

**MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021, AT 6:00 P.M. AT STAGE 123 LOCATED AT 123 W. GORDON 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:**

Jevin Jensen, Chairman  
Barry W. Robbins, Member  
Robby Staten, Member  
Greg Jones, Member

**Others Present:**

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

**Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Staten to amend the agenda by removing the presentation by the Community Development Corporation until the February Board meeting, change item #19., Budget Amendment 2021 to Budget Amendment 2021 & Financial re-charge and to add Discussion of Mask Ordinance inside of County owned facilities. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Staten and Robbins in agreement.**

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Staten to approve the December 14, 2020 regular business meeting, and the Special Called Meeting/Budget Public Hearing on December 22, 2020. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Staten, Jones, and Robbins in agreement.

**Chairman Jensen recognized Ms. Rhonda Franks as Employee of the Month for November 2020. Ms. Franks works in the Board of Elections Office.**

**November 2020 Financial Statement:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the November 2019 Financial Statement as presented by Finance Director James Garvin. Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) collections: 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. November 2020 collections of \$933,286 were .9% greater than budgeted collections of \$925,000. This was 10.5% less than October 2020 collections of \$1,042,612. YTD November 2020 collections of \$11,006,326 were 8.6% greater than same-period 2019 collections of \$10,131,452. TAVT collections for November 2020 were \$301,976. This was 20.8% less than October 2020 collections of \$381,283. YTD November 2020 collections of \$4,064,205 were 34.8% greater than same-period 2019 collections of \$3,014,408. YTD November 2020 actual revenues of \$33,584,683 were greater than projected revenues of \$32,925,083 by \$659,601 or 2.0%. YTD November 2020 actual expenditures of \$42,045,407 were less than projected expenditures of \$44,157,490 by \$2,112,083 or 4.8%. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Staten and Robbins in agreement.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1. Caleb Callahan who resides at 497 Tehilim Pines Lane, Ringgold, Georgia, in Catoosa County addressed the Board. Mr. Callahan spoke in opposition to the ordinance implemented in the December 14, 2020 meeting regarding wearing masks inside of all Whitfield County Facilities.

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2. Billy Wilson who resides at 208 Mayfield Drive, Tunnel Hill Georgia, also spoke in opposition of the mask ordinance. Mr. Wilson noted that at the August Board meeting some Commissioners said they would not implement or extend the previous mask ordinance adopted in July of 2020.
3. Debra Gordon who resides at 1404 Rosewood Circle Unit 35, Dalton GA, also spoke in opposition of the mask ordinance regarding wearing of masks within Whitfield County owned facilities.
4. Shannon Bearfield who resides at 1715 Van Way NW, Dalton Georgia addressed the Board. Ms. Bearfield asked the Board and the audience members what is a better way to help our overwhelmed hospital workers and prevent any unnecessary deaths due to hospitals being over capacity and unable to attend to other emergencies such as heart attacks or brain injuries in our community.
5. Karen Wilson who resides at 2765 Vick Drive, Dalton, Georgia messaged in a question. Ms. Wilson wanted to know what the results were from the Fire Study completed in 2011. Chairman Jensen noted that he hasn't reviewed that study yet but it has been almost 10 years since the study was performed, and maybe there are other areas that can be improved on.

**First Reading – Ordinance Amendment – Meetings of the Board of Commissioners**

**(Administration):** Chairman Jensen informed the Board of some of the proposed changes to Article IV of Chapter 2 of the Code of Ordinances, relating to meetings of the Board of Commissioners by repealing the entire existing Article IV and replacing with a new Article IV. Chairman Jensen noted the changes will help to provide a more consistent, fair and transparent meeting process, as well as more opportunity for citizen comments. No action was taken at this time.

**Board of Commissioners Vice-Chairman Election:** Commissioner Jones nominated Commissioner Robbins for Vice-Chairman of the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners for 2021, Commissioner Staten seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. A vote was taken and Commissioner Robbins was elected 3-0 to be the Vice-Chairman of the Board for 2021.

**Chairman Jensen - Appointment of Commissioners to Commissions, Organizations, and Commissions:**

Chairman Jensen appointed the Commissioners to the following:

Robby Staten – N. GA Community Action Group Inc., Whitfield County Board of Health and Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center

Greg Jones – Dalton-Whitfield Solid Waste Authority, Dalton-Whitfield Land Bank Authority and the Correctional Task Force

Barry W. Robbins – Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corporation and Dalton-Whitfield Library Liaison

Chairman Jensen – Dalton-Whitfield Solid Waste Authority, Greater Dalton MPO, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, and the Council of Chief Elected Officials, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau

Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve Chairman Jensen's Commissioners appointments. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Staten, Jones and Robbins in agreement.

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**Whitfield County Strategic Objectives:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to approve Chairman Jensen's implementation of Strategic Objectives for Whitfield County. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Staten in agreement.

**Whitfield County Department Goals, Quarterly Metrics and Reporting Structure:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Staten to approve Chairman Jensen's goal objectives for Whitfield County Departments. Chairman Jensen noted beginning February 8, 2021, Whitfield County Departments will present their goal objectives for 2021 to the Board. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Staten in agreement.

**AP Triton Fire Study Contract with City of Dalton:** Motion was made by Commissioner Staten and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to table this item. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Jones and Staten in agreement.

**Citizen Lead Recreation Committee (Project REConnect):** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Staten to create and nominate Whitfield County Citizens Chris Shiflett, Kip Allen and Keith Hayes to the REConnect Committee. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Staten in agreement.

**Whitfield County Hiring Goal – Promote from Within First County Employees:** Motion was made by Commissioner Staten and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve filling of vacancies with current internal County employees first, to delay hiring externally as long as possible and that exceptions are to be brought before the Board prior to approval. The Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, and Constitutional Officials are exempt. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Staten in agreement.

**2021 Budget Amendment and Budget Accounting Change:** Motion was made by Commissioner Staten and seconded by Commissioner Robbins to approve the 2021 budget amendments lowering the contingency budget from \$1M to \$600,000, asking County departments to find a 2% savings for 2021, creating a COVID-19 Partnership with a beginning match of \$10,000, and to re-allocate the purchase of 20 SUV's from the CARES Act reimbursement proceeds to the 2020 SPLOST. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Robbins, Staten and Jones in agreement.

**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 Kelly Roy and Dustin Stafford to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 178.07 acres located at 0 Houston Valley Road, Ringgold, Georgia, parcel (27-156-01-000). The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Staten, Jones and Robbins in agreement.

**City of Dalton Annexations – parcels 12-261-33-000 & 12-261-14-000:** Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Staten for no land use classification objection to tax parcel numbers 12-261-33-000 & 12-261-14-000. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Staten in agreement.

**Superior Court – 2021 Interpreter Contract:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Staten to approve the annual contract with KRNW Inc., for court interpreter services for Superior Court. The contract is for \$83,700.00 per year, and the end date is December 31, 2021. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Robbins and Staten in agreement.

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**Coahulla Creek Villages road repair & acceptance by Whitfield County Board of Commissioners:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Robbins and seconded by Commissioner Jones to enter into an agreement with JFP Properties Group, LLC, approving the repair of roads and alleys that are within the Coahulla Villages Subdivision. Whitfield County will provide repair of all existing roads within the development up to \$160,060, after Jan 1, 2021, JFP Properties Group, LLC will submit a property deed transferring road ownership to Whitfield County. Whitfield County will be responsible for all future road maintenance and paving. Initially (spring of 2021), roads will be patched and coated with a temporary asphalt layer. As development progress, final asphalt paving will be placed over all roads and alleys. Whitfield County Board of Commissioners will allow the cost for development to be placed in a Special Tax District for a period of 4 years. The total cost can be divided among the individual subdivision lots and transferrable as lots are sold. Each year 25% of the total cost will be reimbursed to the county through the special tax district assessment. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioner Robbins, Jones and Chairman Jensen in agreement. Commissioner Staten abstained.

**Discussion of Requiring the Use of Masks within Whitfield County Facilities and Vehicles to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19:** Motion was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Staten to remove the ordinance requiring the use of masks within indoor Whitfield County Facilities and Vehicles to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The resolution that strongly encourages the use of masks in public still stands. The motion was approved 3-0, with Commissioners Jones, Staten and Robbins in agreement

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1. Jackie Killings who resides at 3451 Misty Meadows NW Drive, Dalton Georgia addressed the Board. Ms. Killings suggested the Board to speak to the County employees who work at inside of the County owned buildings how safe they feel before they rescind the mask Ordinance.
2. Claude Craig EMA/911 Director for Whitfield County addressed the Board. Mr. Craig noted he will be retiring on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, after working for the County for 47 years. Mr. Craig gave thanked the Board and Major John Gibson and Sheriff Scott Chitwood being supportive all though the years.

**ADJOURN** Unanimous

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JEVIN JENSEN, CHAIRMAN  
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /