

**MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020, AT 6:00 P.M. BY ACCESSING THE FOLLOWING LINK [HTTPS://LIVESTREAM.COM/ACCOUNTS/25637515/EVENTS/7960637](https://LIVESTREAM.COM/ACCOUNTS/25637515/EVENTS/7960637) AND VIA THE WHITFIELD COUNTY WEBSITE [WWW.WHITFIELDCOUNTYGA.COM](http://WWW.WHITFIELDCOUNTYGA.COM)**

**VIRTUAL – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING**

The meeting was streamed online for public simultaneous access at Whitfield County’s website [www.whitfieldcountyga.com](http://www.whitfieldcountyga.com). Whitfield County is currently under a public health state of emergency as the community responds to the COVID-19 pandemic and in an effort to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the CDC; this virtual meeting was held through video teleconferencing. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(g) every effort will be made to have the public participate in the meeting and can 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  
Greg Jones, Member

**Others Present:**

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

**Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to amend the agenda to change item #13. Engineering a. Vehicle Purchase (2) Mid-Size SUV for Engineering Dept. b. Vehicle Purchase (1) Mid-Size SUVs for Inspections Office. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.**

**Chairman Laughter recognized Ms. Jillian Ownbey, as Employee of the Month for September 2020. Ms. Ownbey works at the Sheriff’s Office.**

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2020 regular business meeting, October 13, 2020 Special Called Meeting and October 26, 2020 Special Called Meeting. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.

**BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

1. **Re-Appointments to the Dalton-Whitfield Library Board of Trustees:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to re-appoint Jonathan Bledsoe and John Hutcheson to the Dalton-Whitfield Library Board of Trustees. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Jones and Brooker in agreement.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

Carl Campbell from the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority came before the Board to give an update on the Carbondale Sewer Project for Whitfield County. Campbell noted grant funds totaling in \$950K have been received for this project. Campbell also noted the total cost of the project was going to be \$1.6M, the sewer expansion project was imperative to Whitfield County being able to acquire new businesses. Recently GEDIA Automotive Group announced they will build an \$85M plant at the Carbondale Business Park with construction set to begin at the end of 2020.

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**FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. **County Administrator Contract Renewal:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to renew Mr. Gibson's employee contract with Whitfield County for four (4) years. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.
2. **Appointment of Buildings & Grounds Director:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to name Charles Fetzer as the new Director for Buildings and Grounds for Whitfield County. Chairman Laughter and the Commissioners congratulated Mr. Fetzer on his appointment. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.
3. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the recommendation of the planning commission to approve the request of Michael Law to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 1.38 acres located at Pinebrook Drive, Tunnel Hill, Georgia. Parcel (12-077-04-001). The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, and Robbins in agreement.
4. **Rezoning Recommendation:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the recommendation of the planning commission to approve the request of Sarah L. Holcomb to rezone from Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) to General Commercial (C-2) a tract of land totaling .46 acres located at 600 Lafayette Road, Rocky Face, Georgia. Parcel (27-163-05-000). The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker, and Robbins in agreement.
5. **Special Use Permit –Whitfield County BOC:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve a Special Use permit for **Whitfield County BOC for a recreation park on a tract of land totaling 57.275 acres zoned Rural Residential (R-5) located at Riverbend Park, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel 12-318-02-000.** The Planning Commission had recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve the special use permit at this location. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Brooker, and Robbins in agreement.
6. **City of Dalton Annexation Requests:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins for no land use classification objection to tax parcel numbers 12-163-05-005 and 12-166-06-000. The motion was approved 2-1, with Commissioners Jones, and Robbins in agreement. Commissioner Brooker dissented.
7. **City of Tunnel Hill Annexation Requests:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones for no land use classification objection to tax parcel numbers 11-323-05-000, 11-324-19-000, 11-324-21-000, 11-324-23-000, 28-307-12-001, 28-307-12-004. The motion was approved 2-1, with Commissioners Jones, and Robbins in agreement. Commissioner Brooker dissented.
8. **Edwards Park – Ratify Change Order #1&2:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to ratify change order #1&2 for the back pod at Edwards Park. Change order # 1 was for soil erosion control and #2 is for the fence installation. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement.

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9. **Edwards Park – Construction Turf bid:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the low bid from K & N Construction for \$308,340 for the Edwards Park Baseball infields. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement.
10. **Trane 2021 Service Agreement for Jail HVAC:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the 2021 Service Agreement for \$18,504.83, with Trane of Chattanooga. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
11. **Fire Department – Emergency Lights & Sirens:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the low bid of \$69,314.80 from Interceptor Public Safety Products for installation of emergency lights/sirens on ten (10) 2021 F250s. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement.
12. **Fire Department – SPLOST 2020 Apparatus Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the purchase of two (2) Class A Pumpers from Ten-8 Fire and Safety Triple Combination Pumpers in the amount of \$ 923,576 including prepay discounts. The funds for the apparatus were included in the SPLOST bond. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins, and Jones in agreement.
13. **Public Works Vehicle Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the low bid of \$30,791 for a 2021 Ford F-250 Truck from Ford of Dalton. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement.
14. **Whitfield County Vehicle Purchase and Maintenance Policy:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the policy as presented. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
15. **District Attorney Vehicle Purchase:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the purchase of a one (1) mid-size SUV for the District Attorney's Office from Ford of Dalton for \$28,997. Wade Ford of Smyrna, GA had the lowest bid of \$28,997, but Ford of Dalton agreed to match it under the local vender privilege provision since their bid of \$29,102 was within 4% of the low bid. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
16. **Whitfield County Transit Service 5311 Grant Application:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the submittal of the grant application to GDOT. If awarded the Section 5311 Grant will provide aid in the transit service operations. The grant is 50% federally funded with a 50% match required from local governments. The required local match is a combination of cash box fees and general funds. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Robbins and Jones in agreement.

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17. **Vehicle Purchase for Engineering Dept.:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve purchase of two (2) mid-size SUVs for the Engineering Department from Ford of Dalton for \$57,994. Wade Ford of Smyrna, GA had the lowest bid of \$28,997, but Ford of Dalton agreed to match it under the local vender privilege provision since their bid of \$29,102 was within 4% of the low bid. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
18. **Vehicle Purchase for the Inspections Office:** Motion was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve the purchase of one (1) mid-size SUV for the Inspections Office from Ford of Dalton for \$28,997. Wade Ford of Smyrna, GA had the lowest bid of \$28,997, but Ford of Dalton agreed to match it under the local vender privilege provision since their bid of \$29,102 was within 4% of the low bid. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones and Robbins in agreement.
19. **Engineering – Animal Shelter Building Bid:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Brooker to approve the bid from Crown Service Contractors for \$168,455 for construction of a new 1800 sq. ft. pre-engineered building for the Animal Shelter. The bid is for slab and shell only, which includes the concrete floor slab, all under-slab plumbing, building shell and interior walls. Crown Service Contractors was the lowest qualified bidder at \$168,455. Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC for all or part of the building will need to be added as a change order or in a separate contract, whichever is cheaper. The motion was approved 3-0 with Commissioners Jones, Brooker and Robbins in agreement.
20. **Resolution – Amending the Subdivision Regulations:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to table this item. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones and Robbins in agreement
21. **September 2020 Financial Statement:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the August 2020 Financial Statement as presented by Finance Director James Garvin. Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) collections: Per the IGA, the County's LOST percentage for 2020 remains at 61.556%. It was last adjusted from 62.653% to 61.556% in 2019, down from a starting point in 2013 of 64.851%. The rate will next adjust downward in 2021. September 2020 collections of \$945,162 were 2.2% greater than budgeted collections of \$925,000. This was 4.3% greater than regular August 2020 collections of \$906,403. YTD September 2020 collections of \$9,030,428 were 9.0% greater than same-period 2019 collections of \$8,285,713. TAVT collections for September 2020 were \$397,876. This was 2.8% greater than August 2020 collections of \$387,005. YTD September 2020 collections of \$3,380,946 were 44.3% greater than same-period 2019 collections of \$2,343,395. YTD September 2020 actual revenues of \$23,251,707 were greater than projected revenues of \$22,706,593 by \$545,114 or 2.4%. YTD September 2020 actual expenditures of \$34,667,542 were less than projected expenditures of \$35,886,789 by \$1,219,248 or 3.4%. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, and Robbins in agreement.
22. **Resolution – Requesting the Introduction of Local Legislation for a Public Building Authority:** Motion was approved by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Jones to ask Whitfield County's local delegation to introduce local legislation during the upcoming General Assembly to create a Whitfield County Public Building Authority for future public building capital projects. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Brooker, Jones, and Robbins in agreement.

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23. **Letter from Local Hospital CEOs:** Chairman Laughter informed the Board of the letter she received from CEO's of local hospitals asking the Board to consider a mask mandate in public places for every Whitfield County resident above the age of 12. Dr. Pablo Perez spoke in regards to Whitfield County's COVID-19 situation. Dr. Perez strongly recommends the use of masks to help slow the spread of the virus in Whitfield County.
24. **Resolution – Pandemic Response Requiring the Use of Masks in Public Generally within Unincorporated Whitfield County, Including within Whitfield County Facilities and Vehicles to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19; and For Other Purposes:** No motion was made on the resolution to require mask in public generally within unincorporated Whitfield County. Motion was then made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Chairman Laughter to approve a resolution that recommends the use of masks to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The motion did not pass with a vote of 2-1, with Commissioner Brooker in favor of a resolution that recommends the use of masks. Commissioners Jones and Robbins dissented.
25. **Convention Center:** The Board directed County Administrator Mark Gibson who serves on the Finance Committee of the Convention Center to vote no for a budget increase for the upcoming year.

**ADJOURN** Unanimous

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R. LYNETTE LAUGHTER, CHAIRMAN  
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /