

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
February 23, 2016
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

Item 1 & 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Bridges welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance at the February work session. He asked Commissioner Wester to lead the invocation and pledge to the American flag.

Item 3: *Items for discussion:*

A. Public Comment – Chairman Bridges asked if anyone would like to make a public comment. Commissioner Wester said that he wanted to apologize to the Commission Board; Mrs. Thomas; Mrs. Evans and the citizens of Franklin County for missing the February regular board meeting. He stated that he takes his role as Commissioner very seriously and he regretted being unable to attend the last meeting. Commissioner Jacques said that Commissioner Wester's absence was due to circumstances beyond his control. Commissioner Wester said that he was not using his head completely. Chairman Bridges said that he heard it was his first time skiing. Commissioner Wester said it was also his last time skiing.

Commissioner Strickland clarified that in the last meeting he had stated that he got his information from the GSP but it was actually from the GBI. He said that all the data he presented in the last meeting came from GBI sources not GSP sources. Chairman Bridges asked if there were any other comments before moving to the next item. There was no further discussion.

B. 4-H/Extension – Raymond Fitzpatrick – Chairman Bridges recognized Raymond Fitzpatrick to come forward and speak to the Commission Board. Mr. Fitzpatrick came forward and said that there is an opportunity for Audrey Justice to become a full time employee. Ms. Justice has been employed since 2011 and is a 29

hour per week program assistant. This position is funded completely by the County at a cost of approximately \$18,500 annually. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that he is working with UGA to change Ms. Justice to a full time employee. He said that UGA would pick up the benefit cost which would be approximately \$25,000 per year. This would cover medical insurance, retirement, etc. for Ms. Justice. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that this would give Ms. Justice a reward for sticking with Franklin County.

Mr. Fitzpatrick stated to the Commission Board that what he needs from the County is approximately \$2,500. He said that this amount would get Ms. Justice to where she needs to be for UGA to help. At this point, nothing has been finalized with UGA. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that his director thinks she can make this proposal work for Ms. Justice to become full time if the County will contribute this amount. He went on to say that at this time it is unknown where this money would be placed in the budget, whether it would go into salary or travel. He also said that the travel portion for Ms. Justice would have to increase if she changes from 29 hours to 40 hours per week. Mr. Fitzpatrick said at this time, his goal is to secure the funds for the budget that will become effective July 1. His goal is for Ms. Justice to become a 4-H program associate instead of a 4-H program assistant. Ms. Justice has finished a degree in interdisciplinary studies and is currently working on a master's degree. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that his goal for Ms. Justice after she finishes her master's degree is to make her a full 4-H agent. He said that the difference in an associate and an agent is more monetary compensation and more documentation requirements.

Chairman Bridges asked Mr. Fitzpatrick if he was interested in getting his answer by July 1. Mr. Fitzpatrick said yes, he would need the answer by then for the start of the new budget. He said that he does not need money today but he does need the answer for the July 1 effective budget. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that he has to have an answer from the Commission Board so that he can get UGA started on the process. Commissioner Jacques said that this would have to be evaluated in the budget process. Commissioner Strickland asked Mrs. Thomas if there was any information on the next budget year. Mrs. Thomas said that at this point she does not have information for the next budget year. She said that she is in the process of calculating the revenue that the County will lose for next year. She also said that next year's budget will continue to be an uphill battle. Mrs. Thomas told Mr. Fitzpatrick that she has some questions regarding this request that will need to be answered. She then asked Mr. Fitzpatrick if he had approached the Board of Education concerning this request. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that he has not. He came to the Commission Board first. Chairman Bridges told Mr. Fitzpatrick to get the information to Mrs. Thomas and she will communicate with the Board.

Commissioner Strickland said that the kids are the future and 4-H is leadership. He said that he would be willing to contribute a portion of his salary to assist with the request from Mr. Fitzpatrick. He also called on his colleagues to do the same. Chairman Bridges thanked Commissioner Strickland for his comments. Mr. Fitzpatrick thanked the Commission Board for allowing him to come forward and make his request.

C. Tower License Agreement – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs.

Thomas to go over the tower license agreement. Mrs. Thomas said that there is a tower on Gerrard Road and the County rents out space on it. Previously the GSP was renting space on the tower along with a building for \$600 per month. The GSP is no longer renting space from Franklin County. They have moved their equipment onto DNR's tower because there is no charge. Franklin County is now looking to enter into an agreement with Georgia Power to rent the space left vacant by the GSP. Georgia Power is only interested in the tower space and not the building. The agreement is currently under review before the actual execution. Commissioner Strickland asked what the County would receive from this rental. Mrs. Thomas said that Georgia Power will pay \$500 per month as they are not interested in renting the building, only the tower space. Commissioner Strickland asked if anyone else is interested in the tower space. Mrs. Thomas said that the contract with Southern Link is currently being looked at to rent more space. Commissioner Strickland asked how long the contract with Georgia Power would last. Mrs. Thomas said that the initial contract is for five years with the option to extend. Chairman Bridges asked the Commission Board to review the agreement and to contact Mrs. Thomas if they had additional questions. He said that this would need to be acted on at the March regular board meeting.

D. Rocky Ford bid – Chairman Bridges stated that the next agenda item is the bids for Rocky Ford and each Commissioner has a copy of them. He asked Mrs. Thomas to go over this item further. Mrs. Thomas said bids were received to pave a portion of the parking lot at Rocky Ford Recreation Center after advertising. She said that these funds are available through SPLOST IV. Stratton and Sons was the low bid and Mrs. Thomas is very pleased with that. It is nice to have local people and they have done excellent work in the past for the County. Mrs. Thomas said that the recommendation from the County Engineer is to go with Stratton and Sons for the paving project. She said that she is in agreement with this recommendation. She also asked that the Commission Board look over the bids and take action on the recommendation at the March regular board meeting.

Commissioner Strickland asked when the project would begin. Mrs. Thomas said that it will have to be scheduled with regard to the Recreation activities. The parking lot that is to be paved is the one in the middle. Commissioner Jacques said that the work could be done at night. Chairman Bridges said that the price from Stratton and Sons seems to be a nice price in comparison with the other bids.

There were no further comments or concerns. Chairman Bridges adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2016

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