



**FRANKLIN COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**July 31, 2017**  
**6:00 P.M.**

**BOC:** Commission Chairman Thomas Bridges  
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 work session to order. He said he appreciated the comments given in the public hearing.

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

**Item 3: For discussion**

**A. Public Comment** – Chairman Bridges opened the floor for public comment. Joel Bufford said that he has gotten budget information each year from Beth Thomas. He said that she is the best county manager with numbers and he told the Commission Board to make the right decision to rehire her.

**B. Tax Resolution** – Chairman Bridges said that the Tax Resolution was given to each Commissioner for review. There are four items to be voted on tonight. Each item will be voted on separately.

**Item 1** – Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve 10.813 mills on the dollar for Unincorporated Franklin County. Dr. Macomson made the motion to approve. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner Wester commented on items 1 and 2. He said he did not know what feedback was received by the other Commissioners but he received a lot of feedback. This has been a hard decision and is hurtful with what the Commission Board has to do. Commissioner Wester said he had phone calls from senior citizens who stated that they do not know how they will pay for the increased taxes. He said they are not the only ones out there and knowing this he does not feel that as a



*Commissioner he did enough to help in this situation. The Commissioners are going to have to reach out to retail and other businesses to locate in the County. Commissioner Wester said he does want the Commission Board to have to face this situation again. Dr. Macomson said he agrees with Commissioner Wester. At this time there is not another choice, this is the best that the Commission Board can do. This is a bare bones budget with only pennies projected to be over at the end of the year. Chairman Bridges applauded the school board for rolling their millage back this year. He said he hopes that the citizens realize that the Commissioners are trying to look after everyone. Commissioner Jacques said if the unfunded mandates were taken out and the spending that the Commissioners have no control over was taken out there would be a millage decrease. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The YES votes were Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques and Dr. Macomson. Commissioner Franklin was absent from the meeting.*

***Item 2** – Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve 11.960 mills on the dollar for the Incorporated Franklin County. Dr. Macomson made the motion to approve. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The YES votes were Dr. Macomson, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques and Chairman Bridges. Commissioner Franklin was absent from the meeting.*

***Item 3** – Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve .25 mills on the dollar for the Franklin County Industrial Building Authority. Commissioner Wester made the motion to get to a second for discussion. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner Jacques said for clarification the .25 mills for the IBA is a separate line item on the tax bills and equates to around \$147,500. He said over the last couple of years the appearance of Franklin County is a general lack of economic outreach when adjacent counties are benefitting and profiting from growth and development.*

*Commissioner Jacques said Frank Ginn has been serving in the capacity of the IBA Director for approximately two years and garners a salary of a little over \$60,000 per year. The position of IBA Director was intended to be full time and to provide daily economic outreach on behalf of Franklin County. Commissioner Jacques said Franklin County has a part time IBA Director and the economic outreach has diminished significantly. He said Mr. Ginn's service to Franklin County is based on his service to his senatorial duties, his constituents and his committee assignments. Franklin County is not seeing a daily outreach by an IBA Director. Commissioner Jacques said in the past with a lesser economy there was more outreach and growth than is being seen with Mr. Ginn as there is limited to no tangible growth in the County. Commissioner Jacques said he would vote no on this item as there should be accountability. If someone is going to be paid a full time salary then they need to be in the County earning it.*

*Dr. Macomson asked how the IBA Director is evaluated. Chairman Bridges said the IBA Director is evaluated by the IBA Board. Dr. Macomson asked how the*



compensation was set for this position. Chairman Bridges said the IBA Board set the salary also. He said if nothing is set aside for economic development that things may end up worse and the IBA and the Commissioners need to work together as a team for economic development. Mrs. Thomas said the budget from the IBA included .25 mills. She said they are their own levying authority although this has to be voted on by the Commissioners. Dr. Macomson asked what would happen if the Commissioners reject this. Mrs. Thomas said the Tax Commissioner cannot submit the digest because the IBA won't have a millage rate. She said another meeting would need to be called to assign the IBA some type of millage rate. The plan was to have everything in place for the Tax Commissioner for early submission of the digest. Chairman Bridges asked what the time frame is for submission. Mrs. Thomas said the deadline from the State is September 1. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by three (3) **YES** votes to one (1) **NO** vote. The YES votes were Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester and Dr. Macomson. The NO vote was Commissioner Jacques. Commissioner Franklin was absent from the meeting.

**Item 4** – Chairman Bridges said the millage rate for the Board of Education has come down at 16.868 mills on the dollar. He asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to approve. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. Commissioner Jacques expressed his thanks to the Board of Education for being diligent and prudent in their budget by reducing the millage rate. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The YES votes were Dr. Macomson, Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Wester and Chairman Bridges.

Commissioner Wester asked to revisit Item 3. He asked for this to be tabled with Commissioner Franklin being absent. Dr. Macomson asked if this could be looked at again at next week's meeting. Mrs. Thomas said that she would check with the Tax Commissioner for his schedule to submit the digest. She said she would provide information on the IBA as a levying authority to each Commissioner if requested. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to rescind the motion on Item 3. Commissioner Wester made the motion to rescind the vote on Item 3. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. Commissioner Wester said that he would like to have more time to think about this and to go over it. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by three (3) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** vote. The YES votes were Dr. Macomson, Commissioner Wester and Commissioner Jacques. Chairman Bridges abstained from the vote. Commissioner Franklin was absent from the meeting.

**C. Manager's Report** – Mrs. Thomas expressed her thanks to the Commission Board for approving the County's budget. She said she is grateful that the employees will be given their one in nine years raise. There were lots of good comments and public input at the public hearings for the millage rate. Mrs. Thomas said one of the comments made by Mr. Bellamy was "the greatest threat to any democracy is an un-informed or misinformed electorate." Another way to say this was with the words of Franklin Roosevelt "the safeguard of democracy is education."

Mrs. Thomas is in the process of scheduling education with ACCG for all the



boards in Franklin County for protocol and requirements. This opportunity will also be offered to neighboring counties. There will be no cost to Franklin County for this education. Mrs. Thomas also expressed thanks to the Franklin County Citizen Leader for looking at doing citizen education. She said this is beginning to be talked about on social media and she is grateful for these efforts. The Tax Assessors are also willing to do a question and answer for the Commissioners if they are interested. This would give them a chance to understand the process of the tax value and assessment process.

Blight information was given to the Commissioners. This was brought to the attention of the County at one of the public hearings. Mrs. Thomas said that the nuisance ordinance of the County is what is used now but it is a lengthy process through the Court system. She said there is a tax service paradox with some people asking if everything is done to cut taxes or reduce the impact and others say they want more services such as animal control and blight removal. The bulk of the County taxes go to EMS and Sheriff Protection. Commissioner Wester said that one lady who spoke at a public hearing said there are abandoned homes and animals in her neighborhood. This lady said she does not think she is getting anything for her taxes. Commissioner Wester said that a blight program will need to be feasible for the County. Mrs. Thomas said that it is time consuming to try to catch the people who abandon the properties. She said Stephens County does an amnesty day to encourage citizens to clean up their properties. The Commissioners will need to be mindful that if this is done that it will come at a price as the County does not have a landfill.

A pre-bid meeting for the sewer project was held last week. Mrs. Thomas said this will be bid out as two separate projects, the plant work and the pipe work on August 8. Once the numbers come in the bond attorneys will draft the documents as interim financing has already been lined up with the ARC grant and USDA. Mrs. Thomas said the money was set aside a while ago so she is hoping that the costs do not get out of line. After the bond attorneys draft the resolution the Commission Board will have to take action at their next meeting to validate the bonds.

At the January planning meeting Planning Director John Phillips gave information on an inspection program. The Planning Commission is very interested in starting this. Mrs. Thomas said the Commission Board gave approval to send out a Request for Proposal for services. There are two things that can be done, either go with an inspection program or modify the ordinances to modify the process. The Planning Commission would like for the Commission Board to decide what they would like to do. Mrs. Thomas said she would love for the Commission Board to tell her to go with an inspection program and to do it as cheaply as possible. Dr. Macomson asked if this would be a break even program. Mrs. Thomas said this would be outsourced and it is not a money making program. Chairman Bridges asked the Commissioners to look at this and to give feedback on it.

#### **D. Announcements –**

Commissioner Wester said there was no July IBA meeting so there is nothing new to report.



*Chairman Bridges gave the evaluation form for the manager and the clerk. The evaluations will be done in Executive Session at the regular meeting in August to become effective August 24.*

*Chairman Bridges adjourned the work session at 7:25 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*