

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 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 Engineer, John Phillips
County Attorney, Bubba Samuels

Item 1 & 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Bridges welcomed everyone to the December regular board meeting. He asked Commissioner Strickland to lead the invocation and pledge to the American flag. Commissioner Strickland asked everyone to take a moment of silence for the family members of the attack in California. He then asked everyone to take another moment of silence for December 7, 1941 which brought the U.S. into another conflict 74 years ago. Take this moment to remember the veterans.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes:

November 2, 2015 Public Hearing
November 2, 2015 Regular Board Meeting
November 24, 2015 Work Session

Chairman Bridges said that there are three sets of minutes for approval. He thanked the County Clerk for sending them out and said that she had done a good job. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to adopt the minutes. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to adopt all three sets of minutes as written. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. 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.

Item 4: Items for discussion:

A. Public Comment – Chairman Bridges said that public comment is a way

to give the citizens of Franklin County a chance to express themselves to the Commission Board. He recognized Judge Ken Eavenson and asked him to come forward and make his comment. Judge Eavenson thanked Chairman Bridges. He said that at last month's work session State Court was discussed. Prior to the work session, Judge Eavenson said that he had not heard anything from the District Attorney about State Court in Franklin County. Judge Eavenson requested that the Commission Board not make a decision on this until all information is received, including the true cost. Elbert County is the only county in the circuit that has a State Court. He said that Elbert County and Franklin County cannot be compared. As of today in State Court in Elbert County 1,635 traffic cases have been heard. As of today in Probate Court in Franklin County 4,821 cases have been heard. These are cases and not citations; these are individuals that have come before the Court. Judge Eavenson said that this is done in Franklin County with less staff than Hart County or Madison County. He said that Franklin County usually does more than the other counties combined.

Judge Eavenson said that he is not saying that somewhere down the road a State Court may be needed. What he is saying is that this needs to take place with strategic planning and with the true cost. He said that the District Attorney's Office prosecutes cases in Probate Court using the Assistant District Attorney assigned to Franklin County. Judge Eavenson said that an excellent job is done by the DA's Office. He said that the DA has a right to prosecute cases in Probate Court. This works out well because the same prosecutor is in Superior Court and Probate Court. He said that the misdemeanor problem is not strictly from traffic cases. A lot of the cases that are referred to Superior Court come back immediately to Probate Court to get settled. Judge Eavenson said that since 2009, the most cases to stay in Superior Court for over a year was 35. He said 35 cases out of about 5,000 traffic cases was not a lot of cases. He does understand the request from the District Attorney but he asked the Commission Board to not make a decision on State Court without reviewing all the information. Chairman Bridges thanked Judge Eavenson for bringing his input before the Board. He also said that is exactly what the Commission Board is doing; they are gathering and reviewing all the facts.

Chairman Bridges asked if anyone else would like to make a public comment. Angie Sheriff came forward to speak about Colston Road. She said that has lived on Colston Road since 2012. The road is a mess. There are a lot of disabled people as well as children on the road. She said that she would like to know what to do to get the road fixed. Chairman Bridges referred Ms. Sheriff to County Engineer John Phillips. He said that Mr. Phillips would be able to be of assistance to her and help her with the right steps. Ms. Sheriff thanked the Commission Board for their time. There were no other public comments.

B. Planning and Zoning items – Chairman Bridges said that there were three planning and zoning items at the public hearing prior to tonight's meeting. He said that each item will be voted on individually.

1. Pi Van Trinh – Conditional use for Poultry House – Chairman Bridges

asked for a motion to approve the request from Mr. Trinh. Commissioner Jacques made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner Strickland apologized for being late to the public hearing. He said that he will abstain from the vote on the planning and zoning items. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) YES votes to (0) zero NO votes with one (1) abstain. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Jacques; and Commissioner Wester. Commissioner Strickland abstained from the vote.

2. Elbert and Rhonda Nichols – Conditional use for Poultry House – Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve the request from Elbert and Rhonda Nichols. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to approve. 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 four (4) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes with one (1) abstain. The YES votes were Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Chairman Bridges; and Commissioner Franklin. Commissioner Strickland abstained from the vote.

3. Waste Management – Conditional use for Truck Terminal – Chairman Bridges thanked the Waste Management team for bringing their request to the Commission Board. He then asked for a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Franklin made the motion to approve. 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 four (4) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes with one (1) abstain. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Jacques; and Commissioner Wester. Commissioner Strickland abstained from the vote.

C. New Policies – Chairman Bridges asked County Manager Beth Thomas to go over the new policies.

1. HB 192 Credit Cards – Mrs. Thomas said that HB 192 concerning credit cards was discussed at last month's work session. This will go into effect January 1, 2016 and will cause a county to pass an ordinance and resolution adopting policies for elected officials and credit card or purchasing card use. Franklin County's policy was modeled after the draft from ACCG. The policy was modified to be specific to Franklin County. Mrs. Thomas recommended moving forward with the policy so that everything will be in place for January 1, 2016 to be in compliance with the new law. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner Jacques asked for clarification if there were changes to the document that was presented at last month's work session. Mrs. Thomas confirmed that there were no changes. The documents will have to be executed with each elected official who has use of a credit card.

Sheriff Steve Thomas asked for permission to come forward to speak. He said that he has received an email from the Georgia Sheriff's Association concerning

wording in the document concerning elected officials who use County credit cards. He said that his budget is set different. Chairman Bridges said that when new information is received that it can be reviewed. He said that on tonight's information it is recommended to vote on it. Mrs. Thomas said that if new information comes through then ACCG will send out. She said that with the current wording in the policy it requires an agreement. This has to be in place to comply with the law whether or not an agreement is entered into. Commissioner Jacques said that this can be amended if more information is received. 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 Strickland; Commissioner Franklin; Commissioner Jacques; and Commissioner Wester.

2. Federal Grant Administration Policy - Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the federal grant policy. Mrs. Thomas said that this policy will allow for a set procedure on how grants are handled, coded and accounted for and how the process will work. She recommended moving forward with this policy to cover all grants received by the County. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion. Commissioner Jacques made the motion following review and previous discussion of the policy. Commissioner Strickland 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. Qualifying Fees – Chairman Bridges said qualifying fees were discussed at the work session for the election year 2016. He asked Mrs. Thomas to discuss this further. Mrs. Thomas said that at the work session she gave information on fees set at different levels. It is her recommendation that the County go with the amounts that were set at the previous qualifying which is three percent of the base salary for each position. This recommendation of staying at three percent of the base salary is to encourage competition and easy access. Mrs. Thomas asked for the Commission to move forward with the resolution so that everything will be in place for January advertisement with March qualifying. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to approve. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion to get to discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion.

Commissioner Strickland asked why the County wouldn't increase the qualifying fees to try to bring more money in. He questioned why not go to five percent instead of three percent. He said that he showed this to about 150 people and no one knew what elected officials are paid. Commissioner Strickland said that most people thought that the elected officials were paid the amounts that the qualifying fees were based off of. He said that he thought qualifying fees should be higher to get more money into the County. He then said that most of the money went back to the different parties. Mrs. Thomas said that half of the rate goes back to them. Commissioner Strickland said that if the rate was increased from three percent to five percent then the County would be getting almost twice as much. He said that this needs to be raised because the millage rate was increased for the property owners. Chairman Bridges asked if any other

Commissioner would like to comment. There was no further discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) YES votes to one (1) NO vote. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Jacques; and Commissioner Wester. The NO vote was Commissioner Strickland.

E. Franklin County Board Appointments – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to give an update on the Franklin County Board Appointments.

1. Update on Board Appointments – Mrs. Thomas said that there were three separate board positions that were advertised. The first position that was advertised was for the Airport Authority. There were two people interested in this position. After discussion with the Authority Airport Chairman it was determined that this position should be appointed by the Franklin-Hart Airport Authority. The applications that were received by the County have been forwarded to the Airport Authority. Mrs. Thomas expressed thanks to the two people interested in serving on the Airport Authority Board.

The second position that was advertised was for the Joint Development Authority. As of the meeting time no written interest has been received. Mrs. Thomas said that she talked with Frank Ginn, IBA Director who told her that there are at least four people interested in serving on the Joint Development Authority. The application has been sent to Mr. Ginn to forward to the interested parties. An appointment will be made as soon as applications are received.

The third position that was advertised was for the Tax Assessor Board. One person was interested in this position. A letter was received from the Tax Assessor Board recommending Dan Stroud for appointment. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve Mr. Stroud. Commissioner Strickland made the motion to approve Mr. Stroud. 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.

F. Meeting Schedule – Chairman Bridges said that the next item is to discuss setting meeting schedules. He asked Mrs. Thomas to explain this item further. Mrs. Thomas recommended moving the December 29th work session to December 22nd. She said this would free up Christmas and New Year's without having meetings. She also asked that the Commission Board come up with dates in January for a strategic planning meeting. Mrs. Thomas said that Probate Judge Eavenson brought up an important point that some things take strategic planning. She said that she is willing to come in at night or on a Saturday to do whatever works with the Commissioners schedules. She said the middle of January would be ideal, maybe somewhere around January 15th or January 16th. She asked that this meeting time be set at the next work session for advertisement. Mrs. Thomas said that she would like for all department heads and elected officials to participate in the strategic planning meeting.

Commissioner Jacques clarified that December 22nd would be the work session at the normal time of 6 p.m. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve the change of the work session date from December 29th to December 22nd. Commissioner Wester made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) YES votes to one (1) NO vote. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Jacques; and Commissioner Wester. The NO vote was Commissioner Strickland.

G. SPLOST Financing Update – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to give an update on the SPLOST financing. Mrs. Thomas said that it has been stated previously that the County is on a crunch timeline to get the first round of financing in by December 31st. Thanks to the County Attorney Bubba Samuels the bond validation hearing is scheduled for December 15th. The initial financing for this year (December 2015) is a private placement. Several banks were interested. Mrs. Thomas recommended moving forward with Northeast Georgia Bank for the first placement of financing. She asked for a motion to authorize the County Manager; County Attorney; Bond Counsel; and Placement Agent to proceed with drafting the necessary documents and work with Northeast Georgia Bank to complete the closing and funding of the sales tax general obligation bond on or before December 29, 2015. It is very important for the County to maintain bank qualified status as these financings are segmented in calendar years. In order to have the first round of financing and do some of the projects for next year the financing has to be in place by the end of this calendar so that the hospital can be focused on in the next calendar year.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the recommendation from Mrs. Thomas. Commissioner Jacques made the motion for the purpose of discussion. Commissioner Strickland seconded for the purpose of discussion. Commissioner Jacques asked if Northeast Georgia Bank was the most competitive in all aspects of all the local institutions. Mrs. Thomas said that she would not say that they were in every aspect but the one thing that lends itself is the total relationship and being able to close by December 29th. The rates were very close. She ran the numbers and the difference was less than \$5,000 between the lowest of the low. Mrs. Thomas said that she was concerned with placing with a bigger firm and not being able to hit the deadlines. She said that from the Tax Anticipation Note the County knows that Northeast Georgia Bank will make the deadline. Commissioner Strickland asked if all the local banks in the County were checked. Mrs. Thomas said that the placement agent checked rates, she did not. Commissioner Strickland asked Mrs. Thomas couldn't she have asked the placement agent to look at the home banks. Mrs. Thomas said that the placement agent was asked to look at all the banks that the County currently has relationships with. She said that next calendar year when the timeline is not so tight it will be a full public offering. This was a private placement. Commissioner Strickland asked if Northeast Georgia was the only local bank looked at. Mrs. Thomas said no, that other local banks were looked at. Commissioner Strickland asked if more than two local banks were looked at. Mrs. Thomas said that two local banks were interested as well as other parties that the placement agent pitched it out to.

Commissioner Strickland asked what the rates are. Mrs. Thomas said that the rates are 1.99 versus 1.96. Commissioner Strickland asked about the closing, was that the \$5,000. Mrs. Thomas said that was her calculation and it is all inclusive. Chairman Bridges said that these were very good questions. He then asked if there were any other questions before the vote. 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 Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Strickland; Commissioner Jacques; Commissioner Wester; and Commissioner Franklin. Chairman Bridges thanked Mrs. Thomas for her work on this. Commissioner Jacques said that these are excellent rates.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion and a second to adjourn. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Franklin; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Strickland; and Commissioner Jacques. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 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