MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 14, 2024
9:00 A.M.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Gene King, Vice Chairman Adam Worsley, Commissioner Rosla Plant, and Commissioner Emmett Collins.
Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Bryan Threadgill
Staff Present: Interim County Administrator Theron Gay, Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole, Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens, Finance Director John Gorton, and County Attorney Nathan Lee.
Staff Not Present: County Clerk Beverly Thomas.

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Gene King called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. INVOCATION
The Invocation was given by Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG
All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA
Motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Commissioner Adam Worsley to Adopt the Agenda with the following additions under New Business: *9. Discussion of SUVs for the Sheriff's Office. 10. Discussion of Road Patching and 11. Authorize the Chairman to sign the Hazard Mitigation Grant.* All were in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS
None

VI. FINANCE REPORT
Finance Director, John Gorton provided the Board handouts with the balances from the bank statements as of February 13, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. Director Gorton stated the General Fund is at $5.6 million and the rest of the funds are holding steady with the Investment Pool for the General Fund at $8.1 million with $103,000 in interest that has been earned over the past three months and the interest right now is at about 5% in the Investment Pool. Finance Director Gorton stated that January LOST, SPLOST, and TSPLOST came in higher more than likely due to Christmas shopping and will see what the distributions are in February in hopes they continue to move upward. Finance Director Gorton provide the Board with the balances for SPLOST and TSPLOST on the second page of the handout and explained that the balance as of today for SPLOST with all the commitments is $391,283.14 and the TSPLOST is at $1,362,468.92 which is what can be spent as of now.

VII. DEPARTMENT HEADS

Assistant Administrator Blue Cole stated that Meriwether County was awarded two internships from the Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) which is something that ACCG does on a yearly basis and Meriwether County has had an intern at Judge Rasnick's office for three years with this being the third year in a row that he has received the intern and this year, Meriwether County received 2 interns out of 45. Assistant Administrator Cole stated this was a very competitive process and we are proud to receive two interns. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that the County has two Animal Control Officers who began work part-time, then full-time, and now have become certified as Animal Control Officer 1. Assistant Administrator Cole stated it was great to see employees go from part-time to full-time and then become certified to better serve the citizens. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that EMS has passed their yearly ambulance inspection with everything rated and is on the road.

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENT

Chairman King asked if anyone was signed up to speak during Citizen Comment. Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens stated there were two citizens signed up to speak. Chairman King read the procedure for Citizen Comment.

1. Russell Pickron – Not in attendance
2. Shirley Baker of 1646 Middle Brooks Road, Woodbury stated that she has lived on her dirt road for 20 years and came by the Administration Office and spoke with Assistant Administrator Cole to tell him what kind of condition Middlebrooks Road was in, and he was able to send someone out to look at it that day and the next day they came back out to address it. Ms. Baker stated the road has been fixed several times and presented pictures to the Chairman and Board to show them the condition of the road. Ms. Baker stated when you first come down the road there is a beaver pond on the left and that doesn't help. Ms. Baker stated they did come in and do something and of course it has rained since then and they dug the ditches out halfway down the road and she noticed the other day when it rained the water came down the road because they didn't put the ditches in there. Ms. Baker stated she also found out the other day that the pipe was stopped up and that is one of the reasons the water goes across the road. Ms. Baker stated that they have always had this problem and she realizes the beaver pond is not on County property and is on public property, but something has to be done or the road is going to wash out. Ms. Baker stated that they did something the other day to the dirt road and part of the road is caving in and someone is going to go down in the ditch and get hurt and sue the County. Ms. Baker stated that her and her husband were riding around the other day and noticed that the County has redone Findley Cato Road and Fern Road, and it looks awesome, but she can't understand why the County can't come in and do something with Middlebrooks Road because it is that bad. Ms. Baker stated that she understands the County has a budget, but there was so much done on Fern Road, she doesn't understand why something couldn't be done to her road and the other roads too. Ms. Baker stated that she is not fussing but doesn't understand why something can't be done to the dirt roads. Ms. Baker stated that she understands we are on a budget, but we need to do something about these dirt roads.

IX. MINUTES

1. Motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins to accept the Minutes from the January 23, 2024, Work Session at 4:00 p.m. as presented. All were in favor. Motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by

Commissioner Emmett Collins to accept the Minutes from the January 23, 2024, Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. as presented. All were in favor.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

None

XI. APPOINTMENTS

1. Motion was made by Chairman Gene King to appoint Ms. Joann Lynch to DFACS Board for District 1 to fill a vacant term that will expire on June 30, 2024. This was seconded by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley. All were in favor.
2. Motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant to table the appointment to the Planning Commission for District 4 to fill an unexpired term that will end of January 5, 2025. This was seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins. All were in favor.
3. Motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant to appoint Mr. Larry Dunaway to the Public Facilities Authority to fill a term that expired on December 31, 2023. This was seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins. All were in favor.
4. Motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins to reappoint Ms. Dora Terry to the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board to fill an appointment that will expire on January 28, 2024. This is a two-year appointment for District 2. All were in favor.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Replacement of Jail Locks, Doors, Door Frames and Hinges at the Meriwether County Jail. Mr. Bill Cawthorne stated there was a pre-bid meeting held at the Jail with five companies attending the meeting, along with Blue Cole, Assistant Administrator, Mike Sarno, and himself and completed a walkthrough. Mr. Cawthorne stated proposals were received from three of those companies. Mr. Cawthorne stated the proposals were due on December 14, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. and were opened by Commissioner Collins, John Gorton, Kristy Gillaspy, Blue Cole, and himself with Matt Moreland of Cornerstone attending. Mr. Cawthorne stated the bids were as follows: Willow Products at $558,491.00, Cornerstone Detention at $435,649.58, and C.A. Owens at $408,700.00. Mr. Cawthorne stated his recommendation would be to go with C.A. Owens. Mr. Cawthorne stated it took him a while to check them out and get all the information back from them, but they were the lowest and best bid. Commissioner Plant asked if this replaced all the jail locks in the original part of the jail. Mr. Cawthorne stated this is in the detention area and they are electric over mechanical locks, replacing doors, door hinges, and door frames in some instances, as well as control panels and door closures. Commissioner Plant stated she knows this is long overdue and she would like to make a motion to accept C.A. Owens at $408,700.00 and asked if this included a warranty for any extended period of time. Mr. Cawthorne stated that he is sure it is for about a year. Interim Administrator Gay confirmed there was a 1-year equipment warranty. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Collins. All were in favor. Mr. Cawthorne stated that all the companies were very reputable and had done work across the United States. Vice Chairman Worsley asked where the funding would come from. Finance Director John Gorton stated that staff recommended funding from SPLOST.

2. City of Woodbury/Meriwether County Jail Inmate Housing Contractual Agreement. Interim Administrator Gay explained that this is a 3-party agreement between the County, the Sheriff, and the City of Woodbury that sets a procedure to allow the Sheriff to house the inmates from the City of Woodbury at a cost of $40 per day. Interim Administrator Gay stated the inmates will be house upon available space to accommodate. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff recommends approval. A motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to accept the 3-party agreement and allow the Chair to sign. All were in favor. Interim Administrator Gay advised Deputy Clerk Allyson Stephens to check the address to make sure it is showing a P.O. Box.
3. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners regarding the Meriwether County Board of Education ESPLOST VII. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the Board of Education sets its millage rate each year but it has to be approved by the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Education has recently had an ESPLOST approved and need the Resolution signed because they are wanting to borrow money on a GO type bond to be paid back with proceeds from the ESPLOST, but also with proceeds from the tax digest. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the Board of Education is asking the Board of Commissioners to approve the levy of this for the next 5 years and subsequent years. Interim Administrator Gay stated this was a little different type of Agreement and he doesn't believe he has seen one like it, but they are asking the County to approve. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the Board of Education is the recommending authority, and the Board of Commissioners is the levying authority. County Attorney Nathan Lee confirmed this and advised this is how it is set up in Georgia law. County Attorney Lee stated there is no risk to the Board of Commissioners. A motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins to accept the Resolution of the Board of Commissioners regarding the Meriwether County Board of Education ESPLOST VII. All were in favor.
4. Intergovernmental Agreement between Meriwether County Board of Commissioners and the Town of Gay for Fire Inspections with a Certified Fire Chief. Planning and Zoning Director Cassandra Sharpe stated that there is not an agreement with the Town of Gay to do any of their inspections. Director Sharpe stated the town of Gay has a need for fire inspections to be performed for events such as the fair and have asked for an Intergovernmental Agreement using Mitt Smith, Fire Chief Inspector to perform the inspections and to be billed monthly for each inspection done by him. Interim Administrator Gay stated this would be only for Fire inspection and not building inspections. A motion was made by Chairman Gene King and seconded by Commissioner Rosla Plant to accept the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Gay for fire inspections. All were in favor.
5. Appoint ACCG 2024 Interlocal Risk Management Agency Contacts. Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens stated that every year there is a need to update the ACCG Interlocal Risk Management Agency Contacts. Deputy Clerk Stephens explained that right now the insurance contact is County Clerk Beverly Thomas. Finance Director John Gorton explained that this is required to receive a discount through the safety program. Director Gorton explained that last year the County received a 7.5% discount which was about $30,000 dollars for having a Safety contact and program. Interim Administrator Gay recommended that Deputy Clerk Allyson Stephens be named the contact for the ACCG-IRMA Insurance contact as well as the ACCG-IRMA Claims Contact, Finance Director John Gorton as the ACCG-IRMA Safety Coordinator, and Human Resources Director Valerie Chambers as the ACCG-IRMA HR Liaison Contact. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to accept the ACCG 2024 Interlocal Risk

Management Agency Contact form as outlined by Administrator Gay. This was seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins. All were in favor.

6. Approval for submission of FY24 RAISE Grant. Assistant Administrator Cole advised that staff has been working on a large transportation grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation and the grant is due on February 28, 2024. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that staff is asking permission for the Chairman to sign the grant prior to February 28, 2024, as the grant is not ready today, but will be ready by the deadline for signature. Assistant Administrator Cole explained that the grant helps to rebuild and restore the transportation network and we are requesting $10,425,000 dollars, broken into four components: culverts to replace 100 culverts over 4 years, gravel 30 miles of roadway, repair 20 miles of roadway, and pave 10 miles of roadway. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that each of those 4 components will help improve our transportation network. Assistant Administrator Cole stated we will match that with some of our currently obligated TSPLOST, SPLOST, and General Funds in the amount of $4,325,000 dollars, over a 4-year period. Assistant Administrator Cole stated this is an amount we are currently spending and helps us support the application although being a Tier 1 County we are not obligated to cost share, but by adding that match the grant becomes an almost $15 million dollar grant instead of $10 million. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that we are receiving support letters from the Board of Education, West Georgia Technical College, CAFI, Three Rivers Regional Commission and possibly a couple more. Assistant Administrator Cole stated this is a very competitive grant and is simply an opportunity for the County with nothing being risked other than what we are already doing on the roads and staff time in preparing the grant. Assistant Administrator Cole stated he will provide a finished draft before submission and the Board should have received a draft in their mailboxes last week that was a draft-draft. Assistant Administrator Cole offered to answer any questions. Chairman Gene King stated it will be a huge blessing if approved. Vice Chairman Adam Worsley stated that if this is approved it will be 2.5 times what we commit to on an annual basis and is a huge opportunity that the Board will be praying to get and is a step in the right direction on what we need to do to get the roads under control. Vice Chairman Worsley thanked Assistant Administrator Cole for his work on the grant. Vice Chairman Adam Worsley made a motion to move forward with finalization and submission of the grant and allow the Chairman to sign. This was seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins. All were in favor.

7. Updated on the Recreation Agreement with the City of Manchester. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff met with County Recreation Staff and then with the Mayor of Manchester and a Council Member about recreation. He feels that both parties will agree on what is a long-term solution but differ on how we get there. Interim Administrator Gay stated the Recreation staff feels that we have a stronger County program right now with more participants than Manchester does, and they do not want to step back with one of the comments being "we've talked about it forever and if we don't do it, it will never get done." Interim Administrator Gay states that the city believes that time to allow both parties to work on the plan for moving forward is the best approach. Interim Administrator Gay stated that he believes both parties would be willing to compromise their position a little bit. Interim Administrator Gay feels that one of the things he would like to see is a structure that will allow teams from both programs play each other this year. Interim Administrator Gay feels that Manchester would accept a reduced dollar amount due to the fact we are already 4 months into the Budget year and 2 months into the Calendar year. Interim Administrator Gay stated his recommendation is more discussion to include a couple of Board members to discuss the matter and come to a resolution and his

recommendation would be to set up another meeting with representatives from Manchester, representatives from County Recreation, and a couple of Board members and staff to attempt to hammer out a solution. Interim Administrator Gay stated that once that is resolved, there is a need to meet with other cities about recreation because he has had another City reach out and want to talk about recreation. The Board determined that Commissioner Rosla Plant and Vice Chairman Adam Worsley would sit in on the meeting with Manchester and County Recreation. Vice Chairman Worsley stated he would like to make a comment on things he has heard and are hearsay in which no one has stated directly to him, but wants to make sure the Board is not making decisions based on the hearsay, but if there is a threat hanging out there of coaches stating they are not going to participate if we go in with Manchester and do the program again, those gentleman and ladies shouldn't be coaches in the first place if that is what it takes for them to walk away from children and set that kind of example for them. Vice Chairman Worsley stated to please don't let that attitude or unprofessionalism taint what we need to do for the children of this County and if they don't believe in that and not willing to do what is right to move the children forward, they will not hold that over his head and risk those children being able to participate and do things to have positive role models that they don't get at home sometimes. Vice Chairman Worsley stated he has heard this and doesn't know how true it is but burns him up that grown men and women would play with children's lives like that. Chairman King stated that the only thing he has heard is that the County went into the agreement about 10 years ago or $1.5 million that has been paid and what is there to show on the county side, such as where is it at and what do we have, but feels both Commissioners would do a good job to sit in on a meeting and get to the best resolution for the kids. Interim Administrator Gay stated that one of the things that does need to happen is when this is resolved and we move forward, we continue to work on a plan for future recreation, because one of the easiest things to do is say we have this resolved and have other things to do and put this on the backburner. Interim Administrator Gay stated if that happens, we will find ourselves at the end of this year's contract and won't have accomplished anything, so once this is resolved we need to move forward with discussion of future plans.

Assistant Administrator Cole stated that he wanted to bring to the Board's attention an update on filming at the Covered Bridge and there are a couple of individuals from the production company here and asked Kyle to come up to the podium. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that before filming started, the production company had a safety engineer come out to the bridge and because it is over 180 years old, there were some concerns that the company had. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the production company came to staff last week with options and opportunities and have found a company that does historical bridge restoration and renovation and brought them to the bridge to inspect and they have proposed repairs that will total around $23,000 dollars. Assistant Administrator Cole stated the production company has graciously offered to reimburse the County for the repairs and introduced Kyle Carey from the production team to speak. Kyle Carey, Production Manager with Bride Lake LLC stated they are planning on doing their filming at the Red Oak Covered Bridge and had a structural engineer come out and look at the bridge from the standpoint of a production company as they may have a different load than the traditional traffic load as interpreted by GDOT. Mr. Carey stated that one of the things pointed out by the structural engineer as over time, whether naturally or unnaturally there are historic wooden pegs in the middle of the cross trusses on the left and right interior of the bridge that have shifted significantly. Mr. Carey stated they contacted a company out of Ohio called the Ryder Group that specializes in historic preservation of historic bridges and they do not work in the area but they recommended Sun Coast Waterproofing and Restoration and also reached out to Mr. Bill Caswell who is the President of the Historic Preservation of Covered Bridges and he was also familiar with Sun Coast and work they had done in the area and has Mr. David Ledford with Sun Coast here today. Mr. Carey stated that his team sees this as working together alongside the County for historic preservation. Mr. Carey stated that they are just guests in Meriwether County and at the end of the day we are here just filming a television show and at the end of the day want to make sure we are good guests and see this as an opportunity to work alongside the County to provide historic preservation to the bridge so we can guarantee that it stands and is beautiful longer than it already has. Mr. Carey thanked the Board for their time and stated he and Mr. Ledford could answer any questions related to the work on the bridge. Commissioner Rosla Plant asked what type of work would be done to the Covered Bridge. Mr. Carey stated that the wooden pegs have shifted outwards on the bridge and what would be done for the most part would be a press that would pull those historic pegs back into place so that the pegs would be even with about 2-3 inches sticking out on each side. Mr. Carey stated a few of the driving tracks were lose that more so than anything creates a tripping hazard for the production company crew which would be secured and there would also be some rotted portions on the uncovered portion of the bridge caused by water damage that would be again, primarily a tripping hazard with the focus being the structural aspect of the bridge. David Ledford with Sun Coast Restoration and Waterproofing stated that their company is out of Norcross, Georgia and one of the main concerns on the bridge was the trunnels as those are a structural component that holds everything together as Mr. Carey stated and some of them are only partially displaced, but some of them are almost all the way through the interior truss. Mr. Ledford stated that the structural engineer suggested the siding be removed and the wooden pegs be hammered back in. Mr. Ledford stated they approach things more gingerly than that and would basically apply a jack on the inside of the bridge and a plate on the backside of the trunnel to slide the trunnel back into position. Mr. Ledford stated that this would stick inside the bridge about an inch or so to give structural capacity back. Mr. Ledford stated the drive-lane boards are of course not from the 1800s and have been replaced over the years with a variety of fasteners holding them down and they would use a galvanized spike similar to the ones he saw at the bridge just to fasten the boards back down. Mr. Ledford stated if there were any boards that needed to be replaced on the outside of the bridge, he has several wood providers that he works with and there is one local that Mr. Carey made him aware of and any board would be replaced with wood that looks as historical as possible. Mr. Ledford brought information from work he had done on Concord Bridge in Smyrna that gets about 10,000 cars per day on it and they were able to completely straighten it back out within 1 quarter inch over the 130-foot span. Commissioner Plant asked Assistant Administrator Cole if he had reached out to the Georgia Historic Preservation. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that we had not done that yet. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we needed to do that. Commissioner Plant stated that it needed to be done because we are designated a national historic structure, at least with the State, and believes it is listed on the national registry, we need to clear it with them before we do anything. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we would need to provide Georgia Historic Preservation with a scope of work and get it approved with them first because we don't want to do anything that would harm that classification, because there will be money available down the road to help maintain the bridge, and this is one reason to bring back to the Board today as there are a lot of moving parts. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if we had a report from the structural engineer yet. Assistant

Administrator Cole stated we have not received that yet, but he is sure they can get that to us. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that is needed with the recommendations and full scope of work to take back to the Ga Historic Preservation. Interim Administrator Gay stated there have been issues in the past where work was done, and a truck hit the board and is surprised it didn't cause more damage than it did. Commissioner Plant asked if this would impede on what the production company's plans are for filming because this seems as if it will fast track to get the clearance in and the State will have to give approval, but there will need to be something in writing showing what will be accomplished, proposed, and whether or not it would meet the state approval. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the County needs the structural engineering report, a proposed correction plan, and agreements between all parties. Interim Administrator Gay stated that he is not sure what the load capacity for their filming would be, but he does know that the bridge is about a 3-ton load capacity as per GDOT and there have been at least 100 people on the bridge on several different occasions having a dinner on the bridge, which was a big fundraiser for the Chamber. Chairman Gene King asked Mr. Carey what type of load is being considered to put on the bridge that as structural engineer came in. Chairman King stated he is glad he came and appreciated his findings. Mr. Carey stated that most of the traffic will be foot traffic and film equipment such as lighting and set dressings. Mr. Carey stated there will be nothing excessive accessing the bridge and certainly not a 3-ton limit. Mr. Carey stated that bringing in a structural engineer is a historical practice to set up rules and regulations for the production company to make sure they are doing everything safely. Mr. Carey stated they operate with a larger safety buffer and don't want to come close to what the bridge states it can hold. Vice Chairman Worsley asked Mr. Carey how fast the Board needed to move to meet their production timeline. Mr. Carey stated that as of right now their filming will take place at a later date and some of that is due to the weather and feels everyone agrees that everything needs to be done properly on the front end before any work begins. Vice Chairman Worsley stated so we do have time to do this the right way. Mr. Carey stated they do, how much time he frankly doesn't know because he doesn't know when it will fall back on the schedule but hopes to continue to move forward. Assistant Administrator Cole advised that Board that this information just came to light on Thursday and the production company has been great at getting the information to them, but this is fairly new to all of us. Interim Administrator Gay stated that he recommends the production company getting the engineers report, a contract from the company, a scope of work, and a letter from the production company stating they will cover the cost, then staff can submit all the information and get that taken care of. Interim Administrator Gay stated the Board meets again in two weeks and if all that information can be gathered for staff to submit to the State and clearance is given, this can be brought back at that time. County Attorney Lee stated the State will also have a list of requirements and he is sure the production company will have all the information. Mr. Carey stated that they will take care of those requirements. Vice Chairman Worsley stated they would like to get all this taken care of as fast as possible because we don't want to lose the opportunity to work with the production company in the County.

8. Discussion of Capital Projects for 2024. Interim Administrator Gay stated that at the Board's Work Session at the end of January, there was discussion regarding non-transportation capital projects and to move forward with the needs, staff will need direction from the Board itself as to what they want to accomplish. Interim Administrator Gay stated that a priority list needed to be established for the year as they are already in mid-February right now and if there are projects that need to get done, we would like to get started. Interim Administrator Gay stated that a project list needs to be established of projects that can reasonably be done this year,

remove any projects that the Board doesn't want to do this year from the list, and schedule a Work Session later to prioritize future projects. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the Courthouse roof dome and steeple have been repaired. Interim Administrator Gay stated there is still leakage when we have heavy rain from the roof below the dome. Interim Administrator Gay stated a flat section of the roof over the records room has been repaired. Interim Administrator Gay feels that a TPO roof like the one done on the jail could be used to replace the roof under the dome with the only difference being the jail roof is flat and this roof is broken up into different sections. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff feels like this is a top priority and something that we really need to do with an estimated cost of around $500,000 dollars, however we don't really know until it is put out for bid. Interim Administrator Gay stated that mold needed to be removed on the 3rd floor and it will be around $150,000 dollars for one floor. Vice Chairman Worsley asked Assistant Administrator Cole why he is specific about one floor and if there was mold on other floors. Assistant Administrator Cole stated he didn't want the Board to think the cost was for the entire Courthouse and cannot say until work starts on the other floors if there is mold. Chairman King stated that the hatch is still leaking, and water is coming out into a buck and this needs to be addressed asap because that dome was supposed to be fixed. Interim Administrator Gay stated the problem with the hatch is finding a piece of equipment to get it up there to repair it as it is very high. Chairman King asked if there was a cover for the hatch. Interim Administrator Gay asked Mr. Cawthorne if there was already a cover made. Mr. Cawthorne stated that a prefab fiberglass piece could be purchased and there is a bowl under the hatch that has a drain that was stopped up and they will get that drain opened. Chairman King stated that is what he is getting at is we are fighting a mold issue, but the rest is still leaking and there is water coming down the walls and on the 3rd floor there is mold and critters and bugs and is disgusting, but once the water leaking is stopped it will take care of the problem. Interim Administrator Gay stated that it will require replacement of the HVAC for the Courthouse as well. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that Principle Construction gave them an estimated cost of $600,00 dollars total for the entire Courthouse or $200,000 per floor. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that Principle Construction is not an HVAC company. Assistant Administrator Cole stated it was a subcontract. Vice Chairman Worsley asked why not just get an HVAC company. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we will and if approved we will put the work out in an RFP and submit to everyone. Chairman King stated that he spoke with maintenance and there was a company out of LaGrange that looked at it and gave price of around $300,000 with a few years warranty, but he hadn't seen anything in writing. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we are not sure but want to make sure this is something the Board wants to do and prepare an RFP and not spin wheels. Interim Administrator Gay stated that his recommendation is to seek bids for the Courthouse roof, remediation of the 3rd floor, and replacement of HVAC on all three floors. Interim Administrator Gay stated Finance Director Gorton has already done some work on identifying funds. Interim Administrator Gay stated another area that needs work is the Jail. Administrator Gay stated the roof has been replaced on the jail, as well as HVAC repairs, and the doors and locks were approved today. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the Jail plumbing needs repair, and a proposal was sent out previously with no response. Interim Administrator Gay stated that Mr. Cawthorne has been working with several plumbing companies and hope to hear back from them soon. Interim Administrator Gay stated based on their estimates the plumbing repair would be around $500,000 dollars. Chairman King stated that he requested an email be sent to Fitzgerald Plumbing and he is saying he hasn't heard anything back. Mr. Cawthorne stated he sent him the original bid proposal and never heard back. Chairman King stated Fitzgerald wanted to do a walkthrough as they do commercial plumbing, and he will try to find out where the miscommunication happened. Interim Administrator Gay stated that another project is the Pathways building and moving the Elections office there. Interim Administrator Gay stated that proposals were received on that a while back and came in at around $500,000 dollars and was presented to the Board and they felt it was too high. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we never got the approval to move forward with a new bid package and the cost estimate, depending on the scope of work could be $200,000 to $300,000 and will need to be addressed. Elections Superintendent Patty Threadgill asked that the Board please put this as a priority as November 24, 2024, is projected to be extremely busy. Interim Administrator Gay stated staff would work on narrowing down the work and developing a new bid package. Interim Administrator Gay stated a little over three years prior, staff began working on the Greenville Recreation park and applied for federal grants to develop a passive park on McLaughlin Road, which included trails, nature trails, green field, playgrounds, pavilion, bathrooms, and a dog park. Interim Administrator Gay stated the grant was for $200,000 dollars and staff proposed an additional $200,000 match plus in-kind services in labor for grading etc. Interim Administrator Gay stated since that time, and once the grant was approved, which was on the second cycle, the cost of equipment including playground equipment has increased drastically, doubling in price from what it was. Interim Administrator Gay stated that this is something that staff would like to know if the Board wants them to move forward with the passive park and we had planned to do the rough grading, and this project must be complete by 12-31-2024. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we can try to reduce the scope of work, however there is a process to go through. Deputy Clerk Allyson Stephens explained that staff had been in contact with the grant coordinator and there is a process to request to reduce the scope of work that included submitting an amendment request and then it being sent to the federal side of the grant for approval, which could or could not be approved. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if the County was in possession of the funds from the grant. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we are not yet and have to send in pay requests for the work and they will send us the funds. Interim Administrator Gay explained that right now it is very expensive and by requesting a modification, we could buy some time on the grant. Deputy Clerk Stephens stated that an extension would have to be filed to request extending the end date of the grant. Interim Administrator Gay stated that plans were to have Public Works do the rough grading, then contract out for fine grading, as it will have an asphalt surface walking trail and bathrooms, with some of the construction work that could be done inhouse however we don't have time to do it inhouse. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff needed some direction on the park as it would be good and have a lot of use, especially during the day. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if there had been a study on this to see what type of use it would get and if it was worth the investment. Interim Administrator Gay stated that no formal study was done, but there are several ladies from different buildings that were walking down the street, but had to stop, and he feels there would be a lot of daytime walkers at the park. Interim Administrator Gay stated that there would be a grassy area and there had been several requests for a playground. Interim Administrator Gay felt that the area would need to be secure, not leaving it open after dark. Interim Administrator Gay stated a lot of work had been put into obtaining the grant and direction was needed from the Board to move forward and schedule Public Works for grading or to modify the scope of work and come back to the Board. Commissioner Plant asked if this part of a larger plan to eventually tie into the ballfields behind Greenville High School, with the school having their own plans in place. Commissioner Plant stated that all of this was to set the foundation of how to move forward in the County with the area being in a central location and the park being just the beginning of that plan. Interim Administrator Gay stated that they did go to the school to see if they would be willing to donate a small triangular piece of property that we could use as in-kind for our match, and they did not want to do that right now. Interim Administrator Gay stated it was designed and set up to where when you pull into the park, the park will be on the left, but the road would be between the County property and the School property, with the road being set out to come off McLaughlin Road and come in behind the school where there would eventually be some ballfields and would actually create a loop in there to come off Roosevelt Highway, but this was just the first phase. Chairman King stated he is of the mindset that anytime we can move forward with something that involves the community and recreation and involving young kids, it is a plus and if we need to move forward to get the grant, he is supportive of that as well. Chairman King stated that he has done projects as a contractor and if you build it, they will come as he sees people all the time utilizing those type parks. Interim Administrator Gay stated the tentative budget of what the engineers proposed is around $1,000,000 dollars and feels this can be cut back substantially with modifying the plan. Interim Administrator Gay stated that one of the things included was a dog park and maybe this needs to be at a different location and not near children. Vice Chairman Worsley stated if we cut items out, we are basically adjusting the original grant which we have to reapply and make amendment changes to. Deputy Clerk Stephens stated that we would have to apply for the amendment with a new scope of work and the reason we are requesting the change and submit it. Vice Chairman Worsley stated with the current cost structure, we are going from an agreement 2-3 years ago of a cost of $200,000 dollar grant with the County matching $200,000 to now costing the County $800,000 dollars to do the full project. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that to him the entire grant needed to be redone to buy ourselves some more time as to him if it couldn't be done in the last three years, how will you be able to get it done by the end of this year and why would we be over 4 times our committed amount because we waited three years. Interim Administrator Gay stated that was not the fault of staff. Vice Chairman Worsley stated he realized that and knew it was due to prices going up because of COVID and feels that by redoing the grant you would buy more time and possibly get more funding and not spend $800,000 as opposed to the original $200,000. Deputy Clerk Stephens explained that if you can extend the grant, that would be the way to go, because if you stop this grant and reapply, there is no guarantee you will receive the grant. Interim Administrator Gay feels that the scope of work could possibly be modified. Vice Chairman Worsley stated it may be worth losing the grant because that is $600,000 dollars and is a lot of money that we could use in other places, and it wasn't able to be done in the last three years. Vice Chairman Worsley understands the importance of the park but feels we could possibly modify it and extend it and get more grant funds. Interim Administrator Gay suggested setting up a conference call and seeing what can be done to modify the work and possibly take out one playground as an example because you are asking for playground equipment, and you would still be putting in a playground. Interim Administrator Gay stated we would investigate what can be done and bring it back to the Board. Interim Administrator Gay asked the Board if there were any other projects they were looking to do and mentioned previous discussion of reallocation of office space and the need for direction from the Board. Interim Administrator Gay stated to move forward and get the paperwork and bids together, staff needs direction from the Board and would highly recommend starting with the Jail, Courthouse, and Elections Office and put together those scopes of work. Vice Chairman Worsley stated he agrees with that and if there is approval needed to go after work for the Courthouse and Jail he is in favor, and doesn't know if the Pathways building is the best facility as there are other facilities that the Board and staff have been discussing and feels there needs to be another meeting to discuss what to do with the Board of Elections and where does it go. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he feels we have quicker and cheaper alternatives. Election Superintendent Patty Threadgill asked if they could be brought in on that discussion. Vice Chairman Worsley stated sure and Interim Administrator Gay agreed that they needed to part of the discussion. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff would look back on the scope of work and what could be reduced because the first one came in a little higher than he would have thought. Vice Chairman Worsley stated in the last meeting there was discussion about the building next door that was almost finished and who we could move there and rearrange, and it may be for this upcoming election, it is a quicker alternative for elections to get in and get set up and work a longer-term solution. Interim Administrator Gay stated there will be a Work Session on future plans and maybe have a plan on where we want to move everyone. Interim Administrator Gay stated he knows we have the tax building downtown that will be an expensive project. Tax Commissioner Deann Cruse asked when there was a discussion if her office could have some input as well. Vice Chairman Worsley stated yes, and Interim Administrator Gay stated input was needed from them as they will know their needs best. Chairman King stated from what he understands Board approval is needed to get the paperwork ready to get bids on the roof at the Courthouse, the Jail, and at least try to get something going with Elections. Interim Administrator Gay stated that was correct. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to move forward on getting pricing and quotes for the Courthouse and Jail Plumbing. This was seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins. All were in favor.

9. Discussion of SUVs for the Sheriff's Office. Interim Administrator Gay stated that the Sheriff's Office has a couple of four wheel drive pick up trucks that were taken out of service that are still good and through some of their enforcement actions have secured an F-350 truck, that is not a duly but the Fire Department has expressed interest in that and it is a very nice truck that is a few years old and only has around 100,000 miles on it. Interim Administrator Gay stated the Fire Department has expressed the desire to have the truck to remove some of their high mileage trucks they have on the road. Interim Administrator Gay stated in doing so the Sheriff's Office has proposed that they would gift over the F-350 and two 4-wheel drive trucks. Interim Administrator Gay explained that what they are looking for is two SUVs that would be outfitted to handle their K9 units and would like to know if the Board would be willing to allow them to gift the three trucks to the County and allow them to have enough dollars in their budget to purchase the two SUVs for their K9 units and the cost is about $50,000 each once outfitted. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if there was money already allocated in the Sheriff's budget for vehicle replacement. Finance Director Gorton stated there is money in SPLOST for public vehicle replacement and staff would be recommending the funding source to be SPLOST. Finance Director Gorton stated that there was no money built into their budget and all capital projects were budgeted through SPLOST. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to accept the three vehicles from the Sheriff's Office and allow them to purchase two SUVs not to exceed $115,000 dollars. This was seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins. All were in favor.

10. Discussion of Road Patching. Interim Administrator Gay stated there had been requests in the past to have contractors pre-qualified to do some work in particularly in the event of heavy rain fall requiring a lot of work on some of the roads. Interim Administrator Gay stated there had been a request from some of the Board members to maybe consider putting together some small bid packages that we could bid out that wouldn't have to be as formal as our LMIG bids which

are millions of dollars. He asked Board members to identify a road in their district that they would like to repaired, so staff could go back out and count potholes and estimate the cost and put together a quick bid package to get that work done. Interim Administrator Gay stated he knows there are some local companies that would do that and getting that bid out would certainly relieve Public Works crews from things they have to do. Interim Administrator Gay stated that if the Board would like to do that, he doesn't need any action today, but maybe at the next meeting if the Board had some roads that would need patching to help the longevity of those roads, they can give us the names of the roads and staff can work up bid proposals. Commissioner Rosla Plant asked if the specifications for whatever patching is done meet a certain standard and with any prior companies that had done work in the past that didn't meet standard, be excluded. Commissioner Plant stated that she understands the Public Works crews are overworked, but we don't need to get into a situation where we are receiving inferior product. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff would require the work to meet certain specifications and would check references and it would ultimately come back to the Board for final approval. Chairman King stated there was a definite need for options to get caught up. Interim Administrator Gay stated that we don't want to leave it open and let companies go patch certain areas because years ago before paving and patching standards were developed, we took proposals on roads, and you don't know what you get in those scenarios. Commissioner Plant wanted to make sure she understood that no action needed to be taken today but to come up with some roads in their district they were interested in having patched. Interim Administrator Gay stated that is correct for each member to come up with a couple of roads in their district they would like patched, and staff will put together a package. Chairman King asked if a motion was needed to proceed. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the Board can bring back roads to the next meeting and in the interim staff will prepare the package and plug in the roads but want a direction from the Board to move forward to prevent spinning wheels. Commissioner Plant stated that she knows she has roads in her District that need to be addressed and if this is a viable option, and there again there was a lot of time spent on Ellis Road and when the bid came in it was so high and don't want to go down that road again especially with the problems they have had in the past. Interim Administrator Gay stated it may be when the bids come back it is a viable option or they may come back and not be cost effective and other options would need to be pursued but is hopeful to get some good proposals and relieve some of the work for Public Works and if it works, we can continue or not. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the County did receive some extra LMIG funding in the amount of $525,000 dollars that was originally requested for Coleman Creek Circle to repair for the detour but didn't want to put $1.5 million on that road so we called GDOT and asked them to put that money towards Luthersville Road, which they did. Interim Administrator Gay stated that as Deputy Clerk Stephens was looking it was noticed that we had not received those funds, but they were requested and came in on Monday. Finance Director Gorton stated that we sent in the invoice for the $1.5 million of County Funds that was already paid on Luthersville Road as this was on the 2023 LMIG project schedule and they reimbursed us for that. Chairman King asked if GDOT was going to help with Coleman Creek since they used it for the detour. Interim Administrator Gay stated he doesn't believe that GDOT will help but he will say the road did not sustain as much damage as originally thought and the way to get help is to ask.

Mrs. Shirely Baker stated that while all the talk was going on about paved roads not to forget about the dirt roads. Chairman King stated he could not comment during her citizen comment, but the Board is 100% focused on dirt roads right now.

11. Chairman to sign the Hazard Mitigation Grant. Interim Administrator Gay explained this is something that has to be signed by the Board every year or every other year and this is a way to deal with emergency situations in the community and is a plan that FEMA will help fund. This is a $30,000 dollar project with the County being responsible for $7,000 dollars. The federal government is going to say you have to have this plan. Interim Administrator Gay stated that staff would like to ask the Board to approve this plan update grant application for FEMA and ask the Chairman to sign. A motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to approve the Hazard Mitigation Grant update and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Interim County Administrator Theron Gay stated we were glad to receive the additional LMIG funding as reported earlier. Interim Administrator Gay stated there will be a Leadership Meriwether Class. This will be conducted at the Administration building and is Government Day for the class and will be held on March 21st, 2024. Interim Administrator Gay explained that the Leadership class will come in that morning, and we will have some refreshments for them and will bring in lunch and go through all operations of the county and take some tours of the various county facilities. Interim Administrator Gay invited the Board members to attend as well as do the presentation if they would like and stated that a PowerPoint presentation will be created, based on things done in the past. Interim Administrator Gay stated he met with recreation and assisted on the review of some subdivision plans. Interim Administrator Gay stated that Georgia Transmission is a utility company, and they are proposing a new one-mile section of 115 KV transmission lines and will have an Open House at the Administration office on March 5, 2024, from 6-8 p.m. If anyone is interested that line will be out at the Industrial Park and will run on the backside of the Industrial Park between the Interstate and our Industries. Interim Administrator Gay stated that is all he has but there is a need for Executive Session for Litigation and Personnel.

Assistant Administrator Blue Cole stated he had a busy couple of weeks and had meetings with the Industrial Authority in trying to secure a client for the Industrial Park and worked with the Board of Education not just on transportation but on some workforce and technology connections. Assistant Administrator Cole stated he attended the Lead Academy with six other members of the County and looked forward to them coming here to let them know what we are doing. Assistant Administrator Cole stated he worked with the recreation discussions and worked with CAFI on some things coming in and it has been a good two weeks.

XV. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Gene King: Chairman King stated he appreciated the staff for stepping up and helping get things done. Chairman King stated that Barry and his crews are working hard and have been responding quickly to take care of issues when they come up. Chairman King thanked everyone for what they are doing and stepping up to the task.

Vice Chairman Adam Worsley: Vice Chairman Worsley thanked everyone for what they were doing, and the recent rains had made it difficult for what they are trying to do on the roads and had eroded some of the work that had already been done and will have to be redone due to 6 inches of rain overnight. Vice Chairman Worsley thanked everyone again for the work they had been doing and stated he was able to attend the IDA meeting for the first time in a while and it was very positive with a lot of exciting news coming out of the meeting.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: Commissioner Plant didn't have anything to report.

Commissioner Emmett Collins: Commissioner Collins thanked the staff and all the employees for the work they are doing, especially on dirt roads. Commissioner Collins stated he attended the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, and they are going to build some picnic tables and in conjunction with the Meriwether County Recreation Department and Doodlum's BBQ there will be a barbecue cook-off in April with all the proceeds going to the Meriwether County Recreation Department. Assistant Administrator Cole asked the date and was advised it would be on April 5, 2024.

Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens made the Board aware she was able to listen to the Legislative update earlier in the week and the State will be proving additional funding that is applied for like the LMIG program, but not called LMIG and there will be no match required for the funding and it can be applied for starting April 1st, 2024 and will be similar to the same amount received for LMIG funding which was around $800,000 dollars. Vice Chairman Worsley stated if we can get those funds and the RAISE grant, we won't be getting so many calls on dirt roads. Chairman King stated that he also saw where they will be making cornbread the official bread of Georgia.

XVI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

There was no report from County Attorney Nathan Lee but there was a need for an Executive Session to discuss Litigation and Personnel.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins to go into Executive Session at 10:32 a.m. to discuss Litigation and Personnel. All were in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to go out of Executive Session at 1:13 p.m. All were in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins to go back into Regular Session at 1:14 p.m. All were in favor. Vice Chairman Adam Worsley stepped out of the room at 1:14 p.m. Chairman Gene King stated no action was taken in Executive Session.

XVIII. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins to adjourn the meeting at 1:17 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Allyson L. Stephens, Deputy Clerk

Date: February 27, 2024