

**MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL CALLED WORK SESSION MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY JANUARY 23, 2017, AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING #1, 301 W. CRAWFORD STREET**

**SPECIAL CALLED WORK SESSION**

The Chairman called the work session to order.

**The following members were present:**

R. Lynette Laughter, Chairman  
Harold Brooker, Vice Chairman  
Barry W. Robbins, Member  
Roger Crossen, Member  
Greg Jones, Member

**Others Present:**

Mark Gibson, County Administrator  
Robert Smalley, County Attorney  
Department Heads  
Press

**Work Session:**

Chairman Laughter called the work session to order. Chairman Laughter noted that the March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Regular Business meeting will be changed to March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Planning and Zoning Director Jean Garland informed the Board that a rezoning/special use request has been made to provide transitional housing on a property on Rauschenberg Road. Garland noted that Georgia law states that an initial public hearing needs to be held during a Board meeting, and another public hearing held after a six (6) month comment period. Garland further noted that a legal advertisement would be published in the newspaper to notify citizens of the public meeting. Garland noted that the first public hearing will be held on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017, during the regular business meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Planning and Zoning Director Jean Garland informed the Board of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan Update for 2018-2028. Garland noted that the State of Georgia and the Department of Community Affairs require local governments to update this plan every 10 (ten) years. Whitfield County's plan will expire October 2018. Garland further noted that the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission is available to assist with the development and scheduling of the Plan update. Garland noted that there are multiple elements involved in updating the plan including community goals, economic development, land use, transportation and housing. Garland noted that in order to meet the required deadline the NWGRC will need to begin preparations early in the year.

Fire Chief Edward O'Brien presented the Board with future plans for the Department. O'Brien provided information regarding the Department's current coverage in the County. O'Brien noted that the Northeast and Southern most parts of the County have poor coverage and an ISO rating of 10. O'Brien noted that Station 11 that is going to be built in the Cohutta area and Station 12 to be constructed in the South end of the County would help the residents with fire coverage and also lower their ISO rating. O'Brien noted that these two stations would help to reduce the current ISO ratings thereby lowering the Citizens' homeowner's insurance. O'Brien further noted that an increase to the Special Fire Tax district millage rate would pay for the stations; however, Citizens would receive the lower ISO ratings that would greatly reduce their homeowner's insurance.

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Fire Chief Edward O'Brien informed the Board of a recent bid for a 2017 Ford F150XL to be used by the Battalion Chief as a response vehicle. O'Brien noted that this will replace a 2006 Ford Explorer with 115k miles, to be utilized as a spare vehicle when others are out for service.

Buildings and Grounds Director Gary Brown informed the Board of the building conditions at Administration Building #2. Brown noted that the building is in a state of disrepair that requires continuous repairs. Brown noted that currently the Public Defender's office personnel are in this building, and Drug Court and the BOC hold regular meetings there. Brown further noted that there is a lack of storage in the building also; many of the BOC and other departments' records are kept here.

Public Works Director Dewayne Hunt presented information to the Board regarding a damaged culvert at E. Nance Springs Rd. Hunt recommended inserting a new pipe inside the old pipe (slip liner) to fix this culvert. Hunt noted that with the bridge project near completion he would like to go ahead and repair the damaged culvert now and considers it an emergency purchase. The Board advised Hunt that this purchase doesn't meet the criteria of an emergency purchase and to bid the project out. The Board would award the bid at the next regular meeting.

EMA Director Claude Craig noted that he would request approval at the next BOC meeting for purchase of a RapidCom (communications) trailer from ComLabs for \$96,022.00. Craig noted that they received a FY 2016 Homeland Security Grant in the amount of \$100,000. Craig further noted that the Grant can only be used to purchase items expressly approved by the State and would be used to purchase the RapidCom trailer. Craig noted that this is a reimbursable grant that requires no match requirements.

The work session was adjourned.

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R. LYNETTE LAUGHTER, CHAIRMAN  
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /