the County, only the one person has come forward to ask. Commissioner Strickland said that there are a lot of other citizens in the County who would like to see the voting change to at large. Commissioner Jacques said that several people asked him about voting at large when he was campaigning. Chairman Bridges said that a vote is not needed on this. At the appropriate time the information will be turned over to the Elections Board.

Commissioner Strickland said that at large voting would make sense. He said

that the people from a particular district should be able to elect their commissioner. Mrs. Thomas said that a lot of the smaller counties vote in the same manner as Franklin County. She said that she thinks that the Commission Board works well together because of the population of the County which is around 22,000. There are 10,000 registered voters in the County and only 40% vote in elections. Chairman Bridges said that he is sure that the Commission Board will be receiving feedback from the voters. He said that he has already received feedback stating that they do not want the voting method changed. Commissioner Wester said that he has received several calls stating not to change the voting. He said that the calls he has had said that the Commission Board represent the whole county, not just one district. Commissioner Wester said that he appreciates that view. He also understands that in addition to representing the whole county, each commissioner represents one district.

Chairman Bridges said that he and the Commission Board thanked Mr. Paul Withers for coming before them with the at large voting request. He said that they will see where it goes. Chairman Bridges said that there are no more items on the agenda. He then asked for a motion and a second to adjourn. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Commissioner Strickland; and Commissioner Franklin. The meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2015

Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

David R. Strickland, District 2 Commissioner

Jeff Jacques, District 3 Commissioner

Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

Elaine H. Evans, County Clerk