



**FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
September 18, 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*

*Chairman Bridges called the regular board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He said this meeting was originally scheduled for September 11 due to the September 4 holiday. Last Monday's meeting was canceled due to the bad weather. Chairman Bridges said it will be months before everything is cleaned up in the County. He said there are a lot of good people working on this.*

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

**Item 3:**                ***Approval of Minutes:***

*August 7, 2017 Public Hearing  
August 7, 2017 Regular Board Meeting  
August 29, 2017 Work Session*

*Chairman Bridges said there are three sets of minutes to be approved. He said these minutes are on the County's website for viewing by the public. The Commissioners have all had an opportunity to review them. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to approve the minutes as written and distributed. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin 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 Wester, Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Franklin, Dr. Macomson and Chairman Bridges.*



**Item 4:                   Items for discussion:**

A.     **Public Comment** – Chairman Bridges said comments are welcomed by the Commissioners. He also stated that each Commissioner has a phone and phone calls are also welcome. Chairman Bridges asked if anyone would like to come forward and speak to the Commissioners.

**Ray Hanley** came forward and asked if building inspections are really needed. He said his opinion is that building inspections are not needed. Mr. Hanley said the bigger companies of electricians and plumbers are not interested in doing small jobs. Most of the people who do these smaller jobs may not be licensed but they know as much or more than the licensed ones. He asked the Commissioners to look at this deeper before they hire a building inspector.

**Frank Gibson** said he does not think Franklin County needs a building inspector. He said if someone wants to buy something they can hire their own house inspector to check the house out. This could make a hardship on people because of the extra expense. He said the people in the County need to make this choice.

**Lisa Phillips** spoke next on the perspective of the farmers concerning building inspections. She said a lot of the farmers do their own electrical and plumbing work and they do not need a licensed contractor to come out and do the work for them. Mrs. Phillips said the farming communities need to be left alone. They do not need a licensed contractor. She said it would be greatly appreciated by the farming community if the wording was changed concerning them.

**Shad McDaniel** said it was stated in the newspaper that one of the reasons for building inspections is that if the contractor work was not good then insurance might not pay for damages. He questioned how many people in Franklin County have homeowners insurance. Mr. McDaniel said Hurricane Irma just tore up Houston and per NBC News only 34% of the houses were insured. He said Houston is a big city that has inspections. Insurance cannot be used as an excuse to start inspections.

B.     **Clint Harper** – building inspections – Chairman Bridges welcomed Rev. Clint Harper to come forward and speak about building inspections. Rev. Harper thanked the Board for hearing him out. He said he knew this day would come because when he served on the Commission Board he was approached by several people stating that Franklin County needed building inspections. When these people were asked why building inspections were needed they were unable to give an answer other than other counties have them. Rev. Harper said he came to the realization that everyone who talked to him about this was a licensed contractor. No one other than people in the building industry ever approached him about building inspections.

The question was asked to the Commission Board by Rev. Harper why there is a need for a building inspector. Commissioner Wester said this was brought to the Commission Board by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission asked if this was something that they needed to be researching to keep things from happening.



*Rev. Harper asked why the Planning Commission said there was a need. Commissioner Wester said part of the reason was the issue in Bold Springs where the house was moved after the County Marshal approved the setbacks. Rev. Harper said he thought it would be easier to have the County Marshal go out and look when the house was framed up. Commissioner Wester said the Planning Commission approached the Commission Board because of this issue and some others including septic tanks. Rev. Harper stated it would be great for the Board of Commissioners office to have a list of what is needed for citizens when they are building a house. The step by step instructions would be great.*

*Mrs. Thomas told Rev. Harper this was first discussed at the January Planning Meeting. Building inspections would help enforce the laws that are on the books. Rev. Harper said in the February 2017 Franklin County Citizen photos of people living in storage buildings was shown. John Phillips was quoted as saying that these situations were safety concerns. Rev. Harper said these people did not choose to live like this and where will these people go. He said Franklin County is a poor county. Building inspections will hurt the poor of the County as well as the farmers and people who want to build a small cabin. This will hurt people and will not help anyone. It will hurt the growth in the County.*

*Rev. Harper stated that all the Commissioners ran as Republicans. He questioned if they knew what the Republican Party stands for. Commissioner Jacques said less taxes and more personal and individual responsibility. Rev. Harper said limited government is in the preamble of the Republican Party along with restoring the American dream. The Republican platform is smaller government and smaller taxes. The taxes in the County have already been raised a lot. Inspectors will add another tax burden to the people. Commissioner Jacques stated that during the time that Rev. Harper was on the Board overspending was almost 1.4 million dollars. This overspending was not due to anything that the Commission Board had control over. During this time period taxes were not raised but all the fund balance for the County was totally depleted. Taxes had to be raised because there were no more funds to draw from. Rev. Harper said to put the building inspections on a referendum and see if this is what the citizens want for Franklin County.*

*C. **Delores Gresham** – Oakwood Drive – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Gresham to come forward. Mrs. Gresham said she is back to talk about the same issue that she has previously come before the Board for. She said the County Engineer and her Commissioner came out and looked at her property. Water is being diverted onto her property from one of her neighbors. She would like for the County to correct the diversion of water onto her property.*

*Mrs. Gresham said she spoke with the County Engineer and he put her in touch with Mrs. Thomas. She was told about a decision that was made to correct the problem. Mrs. Gresham said the proposed decision from the Engineer is not a good decision and it will not work. She said it would take years to get the easements to be able to move the drainage to the other side.*



Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Gresham what proposal she would give to correct this problem. The suggestion from Mrs. Gresham is to grade the road from the top of the hill and smooth it out by putting in dirt so the water does not drain onto her property. She said this would put the water onto Pinehurst and could drain toward the lake by Stillwater. This would be the less costly way to fix this problem because the County has the equipment and the people.

Mrs. Gresham said she was told this is her problem because she bought the property with the culvert there. She said that the problem is now the County's because they work the road. Chairman Bridges told Mrs. Gresham that the County Engineer has done a beautiful job with drawing out what is going in her area. He said that the property was developed and then two pieces of property was purchased by Mrs. Gresham. The natural drain was designed to come between the two pieces of property. Mrs. Gresham said nobody told her that she could not build on this piece of property. She told the Commissioners that when the road was accepted the culvert and the water that runs through it were also accepted by the County. She said it is not her water it belongs to the County. Chairman Bridges said the Engineer has given great advice but she does not want to take the advice from him. He said this problem was created by the developer of the property. Mrs. Gresham asked what happens next. Chairman Bridges suggested to Mrs. Gresham that she meet with the County Engineer and County Manager and himself for the best solution.

**D. Public Hearing items**

**1. Conditional use for a truck lube center** – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to give the recommendation for the truck lube center. Mrs. Thomas said Lubezone made an application and came before the Planning Commission. The recommendation from the Planning Commission is for approval with 25 feet of right of way from the centerline of the road to be given to the County for maintenance and J.F. Shirley Road to be widened by eight feet per County standards with adequate levels of base and asphalt. Chairman Bridges asked for acceptance of the recommendation from Mrs. Thomas. Commissioner Jacques made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin 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, Dr. Macomson, Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Jacques and Commissioner Wester.

**2. Rezone and conditional use for a poultry farm** – Chairman Bridges said the Planning Commission has recommended approval for the rezone and conditional use for a poultry farm. He then asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Jacques made the motion. 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 Wester, Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Franklin, Chairman Bridges and Dr. Macomson.

**E. Inspection Program** – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to give information on the inspection program. Mrs. Thomas said the Planning Commission has reviewed and discussed an inspection program. A recommendation was given at



*the January Planning Meeting to recommend implementation of an inspection program via a contractor, someone who is skilled in inspections. The concept of the program is to be revenue neutral; the County would not gain any revenue. At that time the Commission Board approved moving forward with an RFP for a contractor. The Planning Commission has expressed concern over a lack of support by the Commission Board therefore they have not moved forward with the RFP. What is being asked for by the Planning Commission is clarification whether Franklin County is ready to move forward with this or not.*

*Mrs. Thomas said inspections can be argued from either side of being for or being against and each side has valid points. She said the argument of being against the poor could also be argued that this would protect the poor from questionable developers and bad building practices. The question for tonight – is Franklin County ready to begin an inspection program. Mrs. Thomas said the answer lies in what the vision is for Franklin County – is the identity a rural only community or does the County seek growth.*

*Tonight's vote does not have anything to do with being licensed or not licensed. It is not about creating new codes or laws, it is only about enforcing the existing codes and laws. Mrs. Thomas said the vote for tonight will not be to start this program. Clarification is being asked for the Commission Board to show support or to declare a halt to an inspection program. If support is given for this then the Planning Commission will continue to study the best practice approach for the area. It may be broken down into categories of residential, commercial and agricultural. Bids will then be sought from qualified contractors. After this it will be presented to the Commission Board to enter into a contract with the inspectors.*

*Mrs. Thomas said the Planning Commission is asking for the support and continuing the development of an inspection program or to halt the process. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to allow the Planning Commission to study the issue and go for or against. Dr. Macomson made the motion to move forward. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Dr. Macomson said there already is an inspection but it is not very effective. If there was a stronger program in place maybe things such as a house being moved after inspection by the County Marshal and issues like Mrs. Gresham's problem would not happen. Dr. Macomson said the County is not looking to change any codes or laws it is only looking at making things stronger. He said no one likes to be told what to do on private property but this type of program would be designed for the safety and protection of the citizens.*

*Commissioner Jacques said the problem that happened with the house being moved was an individual moved it after the inspection. There is already a subdivision ordinance that addresses the construction of the roads and drainage. He questioned if the County should add more cost to the taxpayers. Commissioner Wester said it is good to research whether a building inspector is needed or whether the process needs to be revamped. Whatever is the best for the citizens is what the County should look at doing. Dr. Macomson said an appeals process should be part of whatever program is*



started. It is important to have due process in anything. Commissioner Jacques said he has talked with other people in counties near us who started out just like this with an inspection program. From the inspection program the cost escalated to around \$1,800 of permits to build a house.

Commissioner Franklin said he talked to someone in another county and was told that the County dictates where trees and everything else can be placed. He said this is unfair to the citizen who is paying for it. Chairman Bridges said he remembers the days before there was any zoning in the County. He said he is in favor of keeping planning and zoning to keep the County beautiful. He told each Commissioner that this needs to be studied to make good decisions for all citizens. Chairman Bridges asked for a show of hands to give this back to the Planning Commission. The motion passed by three (3) **YES** votes to two (2) **NO** votes. The YES votes were Commissioner Wester, Chairman Bridges and Dr. Macomson. The NO votes were Commissioner Jacques and Commissioner Franklin.

**F. Capital Expenditures** – tag reader – Chairman Bridges said the capital expenditure of the tag reader had been discussed previously. He asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the item further. Mrs. Thomas said at last month's work session Sgt. Roberts came on behalf of the Georgia State Patrol and requested assistance from Franklin County. Franklin County has 22 miles of Interstate 85 and Post 52 is in this area. One of the greatest uses in law enforcement today is the tag readers. It is impressive the amount of information that law enforcement is able to get from them. Mrs. Thomas said the request was for two tag readers at a cost of \$18,500 each. There was an unexpected cash flow received by Franklin County from a positive work comp audit in the amount of \$15,116.

Mrs. Thomas gave her recommendation to approve the purchase of one tag reader. This will leave the purchase price about \$3,000 short with using the money from the work comp audit. Franklin County will see the rewards this purchase especially in public safety. She gave as part of her recommendation to wait until October 31 to make the purchase due to cash flows. Mrs. Thomas said that the partnership of the Georgia State Patrol is great for Franklin County.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to accept the recommendation from Mrs. Thomas to purchase one tag reader for the Georgia State Patrol. Dr. Macomson made the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. Chairman Bridges asked for discussion. Commissioner Jacques said he talked with the Post Commander and found out that this request had been made and was denied. He said Sgt. Andrews explained how this technology would help in safety. Commissioner Jacques said normally he would be against purchasing for a State agency but given the enhanced safety and partnership for Franklin County he supports the purchase. Dr. Macomson said the Georgia State Patrol works well with the Sheriff's Office and it is great to have them in Franklin County. Chairman Bridges thanked Sgt. Roberts for the presentation. He said there are two troopers who work Franklin County and keep the citizens safe. 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.

**G. State Probation Lease** – Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the State Probation Lease. Mrs. Thomas said this was presented at the May work session. This is the lease between the State Probation and Franklin County. This is a non-monetary lease. The language was changed concerning the sublease of the building. Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve the State Probation Lease. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to approve. 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 Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Franklin and Dr. Macomson.

**H. Executive Session – personnel** – Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to close the regular session and go into executive session for the purpose of personnel. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to exit regular session and go into executive session for discussing personnel. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. 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 regular session closed at 7:28 p.m.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to close executive session and go back into regular session. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to come out of executive session and go back into regular session and give the Chairman authorization to sign the closed meeting affidavit for the purpose of discussing personnel. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Dr. Macomson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. 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. The regular session resumed at 8:07 p.m.

**I. Announcements -**

Commissioner Wester expressed his thanks to the public works department, fire departments, EMS, and E911, law enforcement and everyone who was out last Monday night helping with the weather and cutting trees. He said it was a very long and busy night and he was appreciative of everyone who had a part in keeping the trees off the roads and enhancing the safety of the citizens. Chairman Bridges asked the Commission Board to express their thanks as a Board and everyone was in agreement. He said he was thankful for everyone who helped. Chairman Bridges also asked that the public be patient with the cleanup process.

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to adjourn. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Wester 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 8:12 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*