

MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020, AT 6:00 P.M. AT EDWARDS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER, LOCATED AT 115 EDWARDS PARK, DALTON, GA

**REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING**

Whitfield County is currently under a public health state of emergency as the community responds to the COVID-19 pandemic and in keeping with guidelines on public gatherings by Governor Kemp's Executive Orders 08.31.20.01 & 08.31.20.02 and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: this meeting will be open to the public with social distancing measures in effect. Attendees will be seated with six (6) feet of spacing between them and seating for the meeting is limited to 50 persons. Due to reduced seating capacity the meeting will also be livestreamed using the following link: <https://livestream.com/accounts/25637515/events/7960637>

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

**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  
Citizens  
Department Heads  
Press

**Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was approved 3-1, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen in agreement. Commissioner Robbins dissented.**

**Chairman Laughter recognized Ms. Loretta Walker, as Employee of the Month for July 2020. Ms. Walker works at the Sheriff's Office, in the Detention Facility.**

**ALCOHOL BEVERAGE LICENSE APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING:**

Chairman Laughter called for a Public Hearing to hear any comments or concerns the public may have regarding an application for a Malt Beverage License for Wesley Corner located at 2230 Abutment Rd., Dalton, GA.

There were no comments or concerns, Chairman Laughter declared the public hearing closed.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2020 regular business meeting, the August 24, 2020 work session and the special called meeting minutes of August 28, 2020. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. **Alcohol Beverage License Application:**

a. Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the Alcohol Beverage Application for a Malt Beverage License for Wesley Corner located at 2230 Abutment Rd., Dalton, GA. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Brooker, Crossen and Jones in agreement.

2. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the recommendation of the planning commission to approve request of Donald Shipman to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 7.62 acres located at 1843 Collins Road SE, Dalton, Georgia, Parcel (12-319-15-000). The rezoning was approved with the following conditions, in

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order to prevent creating a future hardship related to a subdivision of the two dwellings, staff recommend setbacks required in the existing R-2 zone district be required and the prohibiting of animal husbandry to protect the integrity of the surrounding residential properties. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Crossen, Jones and Robbins in agreement.

3. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the recommendation of the planning commission to approve the request of Sandra Campbell to rezone from General Commercial (C-2) to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) a tract of land totaling 0.60 acres located at 1416 Cleo Way, Dalton, Georgia, parcel (12-160-11-000). The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker, Robbins and Crossen in agreement.
4. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the recommendation of the planning commission to approve the request of Conrad Cline and Brian Cline to rezone from General Agricultural (GA) to Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 76.90 -acres located at Prospect Road NE, Dalton, Georgia, parcel (10-182-01-000). The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker, Robbins and Crossen in agreement.
5. **Lease Agreement Staten Building – Tax Assessor:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to enter into a lease agreement with Staten Enterprises, Inc., for office space located at 303 Waugh Street, Dalton, GA, for the Tax Assessors Office. The term of the lease begins on October 1, 2020 and ends on September 30, 2021 with (three) additional options to extend the lease for a one (1) year period. The monthly rental amount per month is \$3,250.00 for the term of the lease. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Crossen, Brooker, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
6. **Resolution – SPLOST Bond:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the resolution of the Board of Commissioners of Whitfield County, Georgia to approve the bond resolution of the City of Dalton Building Authority authorizing the issuance of the City of Dalton Building Authority revenue bond (County SPLOST Projects), Series 2020, in the principal amount of not to exceed \$26,500,000; to authorize the execution of a contract between the County and the Authority; to authorize the Chairman and other officers and officials of the County to take such further actions as are necessary to provide for the issuance and delivery of the revenue bond described herein; and for other purposes. Jim Woodward from First Tryon Advisors informed the Board of the bids received for the series 2020 bond. Woodward noted on September 14, 2020 six (6) bids were received and recommends Zions Bank. Woodward further noted Zions Bank was the recommendation of First Tryon Advisors based on the following: Zions Bank had the lowest interest rate at 0.9200%, and has prepayment flexibility. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Jones, Crossen, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.
7. **Board of Elections – Emergency Absentee Printing and Postage:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve up to \$50,000 to the Elections office for absentee printing, postage and ink cartridges. Due to COVID19 an increase of absentee ballots have been requested from the Elections office, Chief Registrar Mary Hammontree noted the majority of her printing budget went to send precinct cards to registered voters and absentee ballots for the June 9, primary. Hammontree further noted with the upcoming November election and with the possibility of a December runoff, the elections office will need to send more absentee ballots due to demand of citizens opting to vote by mail for safety concerns. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Jones, Crossen, Brooker, and Robbins in agreement.

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8. **Sheriff's Office – X-Ray Parcel Scanner:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the purchase of a X-Ray parcel scanner in the amount of \$17,250. The Sheriff's Office recently put out an invitation to bid for a new X-Ray Parcel Scanner (ITB# SD20-02). This is to replace the older scanner now being used at the courthouse. The older scanner is approximately 10 years old and showing wear. Funds were requested and approved for the 2020 budget for the purchase of a new X-Ray Scanner with the funds being in Capital. The company we wish to purchase the scanner from is Auto-Clear, who had the lowest bid coming in at \$17,250. Major Gibson noted the old scanner will be utilized at the Accountability Courts. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Jones, Crossen, Brooker, and Robbins in agreement.
9. **Cares Act Funding Projects:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to table item #7 Cares Act Funding and items 7.1 Sheriff's Office, a. Vehicle Purchase, b. Equipment for Vehicles, c. Tasers, 7.2 Information Technology a. Vehicle Purchase b. Firewall, c. Toughbooks, 7.3 E911 a. Dispatch Software, b. SUV Purchase, 7.4 Fire Department a. Quick Response Vehicles, 7.5 Finance Department a. Imaging System Expanded Platform. After a lengthy debate Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Robbins withdrew their motion. The Board decided to take action on the individual items rather than postpone them.
10. **Sheriff's Office – 20 Large Scale Police Pursuit Vehicles & Equipment Upfitting:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Chairman Laughter to approve the low bid from Donohoo Chevrolet for 20 large scale SUV pursuit vehicles in the amount of \$767,683.80 with the scheduled delivery of January 2021 and to approve Dana Safety Supply for equipping and upfitting the SUVs in the amount of \$131,420.80. The motion failed with a 3-1 vote with Commissioner Crossen in favor of the motion and Commissioners Robbins, Brooker and Jones dissenting. Commissioner Crossen made the same motion and Chairman Laughter seconded it. The motion was approved 3-2, with Chairman Laughter, Commissioners Crossen and Jones in agreement. Commissioners Brooker and Robbins dissented.
11. **Sheriff's Office – Taser Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the purchase of 150 Tasers for \$542,750 from sole source vendor Axon. The current tasers are not under warranty and no replacement parts are being made for them. The tasers are compatible with the officers body cameras. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Jones, Crossen, Brooker, and Robbins in agreement.
12. **E911 – Emergency Dispatch Software Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to accept and approve the purchase of Emergency Dispatch computer software, by sole source letter from APCO/IntelliComm in the amount of \$63,793.00. This software will replace the manual Emergency Medical Dispatch cards along with the Emergency Fire Dispatch card guides that are required for each of 8 dispatch consoles. Currently any updates or changes in the guides requires the purchase of a new set of cards for each terminal. With the new software changes, any upgrades will be made digitally and will eliminate those replacements costs. EMD and EFD are national standard Emergency Dispatch guides that have to be signed off on and approved by our medical director, Dr. Jason Nicely. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.

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13. **E-911 – Vehicle Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the bid from Ford of Dalton for \$39,011 for a 2021 Mid Size SUV. Ford of Dalton was the only vendor who submitted a bid. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins, Jones and Crossen in agreement.
14. **Information Technology Vehicle Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker to approve the purchase of a 2021 Ford F150 from Ford of Dalton for \$41,648. After a short discussion Commissioner Brooker withdrew his motion.
15. **Information Technology Firewall Upgrade:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to upgrade existing firewall environment to Cisco Next Generation Firewall through state contract holder CORUS360 for \$35,546.00. All County network traffic both inbound and outbound go through our firewall. Public Safety and other County users connect to internal resources through the firewall via a VPN (Virtual Private Network) connection. We use two Cisco ASA (Adaptive Security Appliance) devices setup in a fail over cluster. To stay current with evolving technology and to protect against advanced threats. IT Department Director Rick Lovelady recommends upgrading existing Cisco hardware to the next generation firewall which will be setup in the same fail over configuration. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins, Jones and Crossen in agreement.
16. **Information Technology Panasonic Tough Books Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the low bid from Eastern Data, Inc., for 131 Panasonic Tough Books for \$287,216.19. The Sheriff's Office patrol vehicles and the Fire Department trucks use Panasonic tough books to perform various data inquiry while out in the field. The Sheriff's Office and Fire Department run mobile computer aided dispatch software (CAD), location history, and GPS tracking. These units are ruggedized laptops that use specific mounts in the vehicles. The current Panasonic units are out of warranty. They are essential to the safety of SO and Fire personnel. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins, Jones and Crossen in agreement.
17. **Fire Department – Quick Response Vehicle Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to purchase ten (10) 2021 F250s from Ford of Dalton at \$40,085.00 each. The Fire Department is requesting a total of \$550,000 for the purchase of the quick response vehicles and to outfit them with lights, equipment, medical equipment and computers. Vehicles will be placed at fire stations for the purpose of response to emergency medical calls. As a department, each month 65-70% of our calls are EMS related. Since we have been keeping COVID related data, each month 6-9% of those calls are to confirmed COVID patients. On the remaining calls we are unsure of COVID status of patients but are treated as if they are. These vehicles will allow us to respond more efficiently. We will save fuel, maintenance costs and wear and tear on the larger fire apparatus in addition to easier decontamination of apparatus. Presently we have the ITB completed for the vehicles. The sole bidder states that it will take 12-14 weeks to deliver the trucks. Additional ITB's will be brought to the Board as we get closer to delivery due to being more than 90 days to delivery. The additional ITB's will include but not be limited to: emergency lights, radio installation, computer installation, lettering, medical equipment, personal protective equipment and tools. ITB Fire #20-02 Pick Up Truck: Crew Cab 4x4 dated August 21, 2020 received only one bidder: Ford of Dalton Price for 2021 Ford F250 Crew Cab 4x4: \$40,085.00. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins, Jones and Crossen in agreement.

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**18. Finance Department – Imaging system Expanded Platform Next Generation Migration:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the migration of the current imaging system to the next generation system with Softdocs, Inc. in the amount of \$282,136 and authorizes Chairman Laughter to sign the contract. This updated platform meets all of the most current recommended security protocols, is cloud based, accessible from all of the popular web browsers, and provides expansion capability for every County Department to utilize it, if desired. For example, the security protocols satisfy HIPAA and the GBI requirements regarding fingerprinting, background checks, etc. as related to data handling and storage security. In the context of the current environment (COVID-19 and frequent security breaches of electronic data) this migration moves the County a large step forward toward a much more paperless and secure work environment, as well as reducing paper handling, document storage needs, and physical interaction. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins, Jones and Crossen in agreement.

**19. Engineering – Riverbend Park Grading Bid Award:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the low bid from NWGA Paving for \$ 2,145,081.74 for grading, drainage, and paving for Riverbend Park. This project is the grading, drainage, and paving portion of the Riverbend Park project. It includes grading 2 collegiate-size soccer field pads, a high school-size baseball quad, a building pad for the gymnasium/community center, two entrance roads, main and auxiliary parking lots, and all required storm water management facilities. It also includes curb, gutter, base, paving, and drainage pipe for the park roads, parking lots, and fields (drainage only). The project also generates the dirt needed for a connection to the S. Bypass. We received seven bids, with the lowest qualified bidder being Northwest Georgia Paving, Inc. at \$2,145,081.74. Schedule for the project is to begin work by the end of September, and be complete in 165 calendar days. The building pad for the gym will be complete by Dec. 31 so gymnasium construction can begin. The motion was approved 4-0 with Commissioners Crossen, Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.

**20. Engineering – Administration Building #2 Demolition:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the low bid of \$139,233.00 from Trinity Industrial Services, LLC. This bid is for the demolition and complete removal of the Admin 2 building at the corner of Selvidge and King Streets. The bid includes proper removal and disposal of any asbestos-containing materials. We received five bids, with the lowest qualified bidder being Trinity Industrial Services, LLC at \$139,233.00. The low bidder was interviewed after the bid opening to confirm that all required items were included in the bid. They have extensive Federal and State contract experience. The motion was approved 4-0 with Commissioners Crossen, Jones Brooker and Robbins in agreement.

**21. July 2020 Financial Statement:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the July 2020 Financial Statement as presented by Finance Director James Garvin. Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) collections: July 2020 collections of \$902,194 were 2.5% less than budgeted collections of \$925,000. This was 7.0% less than June 2020 collections of \$970,263. YTD July 2020 collections of \$6,361,219 were 1.2% less than same-period 2019 collections of \$6,441,596. TAVT collections for July 2020 were \$449,922. This was 2.1% greater than June 2020 collections of \$440,827. YTD July 2020 collections of \$2,596,065 were 62.9% greater than same-period 2019 collections of \$1,593,535. YTD July 2020 actual revenues of \$18,076,279 were less than projected revenues of \$18,449,935 by \$373,656 or 2.0%. YTD July 2020 actual expenditures of \$27,036,837 were less than projected expenditures of \$28,145,878 by \$1,109,041 or 3.9%. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Crossen, Jones, and Robbins in agreement.

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22. **Public Works – Vehicle Lease/Purchase:** No action was taken on this item. The Board instructed Public Works Director Dewayne Hunt and County Administrator Mark Gibson to work on a vehicle purchasing policy for the County.
23. **Public Works – City of Dalton Service Delivery Strategy Paving Request:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and second by Commissioner Crossen to approve the recommendation of Public Works Director Dewayne Hunt to pay the City of Dalton \$200,000 rather than provide in kind road services. Hunt noted to the Board that the recent Service Delivery Strategy agreement with the City of Dalton wherein, it was agreed upon to either provide up to \$200,000 in kind road paving or issue a check to the City of the same amount. Hunt informed the Board due to the amount of projects Public Work has coming up it would be better to issue the check. Whitfield County has an obligation to provide the City of Dalton with \$200,000 or the equivalent thereof. This may be in the form of payment or material and labor for road maintenance. This would include both paving and/or milling. Due to unforeseen scheduling impacts and the late project submittal by the COD, it would be difficult for the PW paving crew to include the additional work in 2020. We have 1 large patch to complete at Old Dixie, construct the parking lot at Rocky Face Ridge and complete the 2020 LMIG paving projects. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.
24. **Edwards Park – Tennis Court Bid:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve low bid of \$92,025.60 bid from Advance Sports Group. This rescinds the previous bid acceptance from Sports Services International for \$51,506.17 that was approved at the July 13, 2020 regular business meeting. At that time the Public Works Department was going to do the asphalt work and turn the courts from East to West to North to South. However, Public Works won't be able to complete the asphalt work due to scheduling conflicts and the Parks and Recreation had to rebid this bid to include the asphalt work. The bid from Advance Sports Group includes the asphalt work, turning the courts and the refinishing of the courts. Parks and Recreation Director Brian Chastain also noted one set of courts will be made into a pickleball court. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Crossen, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
25. **Edwards Park – Athletic Fields Turf bid:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Crossen to approve the bid from Shaw Sports Turf for \$609,000 for turf. Shaw Sports Turf Field Direct Purchasing Program using Sourcewell Contract # 060518-S11. A committee evaluated the bids received for the turf and Shaw Sports Turf had the highest score among those received. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Crossen, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
26. **Rocky Face Ridge – Hay Bid:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to enter into a hay lease agreement from Josh Land to maintain the Hay Fields on approximately 70 acres of Rocky Face Ridge. The hay will be cut, baled and removed. Josh Land was the only bid received and will pay an annual amount of \$350.00 to Whitfield County. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.
27. **Rocky Face Ridge – Grant Resolution:** Motion was made by Commissioner Crossen and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to adopt the Resolution authorizing the submission of a pre-application for funding from the Land and Water Conservation Grant. Whitfield County is pursuing a grant for the development of a trail to the summit at Rocky Face Ridge Park and a restroom facility to be located at the summit. A bike trail exists but a hiking trail does not. The grant submission requires a resolution to be passed by the County stating that if the grant is

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approved, the county can and will fund their 50% in kind contribution. For the grant, a 50% match is required. The County's match would be \$42,500. The restroom is needed to service those that will be visiting the summit. Estimated Costs: 1. \$65,000 - Trail building 2. \$30,000 – Restroom. The motion was approved 4-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, Crossen and Robbins in agreement.

28. Stuart Hastings addressed the Board regarding the ongoing water runoff on his property. The Board noted the developer met the requirements and obtained the proper permits to begin construction on the property next to Mr. Hastings. The Board has also requested for County Administrator Mark Gibson, County Engineer Kent Benson and Public Works Director Dewayne Hunt to go to Mr. Hastings property to see if anything can be done to help his situation.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Phillip Neff addressed the Board about the purchases made with the CARES Act.

**ADJOURN** Unanimous

\_\_\_\_\_  
R. LYNETTE LAUGHTER, CHAIRMAN  
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /