



You Are Why We Are Here

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PLANNING SESSION
January 25, 2018
1:00 P.M.**

BOC: Commission Chairman Thomas Bridges
District 1 Commissioner Robert Franklin
District 2 Commissioner Dr. Jason Macomson
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: Call meeting to order – Chairman Bridges called the Planning Session to order and welcomed everyone to the Carnesville Community Center.

Chairman Bridges said there was one item that needed to be amended on the agenda. He asked for a motion to amend the agenda and strike litigation from Item F and only discuss personnel. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to strike litigation from the Executive Session Item F and amend the agenda and only talk about personnel. 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 Franklin, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Wester, Chairman Bridges and Dr. Macomson.

Item 3: Items for discussion:

A. **Public Comment** – Sheriff Stevie Thomas asked the Commissioners to consult with the constitutional officers when planning this type of meeting. He said the constitutional officers would like to attend and have input. Chairman Bridges thanked Sheriff Thomas for his comment.

B. **Infrastructure**

1. **Water System** – Chairman Bridges said the water system improvements for the County have been discussed for quite a while. He asked Mrs. Thomas for further comments. Mrs. Thomas welcomed John Phillips to give history and a power point presentation update on the water system. Mr. Phillips expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to give this information. The water system for Franklin County was



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started in 1991 with one well and a connection to the City of Carnesville and it was started to serve I-85 and the Hwy 51 interchange. Today the water system is over 225 miles of water line with over 1,800 customers. Franklin County's water sales have increased by 15% during the last 12 months because of extending water mains and increased sales to other systems (Carnesville, Franklin Springs, Canon, Bowersville in Hart County, Banks County and Madison County). Mr. Phillips said when the water system was started the goal was to connect the County's system to all five of the cities and to provide water lines into each of the volunteer fire districts and both of these goals have been met.

The water sources for Franklin County was presented and gone over by Mr. Phillips. The main water provider for Franklin County is the City of Toccoa. Franklin County has a contract with the City of Toccoa of being able to purchase up to one million gallons of water per day. The minimum monthly bill regardless of water usage is \$3,600. If Franklin County uses over the one million gallons in a day the price goes up by 150%. Historically Franklin County has done a great job of not going over the million gallons per day.

Mr. Phillips said Franklin County has connections to the City of Lavonia, City of Royston, City of Carnesville, City of Canon, City of Franklin Springs and Banks County. The only one of these with interest in being a long-term water provider is the City of Lavonia with withdrawals from Lake Hartwell. One of the factors in the City of Lavonia providing water is a permit is needed to withdraw water from Lake Hartwell. A treatment facility would also be needed for the City of Lavonia to be a provider.

Chairman Bridges asked how long does the contract last with the City of Toccoa. Mr. Phillips said it is a 30-year contract and Franklin County is about 10 years in. He said it automatically renews every 10 years unless one of the parties gives advance notice to terminate the contract. Mrs. Thomas said there is also an automatic increase clause so each year the contract increases by CPI.

Mr. Phillips said there are three individually owned wells that sale water to Franklin County. These wells are permitted as 206, 209 and 210. It is not recommended for the wells to pump at maximum capacity. Mr. Phillips said it has been found that the wells perform better and last longer by pumping at 50% capacity. The water from the wells is purchased by Franklin County at a cost of 75 cents per 1,000 gallons. Well 206 and Well 209 have been good producing wells with no issues. Well 210 is a good producing well but has had some uranium issues. Mr. Phillips said the maximum uranium level is 30 parts per billion. Meetings have taken place between Franklin County and EPD regarding the uranium. Well 210 will test slightly above the 30 parts per billion and other tests will be slightly below. Mr. Phillips said at the last EPD meeting it was stated this is probably due to the testing process.

The maximum water supply from the current system is approximately 1.7 million gallons per day combining the water from the City of Toccoa and from the County wells. Mr. Phillips said the water sales fluctuate based on varying conditions



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such as weather. By the Georgia Water Standards and everything considered with the peak usage the County would need .6 million gallons more per day to cover the usage. Mr. Phillips said during the peak periods when the County is not producing enough water that water comes out of the storage tank to meet the demand. When the demand is met the tank fills back up.

The GRP facility on Hwy 198 is stating that they will need about 1.0 to 1.2 million gallons of water per day. Mr. Phillips said this is a 200% increase over the usual sales for the County. The County can manage with the storage tank for what is now being sold but with this additional request things will have to be looked at for more production. This problem can be solved by resolving the uranium issue in Well 210. Mr. Phillips said 13 wells have been looked at by Franklin County for water purchases but only four of them have met all the permit requirements. The true cost to produce well water is \$1.50 to \$1.70 per 1,000 gallons which is less expensive than buying from other sources.

Mr. Phillips said the best option to the uranium problem is dilution. This process is to mix the higher level of uranium water with water that has lower levels of uranium and the blended product will meet all the federal and state requirements for uranium. This will allow Franklin County to continue the usage of Well 210. Mr. Phillips gave information on blending the water from the three wells and pumping into a storage tank then pumping again. He also made the suggestion for the County to bring the fourth well that has met the requirements into production to meet the new demand.

The recommendations for water supply is to continue to develop additional water sources. Mr. Phillips said the public/private partnerships eliminate the risk to the County of drilling that may result in unusable wells. He said now would be an appropriate time to negotiate with the City of Toccoa for more water and possibly a better price. These steps will help to secure a long-term water supply. The recommendations for system improvements is to construct an elevated storage tank for the lower pressure areas and emergency situations. There is also a tank that is abandoned and is in poor condition and does need to be removed. Additional water mains need to be installed to eliminate dead end lines and serve high demand areas.

All of the projects that were talked about by Mr. Phillips come to an estimated 3.5 million dollars. Mr. Phillips said Franklin County has already taken steps to fund the project by applying for grants and loans and Franklin County's project is very competitive for approvals. Grant applications have been made to ARC for \$600,000 and OneGeorgia for \$500,000. EDA (Economic Development Administration) is the big one with a maximum grant of up to 50% of the cost of the project. GEFA is a loan that has possible forgiveness for part of it. The pre-application was submitted for more than the anticipated amount to be needed in case some of the grant funding does not come through. Mr. Phillips said federal funds can only pay for 80% of the project cost. The County is making application with the hopes of securing the 80% in grant funding. During this process Mr. Phillips suggested that the Commissioners authorize the County Manager to sign the application documents.



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Dr. Macomson asked if Lake Hartwell is an option for a source of water for the County. Mr. Phillips said it would be an option but it is a long process to gain the approval to withdraw and a treatment facility would also be needed. Commissioner Jacques asked if there is a way to determine the long-term viability of the quantity and quality of the existing wells. He said he would hate for this large amount of money to be spent and there be some type issue when the County is so dependent on this supply of water. Mr. Phillips said the County has done everything that can possibly be done. He said that the testing that the County has done has gone beyond what is required from the State.

Commissioner Jacques said a lot of the system improvements are being made with the anticipation of the use from Georgia Renewable Energy. He asked if the County has any type of contract or MOU in place for this. Mr. Phillips said he knew a lot of conversation has taken place over this issue. He asked Mrs. Thomas to provide the answer. Mrs. Thomas said an MOU is being worked on. She said that GRP cannot start without the County. The MOU needs to cover more than just the water, it needs to contain that the plant continues operations and contributions promised to the County be given among other things.

Commissioner Jacques asked what the contribution is from the well owner other than the small contribution of land. Mr. Phillips said his understanding is the owner is willing to give the County land for a tank and treatment facility location. Mrs. Thomas said the land owner has signed a deed for 1.1 acres to be transferred to Franklin County and this will need to be accepted by the Commissioners. There have also been discussions about the raw water main that would take the water from the owner's well to the mixing tank at his cost. This may not be a cash infusion but may be negotiated in the contract. Commissioner Jacques said there does need to be a contribution from the land owner to offset the cost even though it is beneficial for the County.

Dr. Macomson asked if there are additional people getting ready to drill wells. Mr. Phillips said yes. He also said when Shane Scoggins puts an article in the paper the County receives lots of phone calls. The majority of the wells have not worked out. Mrs. Thomas said there are certain steps that must be followed in order for the County to become interested in water purchase. The well owner is responsible for the initial testing. Dr. Macomson asked if the County system ties directly into the City of Lavonia. Mr. Phillips said yes, there are two connections one on Hwy 59 and the other at Pleasant Hill. The only one suited to move a lot of water is the connection on Hwy 59. Dr. Macomson questioned if the County could partner with the City of Lavonia to get more water from Lake Hartwell. Mr. Phillips said if Lake Hartwell was looked at as a source the most feasible way would be to go through the City of Lavonia.

Land Acquisition / Acceptance – *Mrs. Thomas said Jack Andrews has executed a warranty deed to deed over 1.1 acres off of Turkey Creek Road to Franklin County. She asked the Commissioners to approve a motion that has been drafted to accept this. Mrs. Thomas said after acceptance she will record the deed at the Clerk of*



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Court's office. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the recommendation from Mrs. Thomas and also stated the motion has to be read verbatim. Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to read the motion. The motion read as "I move to accept the dedication of property and right-Of-way from Mr. Jack Andrews for public purposes as set forth in the warranty deed of January 22, 2018 with the present intention to utilize the property for water purposes to construct a water storage tank and mixing system designed to blend well water from Jack Andrews property with water from other sources". Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the motion as read by Mrs. Thomas. Dr. Macomson made the motion to accept. 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 Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Jacques and Dr. Macomson.

2. Sewer System – Mrs. Thomas said this project has been worked on for about 10 years. She said the contracts were split into two parts and they have been executed. The first part is the plant work and the second is the pipe work. Mrs. Thomas said these projects were bid out. There was a single bidder for the plant work and it was double the amount of what was anticipated. Through work with EPD, USDA and the engineers a mutual agreement was made to value engineer the price down to something more reasonable. USDA has concurred with contract number one for the plant work and most of contract number two except for a bond that was not put on the right form. USDA will hold this until the proper form is used. The next step for Franklin County is the pre-construction meeting that is tentatively scheduled for next week.

Mrs. Thomas said from the financing standpoint the Commissioners need to consider bond resolution. The bond attorney is working on the language required by USDA. This will possibly be presented at the February meeting. Mrs. Thomas said 3.2 million dollars will come from USDA with 1.2 million being loan forgiveness. The process for the loan forgiveness is amortization over a period of time and is then forgiven. A grant of \$300,000 was received from ARC. There is approximately 1.2 million dollars in water CD's. Part of SPLOST IV is still remaining for water system improvements. The contract for the plant went up by about a million dollars from eight to 10 years ago and the County will have to contribute an additional \$500,000. This amount will come from SPLOST V, the IBA and the City of Carnesville. According to the revised numbers Franklin County will have enough for this project. Interim financing was required because of a construction loan. The construction loan will only be for the USDA portion of the 3.2 million dollars and it was secured through Northeast Georgia Bank.

The County will have to contribute first and Mrs. Thomas said she will cash out the CD's as it becomes necessary. Next will be the SPLOST IV and then the interim financing will be on a draw down basis. Mrs. Thomas said in the future to cover this it may become necessary to borrow against SPLOST V. Because of the value engineering



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the plant will have to be moved back from the original plans. Mr. Phillips said a 300,000 gallons per day plant is being built with the option to expand to 900,000 gallons per day. The biggest changes were the headworks and things for expanding would not be done at this time. The plant will still be expandable but these things will not be put in at the beginning. Commissioner Franklin asked when this is expected to start. Mr. Phillips said the contractor plans to start construction in March. Mrs. Thomas said the entrance to the construction site will be the road past the elementary school. Mr. Phillips said the City of Carnesville entrance is just past the elementary school. This road will go away and the entrance will be further away from the school on County owned property.

Commissioner Jacques asked what is the tentative date for this facility coming on line. Mr. Phillips said the contract for the plant is an 18-month contract so it will probably be the Spring or Summer of 2019. Commissioner Jacques asked about the line work. Mr. Phillips said this work will be quicker but it will be more into the Spring before this work is begun. The line work will be installed prior to the plant work.

3. Jail Subcommittee recommendations – Mrs. Thomas gave the Commissioners information from the Bond Attorney Jim Pannell for general obligation debt. If this is to be put before the voters a resolution referendum will need to be approved by early February. The reason for this is the ballot has to be created and the first publication will be due February 15. Five publications are required if this is to be done. The projects and the dollar amount for them is required to be in the ballot. Mrs. Thomas said the interest rate also needs to be included.

The Jail Subcommittee Report listed that 3 to 4 million would be needed. Mrs. Thomas asked the Commissioners to be mindful that the County does not have cash reserves and any cost overrun would be devastating. The numbers Mrs. Thomas presented were for 4 million and for 7 million. She said if the County decided on the 7 million she would like to include the courthouse roof replacement and gutters along with the jail expansion. Sheriff Thomas said he was not for this, it only needed to be for the jail. He said when other things are added this is taking away from the jail. The courthouse is a totally different project. When the Jail Subcommittee met nothing was discussed except the jail and nothing else needs to be thrown in with it.

Chairman Bridges said to stick with just the jail like the Sheriff said. He said to be cautious to go with the 4 million to be able to make the necessary recommendations. Mrs. Thomas said the Sheriff has a valid point of sticking with just the jail. Chairman Bridges said this way it would be clear to everyone what they were voting on. Mrs. Thomas said a 10-year amortization schedule to be paid off in 10 years would be \$467,000 annual debt service. The debt service for 15 years would be \$345,000 and 20 years would be \$286,000. For 25 years it would be around \$252,000. Commissioner Jacques clarified that this is only for the debt service, no operational costs. Mrs. Thomas said this is only debt service. She said the Jail Subcommittee Report stated that the additional operational costs would need to be provided by the Sheriff and his staff for the purpose of the budget.



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Mrs. Thomas said the description that would be needed for the ballot would need to include jail expansion and renovation of the existing jail. Commissioner Jacques questioned if it specifically states number of years or gives a range. He said it does not make a lot sense to go beyond the expanded capacity and still be paying on the same issue. Mrs. Thomas said with the growth pattern of the jail it would be better to pay this off in 10 or 15 years. Chairman Bridges stated that he thought 15 years would be a good ratio. Sheriff Thomas said it should not need to be over 15 years. He said the way the trend is there will be probably be 350 people or more in the jail by then. Commissioner Jacques said he was not for going over 15 years. Commissioner Wester said if the Commissioners go over 15 years it will put whoever is in office at that time being stuck with how to pay for this as well as how to take care of housing for excess prisoners. Chairman Bridges asked if this could be done in 10 years. Mrs. Thomas said regardless of what happens the voters are voting for their taxes to go up to pay for this. Dr. Macomson asked the difference in the interest rates. Mrs. Thomas said the biggest savings come at the 10 and 15-year points.

Commissioner Jacques questioned Sheriff Thomas if with the additional capacity he could house in instead of house out. Sheriff Thomas said sure and any available bed they would be glad to. He said in the past the federal government will pay the County x number of dollars for beds. The federal government may not use them but will still pay for them. They can be used for other purposes until they are needed by the federal government. Mrs. Thomas said she was at a meeting where information was presented on Colonel Pinkard from Gwinnett County implementing a program for recidivism. Sheriff Thomas said any time you find the problem you can solve it. He said a lot of the problem is that mental health is not dealt with and people come back to the jails.

Chairman Bridges told the Commissioners to be careful and not miss the dates for this issue. Mrs. Thomas clarified the interest on the borrowing. She said there is about \$500,000 of interest at each 10-year increment. On 4 million dollars of borrowing about 4.7 million dollars would be repaid. On a 15-year borrowing the repayment would be approximately 5.2 million dollars. On 20-year borrowing it would be 5.7 million dollars. And on 25-year borrowing the payback would be 6.3 million dollars. Mrs. Thomas said for the draft resolution she will look at 10 years with a description of jail expansion and renovation for 4 million dollars. She will work with the bond attorney Mr. Pannell to try to get this done by the end of next week for the February meeting.

4. SPLOST V planning – Mrs. Thomas said on the medical office building for Elections she has issued a request for quotes. This advertisement was in this week's Franklin County Citizen and also on the County's website. There will be a pre-bid meeting at the facility on February 2 for the contractors to have an opportunity to look at the building with the quotes to be received the next week. After the quotes are received Mrs. Thomas said she will give a recommendation to the Commissioners. She said she has hopes that this project will stay under \$30,000. This cost will still be less



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than the renovations at the present location.

Mrs. Thomas said there are other purchases that will be made with SPLOST V such as vehicles and EMS units with high mileage. She said the new mechanic at the Road Department has done a world of good to help maintain the units. A vehicle also needs to be purchased for use between EMS/E911 because personal vehicles are being used for addressing.

***Sheriff Thomas** questioned if the jail request will go before the voters in November. Mrs. Thomas said the recommendation is for May. Commissioner Jacques said if this passes it will be incorporated into the FY19 budget. Mrs. Thomas said it would need to be. Commissioner Jacques said depending on construction a portion would have to be from the FY19 budget. Mrs. Thomas said if nothing else the payback amount would need to be in reserves. She said the Jail Subcommittee indicated that they would support this but the operations budget still needs to be submitted by the Sheriff and his staff.*

***Clerk of Court Missy Holbrook** said she would like to comment about the courthouse. She said the courthouse is being used for court along with overflow court at the Justice Center. Security has to be provided at both places along with extra personnel and bailiffs. Mrs. Holbrook said 350 jurors would have to be brought in for this court. Sheriff Thomas said the jurors will have to be bused between the two locations. The County will have to make an agreement with the school system for help with transportation when this much court is going on. Mrs. Holbrook said her concern about putting money into the courthouse is there is no parking around it and the small space in the court room. She said there are family members and jurors who have to stand the entire time of court because there is not enough seating. There is also a weak spot in the court room floor that needs attention. Mrs. Holbrook said a long-term solution needs to be looked at for court.*

Chairman Bridges asked about the space at the court house. Mrs. Holbrook said when there is a criminal trial the court room is full with jurors and defendants. Sometimes the same problem exists in civil cases depending on how many cases are scheduled. Chairman Bridges asked if the space problem is because of jurors being called. Mrs. Holbrook said the first three rows are kept for the jurors but there still is not enough space and some have to stand against the wall at the back of the court room. She said if two trials are scheduled then four panels (48) jurors or more have to be selected. Mrs. Thomas said it was discussed last year of building an administrative building for a judicial system and a jail. She said there are better financing options for this than there are for a jail. Even if a judicial building is built the courthouse will always have to be maintained. Mrs. Holbrook said she is out of room at the courthouse. She said she has only two shelves left for deed books. Chairman Bridges said Franklin County is fortunate to have what they have but planning for the future is needed. Mrs. Thomas invited Mrs. Holbrook and Sheriff Thomas to come to any night meeting and share concerns.



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5. *Surplus Equipment* – Mrs. Thomas said there is only a few ways that governments can get rid of surplus equipment and one of them is by public auction. The Road Department made a list of the equipment that is not used. She said the Road Department has a limited staff but one of their goals has been to clean up around the public works area. The EMS also has old stretchers that need to be sold. Mrs. Thomas said it would be better to convert this into cash instead of gathering dust. She asked the Commissioners to look the list over and deem it surplus at the February meeting.

Chairman Bridges paused the meeting at 2:40 p.m. for a short break. The meeting resumed at 2:50 p.m.

C. 2018 Projects, Priorities and Updates

1. *FCC Market Modification* – Chairman Bridges said the FCC Market Modification has been worked on by the County for several years. He asked Mrs. Thomas to give an update. Mrs. Thomas gave a draft of the market modification without the exhibits to the Commissioners. She said she made a section at the end based on guidance from the DC attorney to give specific reasons in order to make a case for the request. Mrs. Thomas asked the Commissioners to give input into why Atlanta should allow Franklin County into their market. She also said she would have to get help from County Attorney Bubba Samuels with this.

Mrs. Thomas said her goal is to have this petition filed in the first quarter of 2018. She said she would ask Mr. Samuels to proof this and to get the filing fees. If the filing fees are astronomical then it will need to be placed in next year's budget. Four separate petitions will have to be filed. Dr. Macomson asked Mrs. Thomas for the filing timeline. Mrs. Thomas said she hopes to file by March 31. Chairman Bridges asked if the four petitions are for the other counties. Mrs. Thomas said there are four petitions just for Franklin County. Each county will have to file their own petitions. Mrs. Thomas said she is willing to share with the other counties but each county has to file separately. Chairman Bridges suggested that the Commissioners look this over and get comments back to Mrs. Thomas as soon as possible.

2. *Comprehensive Plan Update – Character Area Map* – Mrs. Thomas said the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners worked on modifications to the zoning regulations that encompassed poultry houses. Part of the update listed changes to the character area map along with the setbacks. Poultry houses can only go in rural areas. If poultry houses are put anywhere else then a variance is needed. Buffer zones have been added to the character area map around the cities. Mrs. Thomas asked the Commissioners to look at the map and either accept or deny at the February meeting. Chairman Bridges thanked the Planning Commission for their work.

3. *Software Implementation* – Mrs. Thomas said a lot of time was spent on researching the software. She thanked the Commissioners for committing the funds in SPLOST V for the software. The financial and payroll modules were implemented on January 1. Payroll was the number one priority and all employees filled out new tax



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forms for this change. The tax tables for 2018 will be updated in February due to the tax tables not being updated until December 2017. Mrs. Thomas said these two changes have gone smoothly and the staff is adapting to the change.

The second priority will be the water billing. The water is scheduled to convert on March 19. The first bills from the new system will be due on April 10. All customers have been notified and another one will also be mailed to them. Mrs. Thomas said she would love for Franklin County to push to not take phone payments and ask customers to do everything over the web. She would be willing to not charge fees if payments were made over the web instead of over the phone. The fees would still be charged if payments are made over the phone.

Mrs. Thomas said one of the cost savings in the system is the MICR printer so check stock does not have to be bought. If there is a problem with a check such as a paper jam the check can be reprinted. Chairman Bridges said he is sure there will be some hiccups here and there but it seems to be moving along nicely.

D. Board Expectations – Mrs. Thomas said this item was requested to go on the agenda by the Commissioners. She said this is an opportunity for the Commissioners to publicly discuss their expectations of the other boards and committees. Chairman Bridges said it is important for the Commissioners to stay abreast of what is going on.

Dr. Macomson said if something could be given in writing to the new board members it would help on what is expected of them. It would also help for them to meet once a year to give an update to the Commissioners. Chairman Bridges said it was asked of the Recreation Board to provide the Commissioners with their meeting minutes.

Commissioner Franklin said this does not concern the boards but he would like an update to be given from the Water Department similar to what is given by the Road Department. He said he would like the information on what the County employees are doing, how many water taps were installed, how many miles of water lines have been installed to keep the Commissioners up to date.

Chairman Bridges said it does need to be communicated to the boards the expectations of the Commissioners. Commissioner Jacques said he would like the minutes from all boards to be given to the Commissioners so they can be kept in the loop. Dr. Macomson and Commissioner Jacques said the minutes can be emailed to the Commissioners but they are needed. Chairman Bridges said the Chair of each board should be communicated with to keep the Commissioners informed.

E. Unfunded Mandates – Commissioner Jacques said this request came from him. He said there are a lot of the needs in the County and the question is always how will it be funded. He said he has gone through a lot of budget cycles and it is hard to meet the needs and demands of the citizens because of the unfunded mandates and



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redirection of funds handed to the counties by the State. Commissioner Jacques said he has been in touch with the local elected officials regarding his concerns. He also followed up with a letter to Representative Alan Powell and as of today he has not received a response.

Commissioner Jacques said coming into the FY18 budget cycle there is a reduction of 25% in 911 fees being remitted to the counties. Last year there was an unfunded mandate to provide insurance coverage to firefighters. Commissioner Jacques stated he is not against the firefighters he is only concerned about the County finances. These unfunded mandates inhibit the ability of the County to plan and budget.

By a legislative action \$170,000 of truck taxes was redirected from Franklin County to counties in metro Atlanta. Commissioner Jacques said when this was discovered the Commissioners notified the elected officials and a temporary patch was done. This is a five-year patch with the first year being \$170,000 but decreases by 20% each year thereafter. Commissioner Jacques said Franklin County is in the third year of the patch. In two years Franklin County will be down to nothing where previously this was a revenue stream the County used to fund operations.

Commissioner Jacques said the County is limited to minor fee increases or to increase property taxes which in his opinion is the most unfair and hated way to collect revenue. He said when funds are cut or redirected from the County the choices are to cut services or raise taxes. 3% sales tax was removed from energy consumption from some of the largest industries in the County and these taxes were not replaced. Commissioner Jacques said according to the local elected officials that he spoke with this sales tax was removed to stimulate economic activity.

Last year excise tax was added to motor vehicles used by the County. Counties had been historically exempted from this excise tax. Commissioner Jacques said he looked at a study by Georgia State University published in 2017 concerning TAVT which was implemented in 2013. This study by Georgia State University details the collections prior to TAVT and the collections since its implementation. Commissioner Jacques said according to this study Franklin County has lost \$200,000 annually with the number progressing upward. This is a significant hit for a small county like Franklin County.

Commissioner Jacques said Franklin County also has the TSPLOST penalty which is 20%. Implementation of the GATE card also causes a decrease to Franklin County. He said hundreds of thousands of dollars have gone away from the County with no way to replace them for funding shortfalls. Commissioner Jacques said the only authority the Board of Commissioners has is to set a millage rate to collect property taxes. He said a lot of the problems for Franklin County could be solved if the unfunded mandates were restored to the counties. He said the Commissioners need to appeal to legislators for these unfunded mandates and for future adverse actions.



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Chairman Bridges said Commissioner Jacques pointed out how difficult it is for the County to meet a balanced budget and meet the needs of the citizens with funding being cut. Commissioner Wester said this has been discussed numerous times and until the Commissioners hold the legislators' feet to the fire it will not get any better. Chairman Bridges said it is very important to keep in touch with the legislators.

F. Executive Session – Personnel

*Chairman Bridges said personnel will only be discussed as the agenda was amended to exclude litigation. He asked for a motion to go into executive session. Commissioner Wester made the motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel. 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 Franklin, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques, Chairman Bridges and Dr. Macomson. The planning session closed at 3:25 p.m. to go into executive session.*

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to come out of executive session and go back into the planning session. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to come out of executive session and go back into the planning session and give the Chairman authorization to sign the closed meeting affidavit in which personnel was discussed. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Dr. Macomson 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 Dr. Macomson, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Franklin and Chairman Bridges. The planning session resumed at 4:35 p.m.*

G. Announcements

Mrs. Thomas announced that she will be working at the Senior Center beginning Monday because of the retirement of the director, Becky Wilbanks. Interviews are being done to fill this position but in the meantime Mrs. Thomas will be filling in. She can be reached on her cell phone or at the Senior Center number.

Commissioner Jacques announced the January work session has been canceled due to the length and content of the Planning Session. The next meeting will be February 5 at 6:00 p.m. at the Justice Center.

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wester made the motion to adjourn. 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 Dr. Macomson, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques and Chairman Bridges. The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.*



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Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2018

Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

Dr. Jason Macomson, District 2 Commissioner

Jeff Jacques, District 3 Commissioner

Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

Elaine H. Evans, County Clerk