



You Are Why We Are Here

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
July 31, 2018
6:00 P.M.**

BOC: *District 1 Commissioner Robert Franklin
District 2 Commissioner Dr. Jason Macomson
District 3 Commissioner Jeff Jacques
District 4 Commissioner Eddie Wester*

Absent: *Chairman Thomas Bridges*

Media: *Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen*

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

Item 1: ***Call Meeting to Order** – Vice Chairman Dr. Macomson called the July work session to order and welcomed everyone.*

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

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

A. Public Comment

Dr. Macomson opened the floor for public comments. He asked anyone wishing to speak to come forward and state their name and address for the record. Walter Brown of 885 Aderhold Road came forward to speak. He questioned why gravel was not put on the road in front of his house when it was placed on smaller roads in the area that only have one house on them. Mr. Brown then questioned Commissioner Jacques on right of way and how a road can get paved without the proper requirements because part of Aderhold Road is paved and he wanted to know how it happened. Commissioner Jacques said this preceded his service on the Board. Mr. Brown asked who did the paving request go to. Commissioner Jacques said the requirement would come from the citizens collectively and go to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Mr. Brown then asked where would this be kept. Commissioner Jacques said it should be noted in the County records. Mr. Brown asked if these records could be found. Commissioner Jacques asked Mr. Brown if he was formally making a request. Mr. Brown said yes. Dr. Macomson stated the County Manager would look into this and give him an answer.



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Mr. Brown went back to the gravel not being put in front of his house and asked for an answer. Dr. Macomson questioned when the last time the gravel was put on the road. Mr. Brown said yesterday and the day before on parts of it but it was not put in front of his house. He said the smaller road which is basically a driveway had about six inches of gravel put on it. Dr. Macomson said Mrs. Thomas would look into this. Mrs. Thomas said the County contracts for gravel placement and it is put where it is deemed necessary. Mr. Brown asked who gives the instructions of where to place the gravel. Mrs. Thomas said the order is called in by the County. Mr. Brown questioned if his road could be tarred and graveled. Commissioner Jacques told Mr. Brown the primary reason for the County not doing more roads with tar and gravel is because of financial constraints.

Mr. Brown asked where the proposed four million dollars for the jail expansion that was on the ballot was going to come from. Dr. Macomson said bonds would have been used for the revenue and that would have entailed a tax increase but is a dead issue as it was rejected on the referendum. Mr. Brown then asked what happened to the Water Authority in the County and the plans of putting in a water treatment facility. Commissioner Jacques said the County currently is working on a sewage treatment facility and he has no knowledge of water treatment discussions. Mr. Brown asked why a sewage treatment facility is being built ahead of a water treatment facility. Commissioner Jacques said the County has more than an ample supply of water with purchases from other entities which satisfy the EPD requirements. Mr. Brown asked if this wasn't part of the water department's job to test the water. Commissioner Jacques said the water department employees test the water internally but the DNR/EPD has oversight and greater control over all water supplies and testing is done with regularity.

The process for getting water run on a road was questioned by Mr. Brown. Commissioner Jacques explained the process including the need expressed by the number of residents, capital expense of the County and the financial return. He said the County is aggressively pursuing the expansion of water to the residents of the County. Dr. Macomson said the County is working to expand the water system but at this time is unable to provide water to every citizen due to limited resources.

There were no further questions from Mr. Brown. Dr. Macomson asked if anyone else would like to speak to the Commissioners. There was no one else who wished to speak in public comment.

B. Tax Resolution

Dr. Macomson said the tax resolution is for the purpose of establishing millage rates for Franklin County for 2018. There are four parts to the tax resolution; the unincorporated areas, incorporated areas, IBA and the Board of Education. Dr. Macomson said Mrs. Thomas would review each part of the tax resolution and each section will be voted on individually.



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Mrs. Thomas said the FY19 budget was prepared with no tax increase, keeping the same millage rate for the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County. The budget was based on a millage rate of 10.813 mils for the unincorporated areas of the County, 11.96 mils on the incorporated areas of the County, .25 mil for the IBA and 15.8 mils for the Board of Education.

*Dr. Macomson asked for a motion to accept the recommendation of levying a tax of **10.813** mils on properties subject to taxation in the **unincorporated areas** of Franklin County. Commissioner Wester made the motion to accept the 10.813 mils for the unincorporated areas of Franklin County. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. Dr. Macomson asked for discussion before the vote. Commissioner Wester reiterated there is no tax increase whatsoever, it is staying the same. Dr. Macomson 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 Wester, Commissioner Jacques and Commissioner Franklin.*

*Dr. Macomson asked for a motion to accept the recommendation of levying a tax of **11.960** mils on properties subject to taxation in the **incorporated areas** of Franklin County. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to accept the 11.960 mils for the incorporated areas of Franklin County. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Dr. Macomson asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Jacques, Dr. Macomson and Commissioner Franklin.*

*Dr. Macomson said the **Industrial Building Authority** is a tax recommending authority and their recommendation is a tax of **0.25** mil on all properties subject to taxation in Franklin County. This tax is for the purpose of funding the IBA to develop and promote trade and commerce and gain employment opportunities in Franklin County. Dr. Macomson asked for a motion to approve the recommendation from the IBA. Commissioner Wester made the motion for the 0.25 mil to fund the IBA. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. There was no second. The motion died for a lack of a second. Dr. Macomson asked for a motion for a different tax levy to fund the IBA. There was no motion. Dr. Macomson asked for discussion.*

Commissioner Wester stated he made the motion because this is the same amount that the IBA has requested in years past. Dr. Macomson said everyone has questions about economic development and whether it is being done in the right way. He said earlier this year new people were appointed to the IBA Board and the funding should continue and give these people a chance to work together to do something for the County. Commissioner Jacques said he supports the IBA and supports the IBA Director personally but he is not for the current scenario of having a part time IBA Director with full time benefits. He said Franklin County deserves someone who is working full time for the betterment of the County in the industrial development sector.

Mrs. Thomas implored the Board to please consider approval for the IBA. She said



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she is aware everyone has their opinions but this will have to be given back to the attorney if not approved. Mrs. Thomas said the IBA is fully funded by this tax mil and not giving them the tax will bring questions of how do they move forward to operate. She said there is an IBA Board made up of five mayors and citizens and they are charged with developing a budget and oversight of operations. She suggested tabling this item and coming back to it at the end of the meeting. Dr. Macomson asked what will the IBA would operate on. Mrs. Thomas said the money for last year has already been collected. Money gets tight in the County in the months preceding tax collections and it will get extremely tight for the IBA as they only receive money one time per year. Mrs. Thomas stressed the IBA can not use any SPLOST funds for operations. Dr. Macomson questioned if they would have funds to operate on. Mrs. Thomas said she did not know but given the projects they have she would think not. She also explained the tax collections are given directly to the IBA by the Tax Commissioner and do not come through the Board of Commissioners.

*Dr. Macomson asked for a motion to table. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to table until the August meeting so Chairman Bridges could take part in the vote. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. Mrs. Thomas again stated she would have to check with the attorney to make sure the County meets the deadlines for advertising. She told the Commissioners to be mindful of the deadlines for the Tax Commissioner on submitting the digest. Mrs. Thomas then asked the Commissioners if this could be tabled until the end of the meeting and looked at again. Commissioner Jacques followed the proper procedure and made a motion to rescind his previous motion of tabling the item until the August meeting. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. Dr. Macomson asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Wester and Dr. Macomson.*

*Dr. Macomson asked for a motion to amend the agenda to discuss the IBA tax mil recommendation. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to amend the agenda to discuss the IBA tax mil at the end of the agenda (Item F). Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Dr. Macomson asked for a show of hands. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Jacques and Dr. Macomson.*

*Dr. Macomson said the **Franklin County Board of Education** met on July 19, 2018 to establish a tax mil of **15.8** on all properties in Franklin County subject to taxation for the purpose of funding the operations for the schools. He asked for a recommendation to accept the tax mil of 15.8 for the Board of Education. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to approve the 15.8 mils for the Franklin County Board of Education. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Jacques, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Wester and Dr. Macomson.*



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C. Water System Update

Mrs. Thomas presented a time lapse video of the waste water facility construction. She said the work is ongoing and a lot of progress has been made. The heavy construction has taken place during the summer months when school has been out. Mrs. Thomas said the County will be working with the contractors and the school system to arrange deliveries with school starting back. The road behind the school will no longer be used since a new road has been constructed.

An update was given on the GRP plant by Mrs. Thomas. She said they are building and constructing and the IBA Director would like to schedule a tour of the facility with the Commissioners, Representatives and Senators. The tentative time for the tour is sometime in August. Mrs. Thomas said GRP will be the first large industrial water user for Franklin County. The water rate for large industrial users was established in 2009 along with the purchase requirements. System improvements are needed in order for Franklin County to be able to supply the necessary amount of water for GRP. Mrs. Thomas said those improvements have been identified and financing of 3.5 million dollars has been secured through GEFA. The 3.5 million dollars loan comes with a half million dollars of loan forgiveness. Mrs. Thomas said grants have been applied for with help from DCA and GMRC and the grant amount should be around \$775,000.

Mrs. Thomas said the water system improvements include the construction of a tank, some additional water lines and development of additional sources. The debt has to be executed before the improvements can begin. Mrs. Thomas said she would like for the agreement with GRP to be solidified before the County goes into debt. A MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between GRP and Franklin County that outlines their intent to purchase the minimum requirements to meet the large user industrial rate was presented by Mrs. Thomas. The MOU is based on the maximum usage to keep the water system safe for all customers. Mrs. Thomas asked the Commissioners to review the MOU as well as the debt documents for possible approval at the August regular meeting so the water projects can begin.

D. Manager's Report

Mrs. Thomas gave an update on the new location for Elections (the former medical building). She said the renovations are coming along nicely and this project is being worked on jointly with the Elections Board. Mrs. Thomas said she has spoken with the Elections Board Chairman about a possible open house when the work is complete.

The service delivery strategy for Franklin County was done in 2009 and will run through October 2019. Mrs. Thomas said this is worked on together by the County and the cities so services are not duplicated. She would like approval for GMRC to begin work and facilitate this again for the County and the cities.



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E. Announcements

There were no announcements

F. IBA Tax Resolution

Dr. Macomson asked for discussion before taking a vote on the millage rate for the IBA. Commissioner Franklin said he would like to know what the IBA is doing, are they working on getting any new businesses in and there is a lot of concern in the County from citizens. Commissioner Wester said at the last IBA meeting it was discussed there is interest in the Central Franklin Industrial Park but it was not stated who is looking. Discussion also took place about the adjoining property being purchased for a large customer with help from the IBA. Commissioner Franklin said money is being taken from the citizens of Franklin County and he does not see any return and he is very concerned about it. Commissioner Wester said that is the feelings of a lot of citizens but he is only giving a report of the meeting.

Dr. Macomson questioned how often the IBA meets and if they consistently meet. Commissioner Wester said the IBA meets once a month as long as there is business to discuss. Dr. Macomson asked how often did they not meet. Commissioner Wester said they did not meet in July because of vacations and schedules. They met in June and did not meet in May because of no business to discuss. Dr. Macomson asked if there is full attendance from the members and staff. Commissioner Wester said the IBA Director is supposed to be there but parts of the year he is not. Dr. Macomson stated because he is a Senator. Commissioner Franklin said that is another thing that he has a problem with. He said when Lyn Allen was director there was meetings and were always showing properties and none of this is happening now because the Director is in Atlanta somewhere.

Commissioner Jacques said he served as the liaison to the IBA for the Board of Commissioners for seven and a half years during the time of the former IBA director. During this time span it was tough economic times but there was some growth and development in the County because of the daily sustained outreach of the former director, Mrs. Allen. Commissioner Jacques stated with the transition from a full time IBA Director to a part time IBA Director whose schedule for Franklin County is secondary based on other priorities, the economic outreach has dropped off significantly. He said the citizens are paying direct tax dollars and they deserve a full-time director working for them every day so the benefits can be reaped like Hart County and Banks County. Commissioner Jacques said he does support the IBA and does support the IBA Director personally as the IBA Director is very capable but he does not support the part time aspect when someone is needed full time in this capacity. He said four months are basically exempted out each year and this may be the time when there might be interest in someone coming to Franklin County.

Dr. Macomson said he understands the concern but he is afraid of the message that will be sent to the community and the people looking to come to Franklin County if the



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IBA is not funded. He also said he did not want to upset anything that may be in process that the Commissioners are unaware of. Commissioner Jacques said shouldn't the Commissioners be made aware of things as the Commissioners are being asked to vote. Dr. Macomson questioned if the IBA Board and Director could be invited to the next meeting and give an update. Mrs. Thomas said they could be invited but it is the role of the Commissioner liaison to give the IBA updates.

Mrs. Thomas said 70% of economic development is retention. In the past two years Ross Controls and Latexco have expanded. The largest single investment in the County is occurring now with GRP. Mrs. Thomas said she and the IBA Director have had their issues but she does believe he works for Franklin County regardless of where he is. She said there were matters with GRP that the Director's role helped with. The structure of the IBA according to local legislation is the IBA Board makes the decisions. Mrs. Thomas said the best way to address problems is by going to the IBA Board instead of just taking their funding. Commissioner Franklin questioned Mrs. Thomas how she has seen how hard the Director works when the Board hasn't seen it and stated again he is concerned about the people of Franklin County.

Commissioner Jacques addressed the local legislation regarding the IBA. He said in the format it basically declares itself a full-time economic development director. There is not a full-time economic director now. Commissioner Jacques said Ross Controls and Latexco have been ongoing for some time. He also said the GRP has been in many variations for the last 15 years or so, starting with the C&D Landfill which was to be used to create power. He is grateful for anything in the County but these are carryovers. Mrs. Thomas said he is right but what happens when you don't fund them. Commissioner Jacques said he does not want the funding to stop he just wants the best for the citizens of Franklin County and someone working every day for them. He stated he would love for the IBA Director to be full time but Franklin County is not the first priority for him. Commissioner Jacques questioned what happens from December until legislation adjourns if there are businesses and industries who are interested in Franklin County and there is no one in the County to show them around. Compensation is being paid for a full-time IBA Director but part time results are what is happening.

*Dr. Macomson asked if everyone agreed the IBA tax resolution needed to be tabled. All agreed to tabling. Dr. Macomson asked for a motion to table the item until the August meeting. Commissioner Franklin made the motion to table. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Jacques seconded the motion. Commissioner Wester said he was not trying to influence anyone, his role was to give information. Commissioner Jacques expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Wester for taking the time to be the liaison for the Commission Board. Commissioner Wester said he has the same concern as Dr. Macomson, what happens if the IBA is not funded as he does not want the IBA projects to stop. Dr. Macomson said there should be a disconnect between the funding and the director. He asked for a show of hands to table the item until August. The motion passed by four (4) **YES** votes to zero (0) **NO** votes. The **YES** votes were Commissioner Wester, Commissioner Franklin, Commissioner Jacques and*



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Dr. Macomson.

*Dr. Macomson asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jacques made the motion to adjourn. Dr. Macomson asked for a second. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. Dr. Macomson 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 Commissioner Franklin. The work session adjourned at 6:55 p.m.*

Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2018

Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

Dr. Jason Macomson, District 2 Commissioner

Jeff Jacques, District 3 Commissioner

Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

Elaine H. Evans, County Clerk