



You Are Why We Are Here

**FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
February 26, 2018  
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

**Item 1:** **Call Meeting to Order** – Chairman Bridges called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He thanked Shane Scoggins for attending the meetings and keeping the public informed. Tonight's meeting was changed to Monday instead of Tuesday because the Lady Lions are in a playoff game tomorrow night.

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

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

A. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.

B. **Rue Chalet** – Chairman Bridges asked Dr. Macomson to comment on Rue Chalet. Dr. Macomson said MJ Kneiser talked to him about one of the properties in her neighborhood that is abandoned. The property owners died and the heirs are not taking care of it. Dr. Macomson said Ms. Kneiser provided him with pictures showing the yard being overgrown due to no one living there in over a year. Dr. Macomson said Ms. Kneiser asked about the County's Nuisance Ordinance and whether anything could be done.

Ms. Kneiser provided Dr. Macomson research that she has done on counties and cities being allowed to place higher taxes against property owners that abandon them or refuse to clean them up. Dr. Macomson said Ms. Kneiser would like for the Commissioners to look into placing this type of tax against property owners that do not maintain their properties. The Nuisance Ordinance in place for the County does



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*not address blight unless there is some kind of public health issue. Dr. Macomson said in this case he does not think a health issue exists as it is only the yard not being cleaned up.*

*Dr. Macomson said the County Marshal has looked at this property and has issued a letter to the property owners requesting them to perform clean up. If the property owners do not answer within so many days the County Marshal can take them to Magistrate Court. Dr. Macomson said he does not favor a blight ordinance because tax collection is probably not taking place on the abandoned properties anyway. He said Ms. Kneiser does want the Commissioners to look over the material she emailed regarding a successful blight program in another county.*

*Commissioner Wester said this is a tough issue as far as what the County can do. He is in agreement with Dr. Macomson that he does not see a blight ordinance as being beneficial for the County but something does need to be done regarding abandoned properties.*

*Mrs. Thomas said the Nuisance Ordinance focuses mainly on public health. If there is an immediate public health issue and the Magistrate Judge makes the determination the County can go in and do the clean up using whatever force is necessary. If this is the desire of the Commissioners to move forward with some type of clean up program it will need to be a budgeted item. Mrs. Thomas stated blight programs for cities is much different than managing one for counties. She said if this particular home was out in the country it may not look any different than most of the ones on the road. In a residential setting there may be additional covenants in place from a home owner's association. Mrs. Thomas suggested if this is something the Commissioners would like to start to begin in baby sets. She said that she and the Marshal are piloting a program to clean up some areas by offering free trash tags, just starting with something small. Dr. Macomson said everyone has a different definition of blight and it would be hard to decide how to proceed with a program. Chairman Bridges said this is beginning to be looked into with the assistance of the Marshal.*

*C. **Nicole Lane** – Chairman Bridges asked Commissioner Franklin to comment on Nicole Lane. Commissioner Franklin said Lonie Martin contacted him about Nicole Lane being accepted by the County. He would like for information to be given to Mr. Martin about what it takes to get a road accepted by the County. Commissioner Franklin said he would like for the other Commissioners to take a look at Nicole Lane. Nicole Lane is two miles long with one family living there and two empty trailers. Commissioner Franklin said he did not think the County needed to take on a road that goes out through the woods with gravel here and there and broken culverts.*

*Dr. Macomson asked if it is a cul-de-sac or a through road. Commissioner Franklin said at one time it went all the way through and came out on Hunter's Creek Road but not now. He said he has explained to Mr. Martin that the County does not have the means or the employees to do anything to the road. Commissioner Jacques said in previous cases the Commissioners have not accepted anything unless every*



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*property owner on the road is willing to sign over an easement and be in unison of the request. At this time there are several roads pending acceptance based on bringing the roads up to a certain standard. Commissioner Jacques said he thought this would be applicable for this road as well and he has looked at Nicole Lane. He said it will require a lot of work before it is brought up to an acceptable standard. Chairman Bridges said it is important to follow protocol. Mrs. Thomas said there is a policy that has been followed since 2011 for roads which states the road needs to serve a public purpose and has to serve three or more property owners.*

**D. Plumbing Ordinance** – *Chairman Bridges asked Mrs. Thomas to go over the plumbing ordinance item. Mrs. Thomas said Franklin County ranked number one out of the 15 pages of applications for GEFA financing. Franklin County is eligible to receive the 3.5 million dollars note with \$500,000 in loan forgiveness. Mrs. Thomas said stage two of the loan process requires a review of the building ordinances specific to the plumbing section. The Commissioners were given the existing code for Franklin County and the State code. Mrs. Thomas said Franklin County will need to update the ordinances to align with the State code. The ordinance will need to state that all new homes will be required to have the low volume fixtures. Mrs. Thomas said this is required to gain the funding and it is great news that Franklin County is eligible for the loan forgiveness. Chairman Bridges agreed it is great news.*

*Mrs. Thomas said the update of the ordinance for Franklin County will adopt what the State already has in place. Commissioner Jacques questioned the methodology to ensure compliance without a formalized inspection process. Mrs. Thomas said this will be much like what already exists as the County does not have an inspections program. The update for the ordinance will say the State code applies in Franklin County which it already does. Dr. Macomson said he would be in favor of changing the wording from the chief building inspector to the County Marshal to issue the citations. He said he did not think the building inspectors should be the ones to give the citations.*

*Commissioner Jacques said the whole law allowed counties to exempt out of having to follow and adopt inspections for plumbing. Mrs. Thomas said she will check with the County Attorney for clarification on this. She said John Phillips had mentioned Section 655 of the current ordinance as what would need to be updated. Mrs. Thomas told the Commissioners if they have any questions or changes to the wording to please let her know as the County cannot move forward with this part of the GEFA loan until this is completed.*

**E. Elections Bid** – *Chairman Bridges said bids were taken for the elections building. He asked Mrs. Thomas to go over this item. Mrs. Thomas said the Optum Group developed plans and bids were taken and received. Two bids were received and they were higher than Mrs. Thomas expected as she wanted to stay under \$30,000. Mrs. Thomas said if these bids were rejected and bids taken again that she does not think they will be any lower. She said this project needs to move forward although it is over budget. The County will work with the contractor to reduce the costs.*



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*Mrs. Thomas said the lowest bid was from IBC Construction for \$39,575 with the notation the start date will be seven to 10 days after satisfactory repair of the roof. When the inspection of the building was done the inspector did not note the roof being an issue now but said it would be in the future. Mrs. Thomas said County staff will put a seal coat on the roof. She gave her recommendation to the Commission Board to approve the IBC Construction bid at the next board meeting.*

*Commissioner Jacques said it was worth noting that both bids came from local vendors and he does not think if it is bid out again that the bids would be better than either of these. Chairman Bridges said it would be better to go with the local vendors and work with them. He told the Commissioners to look this over for approval at the March regular board meeting.*

**F. Manager's Report** – *Mrs. Thomas said FY18 will focus heavily on infrastructure. The begin date for the sewer project is March 5 depending on the weather. There will be a public hearing on March 27 at 9:00 a.m. as part of the GEFA application. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the public of a need for improvements and it complies with the rules for safe drinking water and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is where the loan forgiveness is coming from. The March 27 meeting date will be advertised in the newspaper. Mrs. Thomas said anyone who is interested is welcome at the meeting. If the Commissioners are unable to attend then staff will compile the information. Mrs. Thomas said the software training for water is going on this week with the go live date of March 19. The bids for the 2018 LMIG are due March 22. The advertisement for the 2018 LMIG is being run in the newspaper for four weeks.*

*A large screen television with a DVD was purchased for the Senior Center with the funds from the Thanks Mom and Dad grant. Mrs. Thomas said the first movie day was held at the Senior Center and it went great. A new director is scheduled to start in March. Mrs. Thomas said the invitation is open to anyone 60 and older to come check out the Senior Center and see what it has to offer.*

*Mrs. Thomas put out a plea for volunteers for Meals on Wheels. She said some of the Meals on Wheels volunteers have delivered meals for 16 years and they are very faithful. Mrs. Thomas said the volunteer base has declined and she is looking to build it up. Businesses are also needed to sponsor Senior Center activities. The business sponsor for February was Rocky's Marine. Mrs. Thomas said the participation has increased over the past several weeks.*

*Mrs. Thomas said it is time to look at the FY19 budget. The first thing to look at is the goals and objectives. She said she has been compiling a list and she will email to the Commissioners for review and comments. Then she and the Commission Board will need to discuss and prioritize.*

*Mrs. Thomas expressed her thanks for the work session being moved up a night. She said she received a phone call complimenting the Commissioners for their support*



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*of the Lady Lions.*

*Commissioner Jacques said at the last meeting a group of residents came with an issue concerning Culpepper Road relating to the power plant traffic. He said he visited this area a couple of days after the meeting and there was not a traffic problem. Commissioner Jacques said he appreciated the follow up on this issue. He said the same group of citizens expressed concern over the trash on JF Shirley Road. On a positive note the development that was approved last year for the lube center has broken ground and they have started cleaning up the area.*

*Commissioner Wester said if anyone has not gotten out to watch the Lady Lions then you need to get out and watch them. They are a very special team and their team work is impressive. Chairman Bridges encouraged everyone to go out and support the Lady Lions.*

*G. **Executive Session** – Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to go into executive session to deal with personnel. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to go into executive session. 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 Franklin, Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques, Chairman Bridges and Dr. Macomson.*

*The regular session closed at 6:27 p.m. and the Commissioners exited to executive session. The County Manager was called into the executive session at 6:40 p.m. The County Clerk did not attend the executive session at the direction of the Chairman. Commissioner Wester exited the executive session at 6:45 p.m.*

*Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to close the executive session and go back into the regular session. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to come out of executive session where the item of personnel was discussed and go back into regular session and grant the Chairman authorization to sign the closed meeting affidavit. Chairman Bridges asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chairman Bridges asked for a show hands. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Chairman Bridges, Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Franklin and Dr. Macomson. The regular session resumed at 7:07 p.m.*

#### **H. Announcements:**

*Mrs. Thomas announced that tomorrow is green day in support of the Lady Lions. Show your support and wear green!*

*Commissioner Jacques said Commissioner Wester left the executive session due to a family emergency and wished him Godspeed.*



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*Chairman Bridges asked the Commission Board to please follow the legislation that will impact the County. Good updates are provided by ACCG and GMRC.*

*Chairman Bridges adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.*

*Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018*

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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*