

**FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION  
AUGUST 26, 2014  
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 Clint Harper

Media: Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen  
MJ Kneiser, WLHR

Staff: County Manager John Phillips  
County Clerk Elaine Evans

**Item 1 & 2:** Chairman Bridges called the meeting to order. He then asked Commissioner Franklin to lead the invocation and pledge to the American flag.

**Item 3: Items to be discussed:**

**A. Public Comment** - Chairman Bridges asked Judge Ken Eavenson to come forward and speak on behalf of the Historical Society. Judge Eavenson said that the Historical Society will have an open house on Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. This will be held at the Historical Society Office, located in the basement of the Board of Commissioners Office at 141 Athens Street, Carnesville. Judge Eavenson said that the Historical Society is manned by wonderful volunteers and he asked that the Commission Board and the public come out to support them.

Chairman Bridges asked if anyone else had anything for public comment. Senator Frank Ginn asked to speak. He thanked the Commission Board for his previous years of serving as Franklin County's manager. He also thanked Franklin County for their support when he ran for the Georgia State Senate. He said that he has tried to work for the good of all of Georgia since his election to the Senate. Senator Ginn said that his desire is for Franklin County and the State of Georgia to move forward. Chairman Bridges said that he appreciated all the work that Senator Ginn does for Franklin County and the State of Georgia.

Chairman Bridges asked if there was any other public comment. Woody Woodyard asked to speak about Rice Mill Road. Mr. Woodyard that he tried for over 10 years to get his road worked on by the previous Commission Chairman and Board. He said that approximately eight years ago the road was paved. Big trucks use Rice Mill Road as a shortcut – in particular chicken trucks. Mr. Woodyard shared his concerns with County Manager John Phillips about the speed and excessive traffic on the road which is causing deterioration. There are also tree roots growing under the road. Mr. Phillips had the Road Department to put up a 45 mile per speed limit sign along with truck signs. Mr. Woodyard thanked Mr. Phillips for his efforts. He then asked the Commission Board to put his road on the list to be repaired again. Mr. Woodyard also asked that Rice Mill Road be placed on the list for restriping. Commissioner Jacques and Mr. Phillips told Mr. Woodyard that Rice Mill Road is on the next list for restriping as funding becomes available. Chairman Bridges thanked Mr. Woodyard for his comments. He said that the very capable staff of Franklin County will take care of his

concerns and issues with the road.

**B. TruVista Property Donation** – Chairman Bridges thanked TruVista for the property donation to Franklin County and for their attendance at the meeting. He then asked Mr. Phillips to introduce the TruVista team. Before introducing them, Mr. Phillips explained the property donation. Several years ago the County recognized a need for future water storage. At that time several property sites were identified. One of the locations was formerly owned by Northland Cable; now owned by TruVista; which is being donated to the County for use. This is a four acre tract of land located off State Route 51. Mr. Phillips then introduced David Brunt with TruVista.

Mr. Brunt said that he is the senior vice president of operations for TruVista and CFO. He then introduced Allison Jakubecy, senior vice president of sales; Clay Fisher, director of retail operations; Dennis Ledford, local sales director and Patricia Joiner, sales manager. Mr. Brunt then gave the property to the County with the execution of Chairman Bridges' signature. He also said that TruVista is dedicated to the growth of the State of Georgia and Franklin County. Commissioner Strickland asked what the savings was to the County per year. Commissioner Jacques said that the savings to the County for using the internet and telephone services of TruVista is approximately \$12,000 per year. Chairman Bridges thanked TruVista for their donation to the County for future growth.

Commissioner Strickland asked the TruVista representatives for an update on the commissioners meetings being on cable. Jim Royston who videos the commission meetings asked to speak. He said that he is with South Carolina TruVista. He uses a file transfer protocol for the videos. The commission meetings are now available on cable in approximately four counties. The videos are also on YouTube. Allison Jakubecy said that the televised videos are part of her group and if the Commission Board had questions to please contact her. She can be reached at 803-379-6700. Commissioner Jacques thanked TruVista for their donation to the County. He said that he thought this was a win-win situation for Franklin County and TruVista. All of the Commission Board agreed with Commissioner Jacques.

**C. Joint Development Authority Funding** – Chairman Bridges asked Lyn Allen to speak on behalf of her request for the Joint Development Authority for funding. Mrs. Allen said that the Joint Development Authority was formed in 1997 for the purpose of creating Gateway Joint Development Authority. Each county in the Joint Development Authority (Franklin, Hart and Stephens) committed funding at its beginning. Periodically the JDA asks for additional funds as needed. The amount requested is usually around \$5,000 every few years. The JDA made the decision this year to ask Franklin County; Hart County and Stephens County to make funding a part of their annual budget. The JDA is asking that each of the three counties contribute \$3,500 per year. This amount will help pay for the annual audit as well as the management of the different accounts and grants. One of the benefits of the JDA is that requests for funding can be up to \$500,000 over the request of a single county in the amount of \$200,000. Mrs. Allen said that the JDA working together will bring growth to the area. She then asked again that \$3,500 be included in the annual budget of Franklin County for the JDA.

Commissioner Strickland asked Mrs. Allen for clarification. He thought that the JDA was asking each county for \$1,500 instead of \$3,500. Mrs. Allen said that the initial request several years back was for \$1,500. She thought at that time that this had been made part of Franklin County's budget. She said that the reason for the request of \$3,500 instead of \$1,500 was that the JDA made the audit costs part of the request to the counties. Commissioner Jacques asked if the Commission Board could see the audit before the next meeting. Mrs. Allen said that she would deliver a copy to the Commissioner's Office. Chairman Bridges thanked Mrs. Allen for taking her time to come before the Commission Board and make her request.

**D. County Extension Agent Update/Funding** – Chairman Bridges welcomed County Extension

Agent Raymond Fitzpatrick. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that he wanted to give an update on how he has been spending his time. He said that he is traveling the County taking water samples; chicken litter samples; and consulting with families who have inherited farms. He said that he is staying busy. Mr. Fitzpatrick then asked for more funding for the extension department. He said that he was not involved in this year's budget process. He said that the travel amount is not enough to meet the need for his position as well as the 4-H program coordinator. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for an increase of \$4,300 per year in travel. He asked for an additional \$237 in travel for the 4-H program coordinator. He asked for an additional \$1,563 to be added to the county extension agent travel budget. He also asked for \$2,500 for an out of county travel budget to reimburse his travel.

Commissioner Strickland asked Mr. Fitzpatrick if he uses his personal vehicle for his travel. He said yes that he either uses his personal truck or his wife's smaller SUV. Commissioner Strickland asked Mr. Phillips to check if there is a county vehicle available that can be used by the extension office. Mr. Phillips said that at the present time there is not an available vehicle but that he will keep checking as vehicles are replaced. Mr. Fitzpatrick has previously made this request to Mr. Phillips that he is provided with the use of a county vehicle. He then said that if the Commission Board will increase his budget that will take care of his needs until a vehicle can be provided for him.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked that there be an amendment to the budget so that the extension program can run until next budget time. Commissioner Harper asked Mr. Phillips if UGA looked over the County Extension budget before it was approved by the Commission Board. Mr. Phillips affirmed that they did. When UGA looked over the budget their recommendation was to move the travel amount to \$4,000. He said that the salary was competitive for the position. The travel was a little low and was moved to \$4,000. Mr. Phillips said that the budget amounts for the extension office were approved by UGA staff members.

Mr. Fitzpatrick said that there was no budgeted travel for the county agent position. He said that this was due to an increase in salary/retirement contributions for the position. Commissioner Strickland said that the reason that the previous county agent drove his personal vehicle was because of the increase in the salary. Mr. Phillips asked how often the county van is used. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that due to budget constraints they try to limit the use of the van to once a month. Chairman Bridges thanked Mr. Fitzpatrick for his comments.

**E. Employee Handbook** –Chairman Bridges asked the Commission Board if they had comments or concerns about the proposed changes to the handbook. Commissioner Jacques said that the changes that he had requested were included in the most recent draft. Commissioner Strickland asked Sheriff Stevie Thomas what he thought of the handbook. He said that he has not read the handbook. He said that he did not receive it. The handbook draft proposal was previously emailed to all department heads, constitutional officers and commissioners for their comments and concerns. Commissioner Strickland and Commissioner Jacques asked that this be sent again to the department heads and constitutional officers. All the Commission Board agreed that they wanted this sent out again for review by department heads and constitutional officers before formal approval of the handbook changes. Chairman Bridges asked for this to be put on the October agenda. He also thanked the County Clerk for her work on the handbook update.

**F. Executive Session** – Chairman Bridges asked for a motion and a second to close the work session and to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing real estate and personnel. Commissioner Strickland made the motion to go into executive session. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion and a second to close the executive session and go back into the work session. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to close the executive session and go back into the work session, also allowing Chairman Bridges to sign the closed meeting affidavit for the purpose of real estate and personnel discussion. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes

to zero (0) NO votes.

Chairman Bridges stated that the Commission Board discussed the financial health of the County. It is the consensus of the Commission Board that they seek a County Manager with a strong financial background to act as Financial Director/County Manager. The present County Manager John Phillips will transition back to County Engineer/Planning Director.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Strickland made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2014

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Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

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Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

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David R. Strickland, District 2 Commissioner

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Jeff Jacques, District 3 Commissioner

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Clint Harper, District 4 Commissioner

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Elaine H. Evans, County Clerk