

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Work Session
January 23, 2024
4:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Gene King, Vice Chairman Adam Worsley, Commissioner Rosla Plant, Commissioner Emmett Collins and Commissioner Bryan Threadgill.

Commissioners Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Interim County Administrator Theron Gay, Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole, Deputy Clerk Allyson Stephens, and Finance Director John Gorton,

Staff Absent: County Clerk Beverly Thomas and County Attorney Michael Hill

I. WELCOME

Chairman Gene King welcomed everyone to the Work Session and opened it up at 4:01 p.m.

II. NEW BUSINESS

1. Accomplishments during 2023: Interim Administrator Theron Gay presented a handout to the board that listed accomplishments from the previous 5 years. He explained that the document would show the Board members what can be accomplished with planning. Interim Administrator Gay stated that he has presented accomplishments to previous Boards, usually around the first of the year to show what has been accomplished and how important it is to plan ahead and to make sure everyone is on the same sheet of music. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the list goes back to 2017 and there is a separate hand out that he has given the Board of accomplishments over his tenure that he prepared when he was looking to retire last year. Interim Administrator Gay stated there are a lot of things in the list and a lot of good things that have been accomplished and a lot of good things this year as well. Interim Administrator Gay went over the accomplishments of 2023 which included, purchasing a new cab and chassis for Public Works, 2023 LMIG was let, and the County received an extra \$525,000 from GDOT which was used to assist on Luthersville Road, increased the Lake Meriwether RV site camping fees from \$20 to \$30, accepted the invoice from Principle Construction with a 24-month warranty for repairs to the Courthouse roof, Purchased a Ranger tire changing machine for Public Works and a Bobcat Zero-turn mower for Public Works, Attorney looked into and have a referendum set for county-wide liquor sales, approved internet service for Lake Meriwether, purchased the Cloud Permit Software, Pressure washed the courthouse wall and sidewalk, approved NOVA Engineering and Environmental for Building Inspections and Plan Review, Approved Jail Roof RFP and completed the project, Replaced Culverts at River Cove Road and Tarver Creek and Dukes Waddell Road, approved up to \$2,000 to build a storage shed for Lake Meriwether using the recreation budget, Comprehensive Plan update, established the Land Bank, awarded the Beulah Evans Road Paving Contract, and purchased a diagnostic machine for Public Works. Interim Administrator Gay stated that looking back there has been a lot of work done and all of that work takes working together and pulling in the same direction with clear plans to accomplish these items. Interim Administrator Gay opened up the floor for comments or questions the Board may have. Commissioner Bryan Threadgill stated he had a couple of comments and stated the Beulah Evans Project was a two-year project that was ongoing before the current Board came to be and the current Board just passed it, but it was something that was in the works prior and with all the

meetings, when he hears how much we've accomplished, accomplished, accomplished, to see the current list is nothing compared to the prior years before that. Commissioner Threadgill thanked Interim Administrator Gay for composing the list. Interim Administrator Gay stated this is something that he does every year for the upcoming year. Interim Administrator Gay encouraged to Board to read through the list of accomplishments and let him know if they had any questions. Interim Administrator Gay stated he asked Assistant Administrator Blue Cole and Finance Director John Gorton to present today as the Board has already heard about transportation, and personnel and retention, and he feels there was good direction given on that and today he would like to discuss some projects that needed to be done other than transportation such as buildings, maintenance, and other updates, and direction from the Board on what they want to invest in.

2. Discussion of Non-Transportation Projects: Assistant Administrator Cole stated that we are here today to see what direction the Board would like to take on capital projects that are outside of transportation. Assistant Administrator Cole stated he would like to start with the different funding sources and knowing where that funding comes from and where it can go can help things fall into place. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the first category of funds are the General Funds which are available for general government operations and can be used for almost anything from personnel, supplies, equipment, and construction. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that you would typically use these funds last and go with the most restrictive funding first because restrictive funds can only be spent on specific items. Assistant Administrator Cole stated after the General Funds, are the SPLOST funds which is the 1% sales tax that can be spent on special purpose items and is restrictive to the referendum that was approved by the voters and is semi-restrictive fund that can be spent on approved capital projects and equipment, but not on people. Interim Administrator Gay explained that one of the caveats with SPLOST is if you get to the end and you have accomplished all the goals set forth on the list in the referendum, if there are excess dollars, they can be taken back into the General Fund. Interim Administrator Gay stated that this rarely happens due to transportation. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that TSPLOST is the 1% sales tax that can only be spent on transportation projects and equipment and is the most restrictive. Chairman Gene King asked if TSPLOST is the one that will be on the ballot in November. Interim Administrator Gay explained that it was. Vice Chairman Adam Worsley asked if it was not going to be on the May ballot. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we would not have time to do all that needs to be done to get it on the ballot in May, due to having to go back and having an Intergovernmental Agreement with all the cities on the distribution of those dollars and that has to be done 90 days ahead of time and then 60 days for the ballot. Commissioner Threadgill stated the last time TSPLOST was done the Town Hall meetings were a big player in what was done with getting out in every district to pass the information to the community. Commissioner Threadgill states he does feel this needs to be put on the November ballot so there is time to get out and have the Town Hall Meetings in every district again. Chairman King asked Commissioner Threadgill if those town hall meetings needed to happen in the next 2-3 months. Commissioner Threadgill stated yes, and the Board really can't, it will be up to Interim Administrator Gay to do it. Commissioner Threadgill stated that they can have the town hall meetings but cannot push the item. Interim Administrator Gay stated that you can't spend tax dollars in promoting it and you can't go out and say, "vote for it". Interim Administrator Gay stated that he has been doing this for a long time and has been very successful, and what you do is go out and show people what you've done and what you plan to do moving forward. Interim Administrator Gay stated that on top of that there needs to be an Intergovernmental Agreement done with the cities and showed the Board the document that will

need to be updated with the new Census numbers for the distribution percentage to the cities. Interim Administrator Gay feels this will be important when starting to meet with some of the cities and formulate. Interim Administrator Gay stated that some of the presentations will be done inside the cities, and it is good to see and tell the citizens inside the city what is going to be done. Commissioner Threadgill stated during the last meeting with the cities regarding one of the programs, he couldn't remember if it was SPLOST, TSPLOST, or LOST, it became a little challenging with some of the cities who were wanting more. Chairman King stated that he would like to understand if he wanted to have a townhall in his district to talk about what TSPLOST helps us with, he could do that? Interim Administrator Gay stated answered Chairman King that yes, he could do that. Interim Administrator Gay states that he is not telling them which way to vote, just presenting the information and encouraging the citizens to get out and vote. Commissioner Threadgill stated the attorneys did advise last time that the Board has to be very careful what they say during those presentations. Assistant Administrator Cole stated following TSPLOST funding the most restrictive source of funding is grants as they are tied to a specific project and specific funder. Assistant Administrator Cole explained that low interest loans are also a funding source if the Board would like to pursue those, however for the current conversation the discussion will be based on funding from SPLOST, the General Fund, and any Grants we can get. Administrator Theron Gay stated that if you do a SPLOST or TSPLOST you can do advanced funding if you want by putting what you will be doing in the referendum. Administrator Gay stated that his recommendation, if for example there was a large project, such as putting in a complex, and all funding was needed in year one or year 2, then it would be worthwhile to put that in the referendum as an option. Interim Administrator Gay explained that this gives you all the funding upfront to get the project done and it doesn't have to be strung out. Interim Administrator Gay explained with transportation or TSPLOST, you would want to try to spread it out over years because you receive LMIG and other funding to go with it and unless the County is going to take and build a major road, the funding will not be spent all in one year and will need to be used over multiple years, leaving no benefit to borrow that money up front. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the positive side of not borrowing all the money up front is you don't have to pay bond attorneys and all of the money comes directly to the County. Interim Administrator Gay stated he would not recommend the advanced funding, but it is available for TSPLOST and SPLOST. Commissioner Threadgill confirmed that special projects under SPLOST could be for capital projects. Interim Administrator Gay stated that is correct. Commissioner Threadgill stated if for instance the courthouse needed a large repair and we set a million dollars at the beginning for SPLOST funds, to explain how that works. Interim Administrator Gay stated there are a couple of options, using the courthouse example. Interim Administrator Gay stated the courthouse is a structure that serves everyone, so it can be listed as a tier one project and take that off the top of the SPLOST, before it is shared with others. Interim Administrator Gay stated that if you were going to build something different that would just be used by the County, you could request advanced funding, but couldn't ask the cities to participate as well. Commissioner Threadgill stated that it does extend the time period of the SPLOST, correct. Interim Administrator Gay stated that yes it does as SPLOST is normally a 5-year program like TSPLOST, but if there are projects that need to be done it can be extended to a 6-year program which is what has normally been done. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if you could only extend it one more year. Interim Administrator Gay stated that 6 years would be the maximum it could be extended. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that something that would be beneficial to the County would be countywide water and sewer, however that would be too large

for the 6 years. Interim Administrator Gay explained that it would be too large but with that you could possibly get some of the low-interest rate loans that could be worked in and use some of the rates and rate structure. Interim Administrator Gay stated that generally a water and sewer system goes into an Enterprise fund that at the end of the day pays for itself and the taxpayers that are not benefiting from it, don't have to contribute to it themselves. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the first type of projects he would like to look at are the facilities projects, and there are a number of facilities around the County that are due for upgrades, repairs, and really just catching up on regular maintenance. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the four or five items regarding facilities that he is presenting are the Courthouse, County Jail, office space allocation, Tax Commissioner, Tax Assessor, and Planning and Zoning offices, and Lake Meriwether. Interim Administrator Gay stated that it was also important to add the Elections office as well. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that the Courthouse has issues with mold on the third floor and also needs a new HVAC system. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that around 12 years prior a new split system was installed in the Courthouse that promised cost savings and automation and it hasn't delivered. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that between lack of maintenance and lack of personnel the system has fallen apart. He stated that the estimated cost for a new HVAC system for the Courthouse is around \$600,000. Vice Chairman Worsley asked Assistant Administrator Cole how old the system was. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the unit was 10, 12, 15 years ago. Commissioner Threadgill stated it was closer to 20 years old. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that he obtained one quote for a vendor to get a ballpark estimate and it is roughly \$200,000 per floor for the HVAC system. He explained this has not been sent out for bid. Assistant Administrator Cole stated they have obtained some quotes on the remediation, and it is around \$150,000 to remediate the mold and repair the damage on the third floor. Chairman King asked if this was advertised in the paper. Interim Administrator Gay stated that no it has not been advertised and vendors were just called to obtain quotes. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that we are not sure if there will need to be mold remediation to the basement, first floor, or second floor or what repairs will be needed. Chairman King asked if the HVAC estimate is for the entire Courthouse. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that it was for the entire courthouse. Interim Administrator Gay advised that mold remediation could be done, but if the HVAC issue is not addressed, remediation will be needed again. Assistant Administrator Cole stated interim steps have been taken with the approval of calking the roof to take care of the water infiltration. Assistant Administrator Cole stated we heard anything about water infiltration, so we assume that is taken care of as well as the additions made to the annex roof of the courthouse. Assistant Administrator Cole stated hopefully the water has been stopped from coming in. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if anyone was working on the 3rd floor of the Courthouse. Assistant Administrator Cole advised him that no one was working on that floor and is the reason the D.A.'s office has moved to the Administration Building. Vice Chairman Worsley then asked if anyone was checking and inspecting these items after rain. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff was reporting back regarding any leaks and there were no reported leaks after the emergency work was done from the leak into the records room. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that the ballpark figure on the Courthouse would be anywhere from \$1 million to \$1.2 million, depending on what work needs to be done. The next facility according to Assistant Administrator Cole is the County Jail. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the roof had been replaced as well as the HVAC and to date there has been about \$300,000 for these repairs. Assistant Administrator Cole stated bids have been received on the jail doors and locks and we are waiting on bids to come in for the plumbing. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if we are waiting

on the jail plumbing bids to come in or waiting to send them out. Interim Administrator Gay stated that no we have already sent out the Jail Plumbing once and had not received any response. Chairman King stated that he is not aware it went out because he forwarded the information to a company in Peachtree City that is large enough to handle the job. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the bids were sent out and no one showed up for the pre-bid as he was there and Bill Cawthorne. Interim Administrator Gay stated that was brought back to the Board and what we would like to do with that is bring plumbers in to walk through and give an estimate on it. Chairman King stated he does not know this company personally and is not tied to them but has seen their work over the last 38 years in Peachtree City. Interim Administrator Gay advised Chairman King that if they would like us to reach out to just send us the names of anyone they know that's in the plumbing business as the more bids the better off we will be. Interim Administrator Gay stated the bids for the locks and doors are in and were over \$400,000 and staff has gone back through the bids, and this should be on the next Agenda for the Board to consider. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if all the locks in the Jail needed to be replaced. Interim Administrator Gay explained that no work is being done on the annex building, and the rest of the locks in the Jail need to be replaced to be compatible as they have been changed out so many times during the years. Interim Administrator Gay explained that all of the locks will be on a system to open from the tower in the case of a fire or emergency as well as lock down. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that a total estimate for the Jail would be around \$1-1.2 million. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if that was for everything. Assistant Administrator Cole stated it was for everything. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the next topic would be office space allocation. Assistant Administrator Cole explained with the D.A.'s office located in the Administration Building and additional staff, we are starting to outgrow the building. Assistant Administrator Cole discussed one option which he emphasized was just for consideration of moving the Board of Commissioners staff to the DFCS building, moving the Sheriff's Office and Jail Admin to the Administration Building, Moving the Tax Assessors, Tax Commissioner, and Planning and Zoning to the DFCS building while repairs are done to the Tax Building in town, and moving the D.A.'s office to the Tax Building. Vice Chairman Worsley asked why the Tax Assessors, Tax Commissioner, and Planning and Zoning office would only be moved temporarily and why they couldn't just stay in the DFCS building. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that they could, but they wanted the D.A.'s office back towards the Courthouse. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the goal is to get the D.A.'s office back to the 3rd floor of the Courthouse and those repairs should take precedent. Interim Administrator Gay discussed scenarios to allow the tax offices to rotate to the Elections Building and then move back once the office is repaired. Commissioner Threadgill stated he felt the location of Planning and Zoning, being in the middle of the tax offices was inconvenient and moving them would open up space for the tax offices. Chairman King asked the Board what they felt about having an appraisal done on the tax building, with it being prime real estate, downtown, and having all the buildings we have to move the offices to, the money that could be made off of a sale, could be used to repair the other buildings and then become a capitalized business for office rental and use. Chairman King stated he wasn't sure what the building was worth but was a thought he had. Interim Administrator Gay stated they thought about that as a potential option, but that building will be expensive with the amount of obsolescence's that would have to be overcome. Interim Administrator Gay stated another option would be, considering the County owns two buildings at the Pathways location and one of those buildings would be large enough to accommodate both the Tax Assessors Office and Tax Commissioners Office as well as the building in the back that

could be used for Planning and Zoning. Interim Administrator Gay stated that would be something down the road, but you have that building that is in a lot better shape than the building downtown. Chairman King stated that he would like to see what the building is worth and what it will cost to repair. Chairman King stated he is just asking why not see what it is worth and then let finance and staff put numbers together to see because sometimes it is more expensive to tear down and remodel than to build new. Interim Administrator Gay stated the issue with the building is that because it was built in the 50s or 60s there are a lot of small internal offices that can't be changed and is not functioning as it should. Chairman King explained that there is potential to rent out small offices for small businesses. Interim Administrator Gay stated that what would need to be done would be to gauge the market and find out what the market is for downtown rentals. Chairman King stated that an investor is looking at what he has to put into it and what he can make out of it on rental. Interim Administrator Gay asked Commissioner Plant if investments had been good in the downtown area. Commissioner Plant stated that it had not and most of the buildings are privately owned just sitting there and trying to get them to sell is like pulling teeth. Chairman King feels that it should be appraised. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if the DFCS building was finished. Interim Administrator Gay stated it was. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that it is around 15,000 square feet and feels we have a remodeled space, why can't we go ahead and move tax, tag, zoning, elections, to buy time to figure out how to address the other buildings. Commissioner Threadgill stated he has not heard anything about DFCS and where it would go as it is an important part of the County. Interim Administrator Gay stated that there were more conversations that needed to be had regarding where they want to be. Vice Chairman Worsley asked how much space they needed. Commissioner Plant stated that DFCS used to be housed in the Administration Building. Commissioner Worsley asked if we just needed to provide space? Interim Administrator Gay stated that is correct. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he would like to be able to gather how much it will cost to take care of the buildings and possibly get others moved to the DFCS building while that is done. Commissioner Threadgill stated there was talk at one time about Elections moving to the Administration Building and it would allow the chambers to open up for early voting. Commissioner Threadgill stated that if the administration office moves to the DFCS building then there will need to be a conference room or chambers built for their meetings. Interim Administrator Gay stated that when looking at designing a new chamber room, it may be beneficial to design it with an exterior door, that way when there are evening meetings, or planning and zoning has meetings they can utilize the exterior door without having to open the rest of the offices. Commissioner Threadgill stated he agreed with Commissioner Worsley about figuring something out due to vacant buildings just sitting. Chairman Threadgill stated the longer they keep sitting, the more that will be found wrong, or something will go wrong, and we don't want something to happen. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the Elections office would need sufficient space to keep all the machines plugged in, monitored, and secured which takes more space than they would need for office space. Discussion ensued on different scenarios and ways to move offices around to complete repairs. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that one of the facilities not discussed was Lake Meriwether. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that Lake Meriwether is a jewel in the County and suggested improvements to utilize it more in the County. Some of the improvements suggested were updates to the baseball fields for recreation, spaces for campsites, pull-through RV sites and other amenities to bring in revenue and visitors. Chairman King asked questions regarding issues with the dam at Lake Meriwether. Interim Administrator Gay explained that that was resolved and there were no more issues with the dam. Commissioner Threadgill asked about

the dedications that were to be scheduled at Lake Meriwether. Interim Administrator Gay stated that one of the plaques of dedication was already up, and there needs to be a box and cover for the other. Interim Administrator Gay stated he would make it a priority to get those dedications scheduled and there was one that needed to be done at the Fire Department as well. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if there was a cost estimate for Lake Meriwether. Assistant Administrator Cole advised he did not have a cost estimate. Finance Director John Gorton stated that the bank balance sheet has a breakdown of the TSPLOST and SPLOST commitments, excluding the \$130,000 for the two chassis for the Fire Department. Interim Administrator Gay explained that while it looks like there is a negative balance now, we will quickly overcome that and have a positive balance without any commitments. Finance Director Gorton confirmed. Finance Director Gorton explained that TSPLOST with the commitments, leaves the County with \$1.2 million to spend now in the bank. Interim Administrator Gay stated that they are utilizing funding from TSPLOST to gravel roads and that process will continue. Finance Director Gorton stated he received confirmation from the Auditors that the General Fund is unrestricted and can be allocated for anything with the Board's approval and right now there is almost \$10 million dollars that can be allocated to items such as vehicles and building renovations and the auditors didn't see any problem allocating those funds for that. Finance Director Gorton stated that the ARPA funds, which are \$3.5 million that we have in the bank as General Fund as loss revenue. Commissioner Worsley asked if that was part of the \$10 million. Finance Director Gorton stated it is part of that \$10 million and was designated to the General Fund as loss revenue. Commissioner Threadgill stated that we already have a deadline on the ARPA funding on where it has to be allocated. Finance Director Gorton stated that the ARPA funding was already allocated out last year to the General Fund as loss revenue. Commissioner Threadgill stated he thought they had a specific that you had to put the projects out for. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the wording was constantly changing as we went through it, and we got to a point instead of having to let a project out, we counted it as expenses already occurred to bring it back in. Finance Director Gorton stated that treasury rules stipulated that the funds had to be allocated by the end of this year unless you used them as loss revenue in the General Fund. Finance Director Gorton stated that is the way the auditors reclassified in 2022. Commissioner Worsley stated that was a smart way to do it. Finance Director Gorton stated that we are fine on that end, but the ARPA account needs to be closed and that money needs to be transferred to the General Fund. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if that had not been done yet. Finance Director Gorton stated it had not as he needed Board approval to move \$3.8 million dollars. Commissioner Threadgill stated his thought is because the money came down from the federal government to the citizens of Meriwether County, we need to do something very special that will last instead of putting it in the General Fund and losing it and he feels that is how that will be done, he feels it will be lost in a General Fund account and go out and we really won't even know what we did with it. Commissioner Threadgill stated he feels the original part of the ARPA needs to be dedicated to something instead of putting it in General Fund and losing it. Vice Chairman Worsley asked Commissioner Threadgill what type of projects he was thinking about. Commissioner Threadgill stated water across the county as much as possible coming out from the cities to rural areas as much as possibly can be done to help them with it. Commissioner Threadgill stated trash service throughout the County and something that will benefit the citizens over the years instead of losing it in the General Fund. Finance Director Gorton stated the treasury rule was to use it to prevent the spread of COVID. Commissioner Threadgill stated that if we put it in the General Fund, he feels we will lose it over a period of time just spending it.

Vice Chairman Worsley stated could some of those funds be used for roads. Commissioner Threadgill stated that those roads are still going to be there when you and I are both dead and he wants it to benefit the citizens. Finance Director Gorton stated that it will need to be moved to the General Fund and there can be a line item created to track what it is spent on. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the funds could be designated on a project. Commissioner Threadgill stated there is an aging population in the County who are on a fixed income and if there is something that could be done to benefit those individuals it is something that he would really like to do. Vice Chairman Worsley asked about the interest being received on the money that was put into the Investment Pool. Finance Director Gorton stated it is receiving around 4.5% which was generating around \$22,000 dollars. Director Gorton stated he had already moved \$2 million and would be moving another \$1 million. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that would be around \$31,000. Commissioner Threadgill asked how much was being spent on gravel. Assistant Administrator Cole stated it was around \$32,000 per mile. Commissioner Threadgill asked if the money gained on interest could be used to purchase gravel. Vice Chairman Worsley explained that he would like to see some of the projects getting done with that interest money. Interim Administrator Gay stated that that would need to be done quickly because that interest may not always be there. Vice Chairman Worsley stated it was important to take advantage of it while we can and stated that he appreciated Finance investing in the fund as it was a smart decision. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that for some reason he thought it was \$60,000 or \$90,000. Finance Director Gorton stated that there are three funds, SPLOST, TSPLOST, and the General Fund, that are gaining interest. Interim Administrator Gay stated that he would advise the Board to be careful with SPLOST and TSPLOST interest and not moving those. Interim Administrator Gay stated they could be used for gravel, but he would be careful in moving that to a category such as personnel. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if the TSPLOST and SPLOST interest had to be treated the same as SPLOST and TSPLOST. Finance Director Gorton stated that the money had to be treated the same. Finance Director Gorton explained that he plans has funds in those account to gain interest and you have to be careful with the General Fund because the County has a balanced budget and if you gain interest in the TSPLOST account, it can be used for gravel or road projects, the same with the SPLOST account for building renovations. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that before he moved on to the next item, he wanted to explained the reason we are having to spend this amount of money on repairs is there really hasn't been a focus on preventative maintenance. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that there needs to be a line item for preventative maintenance both on the supply side and the personnel side and we need to make sure that is being charged to the appropriate department's budget. Assistant Administrator Cole stated we need to make sure we are staffed as right now Lee with maintenance, spends several hours a day at the jail, when the jail should truly have their own maintenance person. Vice Chairman Worsley asked why they did not have a maintenance person. Interim Administrator Gay stated they did, and the person retired. Commissioner Threadgill stated that they haven't had a maintenance person since 2019. Assistant Administrator Cole expressed the need to make sure we have the right personnel in the right position. Assistant Administrator Cole stated one of the current projects we have going right now is the Greenville passive park, and this federal pass through grant that comes from DNR and the project is partially grant funded by the Land and Conservation Grant in the amount of \$200,000 and because everything has jumped so much in price, we have had a little higher price on the park that we are wanting to spend and are looking to cut it down. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that finishing the park and getting Public Works to start on it is the number one recreation project right now and behind that would

be the baseball fields at Lake Meriwether. Interim Administrator Gay explained that urgency on the park is that it has to be done or substantially done by the end of the year. Interim Administrator Gay stated that what would be done with that would be in-kind work and the in-kind work would include grading and clearing and will need to get someone in to do the final grading on that. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the park will have a pavilion, bathrooms, and etc. and this has been something that we began working on close to three years ago and the pricing list has changed. Interim Administrator Gay stated that he will be getting back with them to see about cutting some of the items or amenities to get it within our price range. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that it was mentioned that Public Works would be doing some of the work, and we are going to pull a short staff at Public Works off the roads that we are working on to send to this park that we have a quote on from a contractor that could do the work for us. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that because it is wintertime not everybody is working on the roads, and it won't be a full crew of public works doing the work. Interim Administrator Gay explained that they would not be pulled off the road full time to do the work as they won't be able to do all of the work and it would have to be bid out. Vice Chairman Worsley stated to excuse his ignorance, but he can't see many road days that Public Works can't work on roads that they could be able to grade a park, because if it rains, you can't grade a road or repair a pothole. Interim Administrator Gay stated it would be a rough grade and you could go back over it. Chairman King stated that he had a gentleman from another County explain to them that when it is raining in their County, not a downpour but raining, they have workers go out with shovels and shovel the dirt out of the pipes and unstop them to keep the water flowing instead of going back to the shop. Chairman King stated that he has lived at his property for 6 years and never noticed, but there is not a culvert pipe under his road and the water builds up on the side of the road and ends up coming over the road until it recedes and then it has to sit on the side like a pond until it goes down as there has never been a pipe under the area. Interim Administrator Gay stated that Public Works employees don't sit around when it is raining, they have other maintenance and things that have to be done. Interim Administrator Gay stated the original estimate for the park was around \$400,000 and we were planning on using in-kind work, such as rough grading and clearing to get some of the costs down. Interim Administrator Gay stated there is also help needed on the industrial park road and it doesn't require an entire Public Works crew. Assistant Administrator Cole stated there is also an obstruction clearance project at the end of the runway at the Airport. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if the Airport Authority could take care of that as we are already short-staffed. Interim Administrator Gay stated he is not aware of that project, and he will check on that to see as if they have funding available, he would think they could take care of that project. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that some of the administrative projects that we are working on is the TSPLOST referendum which includes all the documents and intergovernmental agreements that need to be done to get it on the ballot in November, the SPLOST initiative that will be coming up in 2025, and additions and updates to County Ordinances. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that some of the topics that need to be added are landlord surrenders for animal control, utility right of way permitting process, and the expansion of our commercial zoning classifications, to open up more options for commercial zoning. Assistant Administrator Cole stated another project is the creation and implementation of a vehicle replacement program, not just for Public Safety but also for other county fleets. Assistant Administrator Cole explained two separate ways to do that either by contracting a fleet service via an RFP to purchase them and when we are done with the use of them, the fleet service would sell them to recapture as much value as possible, or we could develop an internal

procurement plan on a set schedule. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that staff recommendation would be to establish a schedule to assist in budgeting procurement with it mainly coming from SPLOST, if it is any public works equipment, it could come from TSPLOST. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that we also have a Capital Outlay account in the General Fund that can be carried over year by year if it is not used and is reported correctly. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that is an incentive to Department Heads that if they save money, they will have it available as a capital outlay in the next year. Finance Director Gorton explained how the capital outlay carryovers worked and that it has to be reported as a carryover. Vice Chairman Worsley asked where it stands on the replacement of vehicles as we just purchased two possibly three ambulances. Interim Administrator Gay explained a replacement program and that an analysis would have to be done with each of the county departments that have fleet. Vice Chairman Worsley wanted to know if this is something that is urgent or what we need to do to address it. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that money could start being saved towards that and most of the immediate needs have been taken care of, but there are two 2003 model trucks in Public Works that need to be replaced with a newer vehicle. Interim Administrator Gay stated that as we move into the 2024 budget it would be a good time to address that. Commissioner Threadgill stated that he noticed on the handout that there were 6 projects showing grant funding and asked what grants had been obtained for that or will we get them. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that it is there simply because it is available for those. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the Lake Meriwether grants would be fairly easy to get and he is not so sure about the Courthouse renovation. Commissioner Threadgill stated we probably needed to know what funding source was available for these items, and if we have applied for the grants or will we be applying for the grants. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that he has not applied for these but could if the Commission wanted him too. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the Courthouse project would be Historic Preservation grants, and the County Jail would be U.S. Rural Development grants. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the chart that was presented was part of the County's short-term work plan and is something that has to be updated every 4-5 years and was something that already existed to gauge when projects needed to be done. Vice Chairman Worsley stated going back to Commissioner Threadgill's point is if there are grant funds available, we should be going after those immediately. Vice Chairman Worsley explained that the program from Senator Ossoff's office was a rural or downtown revitalization grant and that could be used on the tax and tag building. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we paved the parking lot of the tax building with a USDA grant. Commissioner Threadgill stated when he spoke to Senator Ossoff himself, he told him there were a lot of grants coming up this year through his office. Interim Administrator Gay stated the key to grants is to use them for something you were planning on doing. Interim Administrator Gay stated that some people get grants just to get the grant and then they build something and don't know how they are going to supply it or have personnel to run it. Interim Administrator Gay stated to get a grant for something that you want to do. Chairman King stated to Assistant Administrator Cole grants is what he is supposed to be working on. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that it is one of the things that he is to be working on and is a big part of his job. Chairman King stated it is the majority of things he should be working on. Commissioner Collins asked if a tanker truck was obtained from Senator Ossoff's office. Interim Administrator Gay stated he would look into that. Commissioner Threadgill stated that there were two things, and one was a fire truck. Commissioner Collins stated the County applied for two and was awarded one. Interim Administrator Gay stated he would look into that. Vice Chairman Worsley stated also this year

was the ability for the County to double the LMIG Grant. Interim Administrator Gay stated this is something the Governor has mentioned wanting to do and hopes that legislature will pass it. Commissioner Threadgill stepped out of the room at 5:23 p.m. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the governor is asking for additional LMIG funding, and this comes mainly from fuel tax sales. Interim Administrator Gay explained that what the state does if awarded the additional LMIG funding is they will go out and reallocate those funds if awarded based on criteria of use. Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens explained that there is a 2025 Off System Safety Program or grant through the federal government that Bill Cawthorne is working on to address signage and striping. Commissioner Worsley stated that one thing we are blessed with is a lot of projects to do and we need to seize every opportunity because the only thing holding us back on some of these projects is funding. Interim Administrator Gay stated that there are grants out there that are so uncertain and sometimes they take a very long time. Commissioner Threadgill reentered the meeting at 5:25 p.m. Interim Administrator Gay stated that Assistant Administrator Cole was working on a grant for the industrial park road and his concern is we will need to have that road open, long before the grant materializes. Vice Chairman Worsley stated with all the projects that need to be done, would it be in the interest of the Board to hire a company for a short period of time to go after certain grants and get moving on them. Interim Administrator Gay stated he feels it would be because it takes a lot of time to write a grant, however if you know what you are doing, you can cut that time in half. Interim Administrator Gay stated that one of the companies that he has worked with is Allen Smith Consulting and they are known statewide and do a great job. The Board came to a consensus to contact Debra Smith and see if she will be in the area and see if she could help us. Chairman King also asked Interim Administrator Gay to not forget to see about a light in Alvaton. Chairman King stated that he went over and met with the Fire Chief, Sandy Garrett, and Custom Trucks at 8:00 a.m. and noticed that there were four ambulances sitting out that were plugged in for diesel, but if all of a sudden there was some crisis or emergency the ambulance would have to de-ice. Chairman King stated that Sandy stated he had been wishing for that for years and Chairman King stated he had not heard anything about that. Chairman King asked about installing a roof on the poles out behind the Fire Station on Hill Haven Road to keep the ambulances out of the weather and feels a quote needed to be obtained for that. Vice Chairman Worsley stepped out of the room at 5:33 p.m. Chairman King stated he just wanted to mention that as they had the poles. Commissioner Collins stated that the new Fire Station would hold more, and they don't have that many in them. Commissioner Threadgill stated that he thought the new Fire Station in Greenville would hold 6 with three pulled forward and three backed in. Vice Chairman Worsley reentered the room at 5:33 p.m. Interim Administrator Gay stated he would like to go back over everything to make sure he had clear direction. Interim Administrator Gay stated that he feels at this stage we have good feedback and recommends staff puts together some options to bring back very soon on what we want to do on buildings and how we need to go about doing that. Commissioner Threadgill stated that fewer options are better. Interim Administrator would like to rank the options so if we don't get to them this year, we start on them next year. Interim Administrator Gay explained the procedures for a Public Hearing. With no further discussion, the Work Session concluded at 5:36 p.m.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for an Executive Session.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the Work Session concluded at 5:36 p.m.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Deborah S. Stephens, Deputy Clerk

Date: February 14, 2024