

**FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION  
April 26, 2016  
5:30 P.M.**

Present: Commission Chairman Thomas Bridges  
District 1 Commissioner Robert Franklin  
District 2 Commissioner David Strickland  
District 3 Commissioner Jeff Jacques  
District 4 Commissioner Eddie Wester

Media: Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen

Staff: County Manager, Beth Thomas  
County Clerk, Elaine Evans

**Item 1 & 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance** – Chairman Bridges thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting a little earlier than normal so that the Commissioners could attend tonight’s political forum at the Civic Center. He called the meeting to order and asked Commissioner Strickland to lead the invocation and pledge to the American flag.

**Item 3: *Items for discussion:***

**A. Public Comment** – Chairman Bridges asked if anyone wished to speak in public comment. There was no one who wished to speak.

**B. Board Appointments** - Chairman Bridges asked County Manager Beth Thomas to go over the board appointments. Mrs. Thomas said that there are a couple of board appointments with the terms expiring. Copies of the letters for appointments were given to the Commissioners for review. She said that these positions will be advertised although recommendations have been received. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. There was no discussion.

**C. Recreation – Commissioner Wester** – Chairman Bridges said that the next item is recreation. He asked Commissioner Wester to comment on this agenda item. Commissioner Wester said that he was contacted about a month ago by Recreation Director Randall Gailey. He and Mr. Gailey talked extensively by phone. Commissioner Wester requested that he and Chairman Bridges meet with Mr. Gailey and Spenser Risner for further discussion about questions and issues that they had

concerning the recreation department.

Commissioner Wester said that Mr. Gailey is not asking for more money for himself or an increase in the recreation budget. Mr. Gailey is asking for a raise for Spenser Risner because of the job duties that he performs. Commissioner Wester asked Mr. Risner to give him the things that he is responsible for. Several of Mr. Risner's duties increased after the previous position cut at the recreation department. Commissioner Wester said that he would like to give Mr. Risner a raise so that he does not leave. He said that his daughter grew up in the recreation department and now he has a son involved in recreation. Commissioner Wester said that Mr. Risner has a heart for kids and is definitely in the right place to serve the County.

At the request of Mr. Gailey, Commissioner Wester asked for an increase to be given to Mr. Risner in the next budget. Chairman Bridges stated that this needs to be correlated with Mrs. Thomas and Mr. Gailey during the budget process. He said that he is aware that Mr. Risner coaches and that it is part of his job. Commissioner Wester said that Mr. Risner had planned to attend tonight's meeting but did not because he is on vacation.

Chairman Bridges asked for other comments. Commissioner Jacques said that he is not aware of a cut in the recreation budget. Commissioner Wester said that the budget was not cut, that a position was cut. He also said that Mr. Risner took over part of those duties since the cut of the position. Commissioner Jacques said that there are a lot of other overachieving employees in the County and he asks that the same consideration be given to them. He said that his priority in this year's budget is to take care of County employees who have done a phenomenal job during the recession with no pay increases.

Commissioner Strickland said that he was solicited for a contribution by a former employee of the recreation department. His company donated \$1,000 for sponsorship. Commissioner Strickland then asked how does the money that is solicited for sponsorships factor into the recreation budget. Commissioner Wester said that he thought this money went toward uniforms. Mrs. Thomas said that this goes into the general fund as a revenue item. She said that she has work files with revenues and expenditures. These numbers are off this year because of the change in Little League. The change in Little League was the reason for the cut back in staff. Mrs. Thomas said that previously there were three locations being run by three personnel. Now there is one location being run by two personnel.

Commissioner Jacques noted that all money received by the recreation department is credited to them via the revenue code. Mrs. Thomas said that this is correct. She also said that the recreation department operates at a loss. Chairman Bridges said that all of this will be looked at during the budget process. There was no further discussion.

**D. Freedom Drive – Commissioner Strickland – Chairman Bridges asked**

Commissioner Strickland to speak his concerns about Freedom Drive. Commissioner Strickland said that Stephens County is paving their portion of Freedom Drive. He asked County Engineer John Phillips to look into the cost of paving the approximate half mile of Freedom Drive that is in Franklin County. Mrs. Thomas said that Mr. Phillips sent a memo to all of the Commission Board concerning Freedom Drive. Commissioner Strickland said that he had been traveling and did not have access to email. Mrs. Thomas went over the information from Mr. Phillips. She said that Franklin County does have the necessary right of way. Mrs. Thomas said that she and Mr. Phillips met recently with Keith Canup of Stephens County. Mr. Canup is to give a price estimate to Franklin County for paving. Commissioner Strickland said that maybe this project could be done with SPLOST dollars.

Mrs. Thomas said that the County is waiting on the dollar amount before a decision can be made. Commissioner Strickland said that he has been discussing Freedom Drive with Mr. Phillips since about August of last year. Mrs. Thomas said that the residents of Freedom Drive are also very good about contacting the County. Commissioner Strickland said that he just wanted to bring this issue before the Board. Chairman Bridges asked if anyone else had comments or concerns.

Commissioner Jacques said that he appreciated the due diligence that Commissioner Strickland, Mr. Phillips and Mrs. Thomas have done on this issue. He said that anytime a cost can be shared it is a win-win for everyone. Commissioner Jacques said that the monetary aspect is his concern. In 2015 the Commission Board voted to move forward with the paving of Atkinson Bridge Road. He said that the residents of Atkinson Bridge Road have already obtained the necessary right of way. The County has not been able to move forward because of funding. He said that this road has been deemed a priority. He said the roads should be prioritized based on certain criteria. Mrs. Thomas said that the County is still waiting on a little bit of right of way for road work on Atkinson Bridge Road. Commissioner Jacques said that there were a couple of parcels that right of way was not given last summer because the residents thought the project had been abandoned. Mrs. Thomas said that each road is researched before projects begin.

Commissioner Strickland said that he understood that Atkinson Bridge Road was contingent on funds available. Commissioner Jacques said that this was voted on because the Board thought the funds were available. He also stated that surface treatment would be good for both of these projects as it is significantly cheaper than paving. Commissioner Strickland said he just wanted whatever is best for the citizens of Franklin County. Mrs. Thomas said as soon as numbers are available then a decision can be made. Chairman Bridges asked if anyone had any further comment or concerns about Freedom Drive. There was no further discussion.

Chairman Bridges adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016

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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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Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

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Elaine H. Evans, County Clerk