

FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 6, 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*
Buddy Hardigree, *WLHR*

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 called the June regular board meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. He then led the invocation and pledge to the American flag.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes:

May 2, 2016 Public Hearing
May 2, 2016 Regular Board Meeting
May 17, 2016 Special Called Meeting
May 31, 2016 Work Session

Chairman Bridges said that there were four meetings in the month of May. He said that each Commissioner had an opportunity to look over the minutes. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Commissioner Franklin made the motion to accept the minutes. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion following review. 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.

Chairman Bridges said that the agenda needs to be amended to add health insurance. He asked that this be added as F1 under the budget discussion. Commissioner Jacques said that this is part and parcel of the budget. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion. Commissioner Strickland made the motion to amend the agenda and add health insurance. 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.

Item 4: *Items for discussion:*

A. Public Comment – Chairman Bridges asked if anyone would like to speak in public comment. Rita Shoemaker came forward to speak and gave the Commission Board a handout. She said that she is on the Library Board Trustees. She said that she had emailed the Commission Board requesting an increase in the library budget. She said at the Lavonia branch there are employees who work by themselves and that is the main thing they are asking for in the budget increase. She said that it is a dangerous situation for an employee to work by themselves. Ms. Shoemaker said that Franklin County has two beautiful libraries and she hopes that everyone has visited them. Commissioner Strickland questioned the \$8,000 in the budget request for cleaning. Ms. Shoemaker said that is a wish list item. She also said that the manager at the Lavonia branch retired and the manager at the Royston Library is now managing both branches as a cost saving effort.

Chairman Bridges asked if anyone else would like to speak in public comment. Walter Brown of 885 Aderhold Road came forward to speak. Mr. Brown said that he spoke at the last meeting about his road. He said that he appreciated the help from the County but he does not understand why or how the road got graded in such a way so that the water funnels into the residents yards. He also said that the road has been graded so that it looks like a racetrack. Mr. Brown said that the speed limit on Aderhold Road should not be over 25 miles per hour. He said that he feels like his road is being ignored. Chairman Bridges asked Mr. Brown if he has spoken with Sheriff Thomas. He said that he has talked with Sheriff Thomas but it has only helped in spots. He said that the kids on four wheelers has picked back up. Mr. Brown stated that this is a County road and people should have to have a license to drive a vehicle on it. He said that something needs to be done about the water problem. Chairman Bridges said that he would mention this back to the county engineer and the Sheriff. Mr. Brown concluded by thanking the Commission Board. He also recommended a book for the Commission Board to read “The Founders Bible” by David Barton. He said that this is the greatest book ever written in his opinion.

B. Public Hearing items –

Conditional use permit – Daniel Litwiller – Chairman Bridges said that the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission was to approve the conditional use permit for Daniel Litwiller for a poultry farm. He asked for a motion to approve the poultry farm. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to approve the poultry farm based on the recommendation of the Planning Commission and following review of the County zoning regulations as noted from the staff recommendation. 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 Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Strickland; and Commissioner Franklin.

Guerry Hall Road – right-of-way abandonment – Chairman Bridges

asked for a motion to abandon the right-of-way on Guerry Hall for Wesley Eavenson. Commissioner Strickland made the motion to be able to get a second for discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Jacques said that he is not in favor of giving the right-of-way back based on his research but for the purpose of discussion he seconded the motion to give ample opportunity for discussion. Chairman Bridges opened the discussion by stating that he personally thinks if someone gives property to the County and it is not used, the property should be granted back to the owner. Chairman Bridges said that his recommendation is to give the property back to Mr. Eavenson as requested in the public hearing.

Commissioner Franklin said that his thoughts are that the County has used property given from other people and nothing has been given back to them. He asked what the County would do if these people came and asked for their right-of-way back and the road has already been changed.

Chairman Bridges said that there was a motion and a second to not abandon the road. Commissioner Jacques clarified that the motion is to abandon the road. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands to abandon the road. The motion failed by one (1) YES vote to four (4) NO votes. The YES vote was Chairman Bridges. The NO votes were Commissioner Jacques; Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Franklin; and Commissioner Strickland.

C. Road Issues

1. Sullivan Road – Chairman Bridges said in the previous work session it was talked about authorizing County office personnel to get Sullivan Road back on the GDOT Registry. He asked for a motion for this. Commissioner Jacques made the motion as per discussion in the work session. The motion by Commissioner Jacques is that the County affirms that Sullivan Road is a County road from right-of-way to right-of-way; County Road 52 will be added to the existing Sullivan Road sign which is attached to the stop sign located at the intersection of Stone Bridge Road; update County road records for perpetual maintenance; and County staff approach GDOT to have County Road 52 – Sullivan Road updated on the GDOT Registry. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion.

County Manager Beth Thomas said that she has one concern which is that GDOT may try to assign a different road number. She asked if the County should wait until GDOT confirms County Road 52 or assigns something different. Commissioner Jacques said that he does not think that will be case as there will be meeting minutes which shows Sullivan Road as County Road 52. The Road Department records will also be updated to add County Road 52 to Sullivan Road. Mrs. Thomas said that is right but nothing in government has made sense. Commissioner Jacques said that it is fully in the power of the County to make the change. Mrs. Thomas said that this would give County staff enough time to make contact with GDOT. 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.

2. Arial Road abandonment – Chairman Bridges said that this was discussed at the work session. Both sides of Arial Road are owned by the same

individual. A portion of Arial Road has already been abandoned. He asked for a motion to abandon Arial Road. Commissioner Jacques made the motion. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. County Attorney Bubba Samuels clarified that the appropriate motion is to authorize County staff to advertise the abandonment of Arial Road. Commissioner Jacques restated the motion to include advertisement. Commissioner Franklin seconded. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner Franklin asked why advertisement was necessary when the same gentleman owns both sides of the road. Mr. Samuels said that the law is clear that until the County goes through the statutory process which includes a public hearing and publishes it in the paper for two weeks prior to the hearing and the Board makes the decision that the road serves no purpose to the public then it is a county road. Commissioner Franklin said that he didn't have a problem going through the process; it just didn't make sense when one person owned both sides. 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.

3. SPLOST V Improvement Project (Turkey Creek/Tugaloo) –

Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the SPLOST V Improvement Project. Mrs. Thomas said that two main roads on the project list were Turkey Creek Road and Tugaloo Road. Turkey Creek is a heavily used road near the middle school. Tugaloo State Park is a major economic factor in the County. This project was bid out. Stratton and Sons, a local contractor was the lowest bid by over \$100,000. Mrs. Thomas recommended moving forward with this project. She thanked County Engineer John Phillips; Franklin County representatives and Mr. McMurray at GDOT. Because of their help Franklin County was able to receive an additional \$100,000 for this project. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to move forward. Commissioner Strickland made the motion to move forward. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion.

Chairman Bridges said that he is happy to be able to take care of Turkey Creek Road because of school bus safety. It is good news that additional funds are being awarded for Tugaloo State Park Road. Commissioner Jacques thanked the citizens of Franklin County for approving the SPLOST. 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 Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Strickland; and Commissioner Franklin.

D. Sale of Land – Old Chism Trail – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to discuss the sale of land. Mrs. Thomas said that the County owns a tract of land on Old Chism Trail which was acquired in approximately 1988. There was a sealed bid process which was opened on June 2 at the BOC Office. Only one bid was received which was from the adjacent property owner in the amount of \$600. Mrs. Thomas said that the current assessed value for this piece of property is \$600 with a fair market value of \$1,500. She will contact the bidder and work with Mr. Samuels if this is approved by the Commission Board.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the bid. Commissioner Jacques made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded for discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner

Franklin clarified that the bid amount is \$600 plus attorney fees. Mrs. Thomas said yes. Commissioner Strickland asked why the County would want to sell something for \$600 when it is worth \$1,500. Mrs. Thomas said that there are two very large boulders that block the entrance to the property. If anyone bought the property they would have to spend a good bit of money to move the boulders and make the property usable. The adjacent property owner is only interested in expanding the border around his property. Commissioner Jacques said that from the size and configuration of the property it is almost unusable. He also said that the County has owned this property since 1988 and it has not been on the tax digest and this will give a little revenue back to the County.

Commissioner Strickland asked Tax Commissioner Bobby Martin how the taxes would be collected on this property. He asked if the first year would be 40% of the \$600 and would the second year be the full amount. Mr. Martin said that the second year the property will go back to the fair market value. He also said that there are several parcels of land that no bids were received on during tax sales. This makes the taxes hard to collect. 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. Board Appointments

1. Planning and Zoning – Chairman Bridges said that his understanding is that there is one person interested in the Planning and Zoning Board appointment. He asked Mrs. Thomas to explain this further. Mrs. Thomas said that this position was advertised as were the other board openings with the hopes of garnering interest. No applications were received for any of the board appointments. Mrs. Thomas said that Daphne Farmer expressed interest in keeping her position. The Planning and Zoning Commission agreed and they would like for Mrs. Farmer to stay on. Mrs. Thomas recommended that the Commission Board reappoint Mrs. Farmer for another term on the Planning and Zoning Board. Commissioner Jacques asked if Mrs. Thomas was looking for this in the form of a motion. Mrs. Thomas affirmed yes. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to reappoint Mrs. Daphne Farmer to the Planning and Zoning Board. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. 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.

2. AVITA – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the AVITA appointment. Mrs. Thomas said that the appointment for Angela Whidby has come up. This was advertised but there was no interest in the position. AVITA has requested that Mrs. Whidby be reappointed and Mrs. Thomas concurred with this recommendation. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to reappoint Angela Whidby. Commissioner Wester made the motion. 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 Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Commissioner Franklin; and Commissioner Strickland.

3. CCRC&D – Chairman Bridges said that there are two people currently

on the CCRC&D. His understanding is that they need to be rolled over but this does not require a vote. Chairman Bridges said that the two people are Angela Whidby and Woody McFarlin. Mrs. Thomas said that the information from the Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D was if the County would like to change their representation to send in the information. She said that a vote is not needed, this is for information. Mrs. Thomas also requested that if anyone is interested in any board position to please apply as applications are accepted all year long and kept on file for one year.

Commissioner Jacques requested that information be given on all the board positions. Mrs. Thomas told Commissioner Jacques that this is being worked on currently. As soon as the information is complete, it will be emailed to the Commission Board.

F. FY17 Budget – Updated Calendar – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to comment on the FY17 budget. Mrs. Thomas gave each Commissioner a handout with information on the budget. She said that this is the budget that will be presented to the public. The advertisement will begin. There will need to be one public hearing for the budget. Mrs. Thomas said that last year there were over 10 meetings due to the millage increase. She asked each Commissioner to review the budget information. The budget will also be available for review at the Board of Commissioners Office. Commissioner Jacques asked for an electronic version. Mrs. Thomas said that she would send this information to each Commissioner.

Chairman Bridges said that a date needs to be set for the budget hearing. He asked the Commission Board if Thursday, June 16 at 6 o'clock would work for them. Each Commissioner confirmed that this will be the date for the hearing. Mrs. Thomas again asked the Commission Board to review the budget requests. She said that this budget is within the context of no property tax increase. Commissioner Jacques asked if the tax digest numbers are available yet. Mrs. Thomas said that she does not have printouts but the tax digest should pretty much stay the same as last year. She said what was gained was lost in motor vehicles.

F.1. Health Insurance – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to give information on the health insurance. Mrs. Thomas said that one major component in the budget is health insurance. She said the current health insurance offered by the County is two medical plans – one is a base plan with co-pays; the other is a buy-up plan which is a first dollar deductible plan. The participants in these plans were 73% on the co-pay plan and 27% on the buy-up plan. Collectively the plans are running at 116% loss ratio. \$875,000 has been paid in premiums but over one million dollars has been paid in claims. For the month of March the loss ratio was 169%. This has been consistent and shows that making the switch from self-funded was the right decision.

Mrs. Thomas said that over 30% of the claims cost is for prescription drugs, which is high. Insurance companies typically like to see prescription drugs at 15% to 20%. This is consistent each month for chronic conditions. Based on the prescription claims and the number of members the insurance company is spending approximately \$200 each month per member. Mrs. Thomas said that between the two plans the split is approximately 54% for the base and 46% for the buy-up. She said that this information tells you that the 20/80 economic rule is in place; 20% of the population is driving 80% of the cost. A small portion of the population of employees is driving the cost.

When the current plan was looked at for renewal, it went up 46% which Mrs. Thomas stated was around \$550,000. She said that the County is unable to absorb this kind of increase. The insurance was looked at by several large companies but all came back with this type of increase. Mrs. Thomas said that one way to help with the insurance increase is to increase revenue by going up on property taxes or some other way; pass the increase to the employees; or modify the health plan. She said that the County's health care costs are driven by high utilization and high prescription drug costs so we know that this will continue. Mrs. Thomas said that the County will have to start looking at models that are more consumer driven plans. Insurance companies have seen where employers changed to consumer driven and it changes behavior. When the employee is paying for the first dollar then they may ask for the generic drug.

Mrs. Thomas said that the County will still offer two plans. The base plan will switch to a first dollar plan, which means that the deductible including prescription drugs has to be paid for up front. After this the prescription drugs will go to a co-pay plan. The buy-up plan will be the co-pay plan. Mrs. Thomas said that as written these plans will only be a 10% increase which is more manageable with the decreased revenue. She said that depending on which plan they choose, employees can have a 10% savings in premiums or up to a 23% increase. The highest increase will be for family coverage which will affect six to 14 employees. She said that she is one of the people who will feel the worst harm from the change.

This is a consumer driven plan and usage of the plan will determine the costs to the employees. Mrs. Thomas said that with the new base plan, the County will establish a health savings account. She said that the savings in premiums will be used to set up these accounts for employees and the County will contribute \$25 each month. This will be \$300 per year for the employee to use towards their medical. Employees will also have the option of contributing additional funds into these accounts. These contributions are pre-tax. Open enrollment will be scheduled for the week of June 13. Mrs. Thomas recommended that the County stay with United Healthcare and make the plan changes. She recommended that the County change to Lincoln for all the ancillary coverage with the exception of AVESIS for vision coverage. She also recommended going to UNUM for the optional employee coverages.

As of 5:04 this afternoon, Mrs. Thomas stated that another bid proposal came in. With this proposal she said that a \$50,000 savings would be realized. Mrs. Thomas said that the only change in this plan would be to drop from 100% coinsurance to 90% coinsurance. She said that this is not a bad change and another \$10 per month could be added to the health savings account. Mrs. Thomas said that the employees on the base plan would get \$35 per month put into their accounts. She said that this plan is her recommendation. Commissioner Strickland asked would the employees lose what they have built up on United Healthcare. Mrs. Thomas said that part of the negotiations was that the deductible carried over. Commissioner Strickland said that he is talking about the Rally points. Mrs. Thomas said that the Rally is not included in this but she will push to negotiate for it. Commissioner Strickland said that some of the employees may still have points and he does not want them to lose them. Mrs. Thomas said that this would be included in information at the open enrollment.

Mrs. Thomas said that this is a very different plan from anything offered before

but the County cannot afford a 46% increase. She said that Stephens County had over a 13% increase in insurance which was passed along to the employees. It is not ideal to change anybody's health insurance plans but for individual coverage the employees will not be harmed. Commissioner Strickland said that the employees in Stephens County were already paying around \$114 a month for health coverage. Mrs. Thomas said that this is a valid point.

Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas if there was anything else before the vote. Mrs. Thomas said no, unless the Commission Board had questions. She restated her recommendation of going with the FY17 base plan with one modification to drop to 90% coinsurance; move to Lincoln for ancillary coverage except for vision with AVESIS; and add UNUM for extra coverage. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to move forward. Commissioner Strickland made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. Commissioner Strickland said to make sure that the employees receive education on the changes. Mrs. Thomas said that he is absolutely right and she is working with the broker to provide information the week of open enrollment. Chairman Bridges said that this is a tough issue for everyone. 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.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting. Commissioner Jacques made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Strickland 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 Commissioner Wester; Commissioner Jacques; Chairman Bridges; Commissioner Strickland; and Commissioner Franklin. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 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