

**MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2016, AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING #2, 214 W. KING STREET**

**REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING**

The Chairman called the meeting to order.  
Pledge of allegiance to the Flag  
Roll call to determine quorum

**The following members were present:**

Mike Babb, Chairman  
Harold Brooker, Vice Chairman  
Lynn Laughter, Member  
Roger Crossen, Member  
Barry W. Robbins, Member

**Others Present:**

Mark Gibson, County Administrator  
Citizens  
Department Heads  
Press

**Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the agenda. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Laughter, Brooker and Crossen in agreement. Approval of the agenda was unanimous.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the Regular Business Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2016. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Laughter, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

1. Carl Campbell from the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority came before the Board to give an Economic Update for Whitfield County. Mr. Campbell noted that recently Jackson Paper will be building a facility off of Five Springs Road in Whitfield County. It will be a 150,000sq ft facility and employ around 62 people with a good pay rate. Mr. Campbell noted that there are currently three active projects in the works and are working hard on growing their network to let businesses know Whitfield County is open for business.
2. Mr. Brett Huske from the Convention and Visitors Bureau came before the Board to give an update on the CVB. Mr. Huske pointed out the Tourism is moving in a positive direction, and lodging tax collections have been up for the sixth year in a row 2015's total lodging tax was \$1,623,116. Mr. Huske noted that for future product development they are working on a textile heritage trail, with interpretive signs, a kiosk and an exhibit at DCC. The CVB will also host a Trail of Tears conference in 2016.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. **Proclamation –National Day of Prayer May 5, 2016:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Laughter to proclaim May 5, 2016 as National Day of Prayer in Whitfield County, Georgia. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Robbins and Laughter in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT “A”)**
2. **National Donate Life Month:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Laughter to proclaim April, 2016 as National Donate Life Month in Whitfield

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County, Georgia. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Crossen, Laughter and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "B")**

3. **Sheriff's Department – Two (2) Ford Explorers:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the low bid of Brooker Ford for \$58,286.36. The Sheriff's Office received two bids one from Speedway Ford and Brooker Ford. Speedway Ford has the lowest bid, but Brooker Ford agreed to meet the bid. This purchase is being funded by the 2015 SPLOST that was approved by voters March 2015. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Laughter, Brooker, Robbins and Crossen in agreement.
4. **Timber Harvesting Ordinance:** Motion was made by Commissioner Laughter and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve an Ordinance Amending Chapter 13 of the Whitfield County Code relating to Timber Harvesting and removal requirements; to require notice upon approved forms; to provide for a bond in connection with timber harvesting; and for other purposes. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Laughter, Brooker, Crossen and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "C")**
5. **City of Varnell Annexation Request – 11-264-06-008:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker for no land use classification objection to the City of Varnell concerning tax parcel number 11-264-06-008. For this parcel the City of Varnell proposed a zoning change from County R-2 to Varnell R-1. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Laughter, Robbins and Crossen in agreement.
6. **Property Acquisition:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Laughter to approve an agreement with Heather Elsea-Jones for \$17,500. This purchase is being funded by the 2015 SPLOST that was approved by voters March 2015 and is for one of the towers for the communications project. This property is located in the Carbondale area. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Laughter, Brooker, Robbins and Crossen in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "D")**
7. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the request of Elvia Zendejas to rezone .45 acres from general Commercial (C-2) to Rural Residential (R-5); the property is located along the north R/W of Stevenson Drive, just off the corner with Coogler Road. The Planning Commission has recommended that the Board approve the rezoning. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins, Crossen and Laughter in agreement.
8. **February 2016 Financial Statements:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Laughter to approve the February 2016 Financial Statements as presented by Finance Director, Alicia Vaughn. In discussion, Mrs. Vaughn reported that Local Option Sales Tax for February 2016 is \$822,006, the LOST percentage for 2016 is 63.752%. Local Option Sales Tax for February 2016 show an increase of .4% compared to Local Option Sales Tax Collections for February 2015; Local Option Sales Tax collections for February 2016 show .1% decrease from January 2016. Year to date 2016 collections of \$1,644,737 are down 1.1% compared to year to date 2015 collections. Year to date actual revenues of \$4,022,234 for February 2016 are under year to date projected revenue \$4,094,706 by 2%. Year to date actual expenditures of \$5,871,206 February 2016 are under year to date projected of \$6,662,099 by 12%.TAVT collections for February 2016 were \$138,038. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Laughter, Brooker and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT "E")**

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9. **Finance – 2015 Budget Amendment #3:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the 2015 budget amendment #3 as presented by the Finance Department. This amendment is to realign budget allocations within the attached funds to meet projected expenditures and revenues for year ending 2015. As the audit process progresses, other amendments will likely be forthcoming. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Laughter, and Robbins in agreement. **(SEE EXHIBIT “F”)**
10. **Fire Department Personal Protective Clothing Accessories:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the low bid of MES Inc, for \$4,133.28 to purchase hoods, leather fronts and passport and to approve the low bid of 10-8 Fire for \$25,608.00 for boots gloves and helmets. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Laughter, Brooker, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.
11. **Buildings and Ground – Mowing Contract for BZD, Meals on Wheels, 911, and 10 Fire Stations:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to accept the bid from Outdoor Worx in the amount of \$16,000 for the mowing of the Meals on Wheels, the 911 Center, the Old Health Dept. and 10 Fire Stations. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Laughter, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.
12. **Public Works – Traffic Signal Lease Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Laughter and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to postpone this lease purchase until the next meeting. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Laughter, Brooker, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Jeff Harris who resides on Susan Lane spoke before the Board about the possibility of installing speed humps on this road. Mr. Harris noted that vehicles have been speeding down this road and he is concerned because there are several small children that play along this road. County Administrator Mark Gibson stated that he would contact the Sheriff's Office and ask them to patrol this area more often.

Mr. John Lofty came before the Board to speak about the Magistrate Court Judges salary. Mr. Lofty is one of six candidates running for this office. Mr. Lofty qualified to run for the seat that is held by Mrs. Kay Cope, she will be retiring this year. Georgia Law sets the base salary of the Magistrate Judges on population, Whitfield County's is 103,542 based on the 2010 Census, the salary for all new non-chief Magistrate Court Judge is \$49,964.30 including the COLA's for 2007,2008,2015 & 2016. Mr. Lofty paid a qualifying fee of \$1,955.72 which included a supplement that a previous Board of Commissioners agreed to pay the Magistrate Judges in 2002. The supplement should not have been included with the base salary, therefore the qualifying fee should have been \$1,386.53. Mr. Lofty noted that upon the time of his qualifying it should have guaranteed him the base salary plus the supplement, and had he had known that they supplement would not be included in the salary he wouldn't have run for the position. Chairman Babb stated that when you run for public office you run to become a public servant and provide the public with a service to the best of your ability. Chairman Babb noted that whomever of

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the six candidates should be elected they may come back during the 2017 budget preparations and ask for the supplement at that time.

Mr. David Pennington spoke before the Board to ask them what the Board's plan is to reduce the \$3 million deficit that the County is carrying. Mr. Pennington noted that with any private business it's always better to cut loses sooner rather than later and to make the difficult decisions to cut expenses. Chairman Babb stated that the Board could cut expenses or raise taxes but hopes that the economy will pick up before those decisions are made.

Mr. Jan Porquoi came before the Board to ask about the quality of the Tax digest, he suggested that since around 50% of the County's revenue depends on the tax digest that a study should be done on property values. The Board said they would look into Mr. Porquois' suggestion.

**ADJOURN** Unanimous

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MIKE BABB, CHAIRMAN  
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /