



**FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
July 10, 2017  
6:00 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  
County Attorney Bubba Samuels  
County Engineer John Phillips

Chairman Bridges called the July regular board meeting to order. He expressed his appreciation to those in attendance.

**Item 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance** – Commissioner Franklin led the invocation and pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

**Item 3: Approval of Minutes:**

June 5, 2017 Public Hearing  
June 5, 2017 Regular Board Meeting  
June 27, 2017 Work Session

Chairman Bridges said that the minutes are not official until approved. He told the Commissioners that the opportunity to review was given by the Clerk. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Macomson made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by five (5) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin, Dr. Macomson, Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Jacques and Commissioner Wester.

**Item 4: Items for discussion:**

A. **Public Comment** – Chairman Bridges said that an opportunity is given each meeting for public comment and the Commissioners are always interested in hearing from the public both in meetings and outside of meetings. He asked if anyone would like to come forward and speak. He said to please come forward and state your



name for the record and then proceed with their comments.

**Mary Gray** came forward and addressed the closing of Strawberry Lane. She said that the sign for the road closure was placed on private property and was also on a chicken house sign. Ms. Gray said that the sign was not placed on Strawberry Lane. She said if the sign had been on the stop sign she would have seen it.

**Sharon Laird** said that she is one of the property owners on Strawberry Lane. She thanked the Commission Board for abandoning the road because it has been a huge relief to her family because of the traffic. Ms. Laird said that the road is not big enough for two cars to pass. She said that if the road is reopened it will be devastating to her and her family because they are the property owners. Ms. Laird suggested working on Carroll Church Road to make it safer.

**Paul Laird** said that he came to the meetings to have Strawberry Lane abandoned because it is a safety issue for his family. He said that he does not know everybody's concerns but one of the concerns is the issue of entering Jackson Bridge Road from Carroll Church Road. Mr. Laird said that a solution to this problem would be to put a four way stop on Jackson Bridge Road near Carroll Church Road and Casey Road. He said that this would eliminate the speed on Jackson Bridge Road and make entering into Carroll Church Road or Casey Road easier. This would be less expensive than maintaining Strawberry Lane. Mr. Laird said that this would solve the problems for everyone else and he could keep Strawberry Lane closed. He also said that he was willing to work with the property owners to pay for improvements on Carroll Church Road. This would make more sense than spending money on Strawberry Lane as it is a one lane road.

**Ellen Roper Parten** came forward to speak. She said that she is concerned about the safety of the children on the school bus. Ms. Parten said that the school bus route using Strawberry Lane had worked for years and she did not want it to have to be changed. School is starting soon and Ms. Parten asked that this be considered.

**Johnny Cash** spoke next. He said that work was done on Strawberry Lane by the County in widening it. Mr. Cash said that the tree limbs are more of a problem than the road. He said that he has always used this road and does not want it closed as it would be like taking something away from him. Mr. Cash said if Strawberry Lane does not remain open then work will be needed for Jackson Bridge Road to be safer.

#### **B. Public Hearing item:**

1. Rezone and Variance – **SW Royston, LLC** – John Phillips said that SW Royston, LLC has filed an application to change the zoning from Agricultural Intensive to Commercial Community and also a variance to reduce the front setback to 50 feet from 80 feet. The Planning Commission reviewed the application and recommends approval. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission. Commissioner Wester made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion.



*Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner Wester clarified that he does share the concerns for agriculture expressed by Mr. Roper. He said that he is in support of the farmers and he does want to keep the area surrounding Agricultural Intensive along with allowing the Dollar General to come in to help the community. He does not want any negative impacts on the farmers. Commissioner Jacques echoed the sentiments from Commissioner Wester and said that Dollar General is well aware of the area where the store will locate. 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, Dr. Macomson and Commissioner Franklin.*

***C. Consideration of motion to rescind abandonment – Strawberry Lane** – Chairman Bridges asked Mr. Samuels to give the Commission Board the options for Strawberry Lane. Mr. Samuels said at the last meeting the Commission Board after following all the required statutory requirements to abandon a road then voted. He said that the Commission Board has the ability in their rules of procedure to rescind the vote made in a previous meeting. Mr. Samuels said that the agenda item was properly included and that put the public on notice that this motion would be considered. He said that if the motion to rescind was made and passed then it would void the previous decision. The other option given is to let the previous motion stand and the road will stay abandoned. Mr. Samuels said that it will then be removed from the County's road inventory and will no longer be maintained.*

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to rescind abandonment of Strawberry Lane as listed on the agenda. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to get the item to a point of discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion from the Commission Board. Dr. Macomson said that he understands the point of view from the Laird's but he thinks there is a clearer safety issue that the Commission Board was not aware of before last month's vote. He said that safety trumps any other issue. Large numbers of people use this road and this will create another safety hazard by forcing people to change their habits. Dr. Macomson said that the reasonable thing to do is to reopen Strawberry Lane.*

*Commissioner Jacques said that he wholeheartedly agrees with Dr. Macomson. He said after the last meeting he went to both intersections and evaluated the sight distance. There is no question that it enhances the sight distance and operational efficiency by entering and exiting from Strawberry Lane. Commissioner Jacques said that this will serve the public good and public interest.*

*Dr. Macomson said that along with this the intersection needs to be looked at for safety. People will still use Carroll Church Road and Jackson Bridge Road. Commissioner Franklin said that Jackson Bridge Road really needs an embankment slope. Commissioner Wester asked if the County has right of way on Jackson Bridge Road. Commissioner Jacques said that the right of way would probably need an additional easement to be able to slope it back and would only be temporary. This would greatly improve Carroll Church Road.*



*Chairman Bridges said that he had looked at this with Mr. Phillips. He asked Mr. Phillips if this could be made safer. Mr. Phillips said that there are some things that will help that can be done within the existing right of way. He said that these measures will not get to the standard that you would like as far as sight distance. In order to do this an easement would be needed from the property owner in order to take the embankment down. Commissioner Franklin said that he felt sure that the County could get a temporary easement for this.*

*Chairman Bridges said safety of the citizens is very important to the Commissioners. He asked for a show of hands. The motion passed to rescind the previous decision by five (5) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin, Dr. Macomson, Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Jacques and Commissioner Wester.*

*Commissioner Jacques said that as Dr. Macomson brought up maybe the process of abandonment needs to be evaluated. He said this should be taken as a learning experience. Additional advertisement, placement of signs, and more public input and citizen feedback may be needed. Commissioner Jacques said that the law was followed to a tee but maybe more needs to be done before abandoning. Chairman Bridges said that the Commissioners need to study the issue in order to get the information out to the public.*

***D. Tax Digest update** – Mrs. Thomas said that due to State regulations and how advertising is done, public hearings will have to be held although the millage rate is the same as last year's. Because of the inflationary growth calculation a tax increase is triggered. Although the millage rate did not change because of inflationary growth a tax increase has to be advertised of 14.41 % for the incorporated portion of the County and 4.43% for the unincorporated portion of the County.*

*Mrs. Thomas told the Commission Board that a press release will be sent out in the morning announcing the inflationary growth increase with the public hearing dates. She said that this will be advertised in this week's newspaper. Three public hearings are necessary. The dates for the public hearings are July 25 at 6:00 p.m., July 27 at 6:00 p.m. and July 31 at 5:30 p.m. with the vote at the 6:00 p.m. meeting.*

*Chairman Bridges stated that the vote will take place at the 6:00 p.m. meeting on July 31 and told the Commissioners to be prepared to vote. Commissioner Jacques said that per State law this is a tax increase but he said looking back the County is actually getting less revenue than seven years ago. Mrs. Thomas said that the tax digest is \$80,000 less than it was in 2008. The County still has not gained back to the pre-recess values.*

***E. Announcements** – Mrs. Thomas gave an update on the FCC market modification. She said that she spoke with an attorney out of Washington, DC concerning how to proceed without the support of the broadcasters. Mrs. Thomas said that she has a phone call scheduled with the FCC in the next few weeks. At that time she should be able to have an answer on whether to proceed with the petition for market*



*modification. Chairman Bridges said that he hopes for a positive response to convince the FCC to grant the Georgia stations to our viewing area.*

*Commissioner Franklin expressed his thanks to the employees in the Road Department for their cleanup of debris after last week's storm. He said that he saw them moving trees in the upper part of the County and they are doing a great job.*

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to adjourn. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. The motion passed by five (5) YES votes to zero (0) NO votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Franklin, Dr. Macomson, Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Jacques and Commissioner Wester. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.*

*Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017*

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*Chairman J. Thomas Bridges*

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*Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner*

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*Dr. Jason Macomson, 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*