

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 26, 2024
6:00 P.M.

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: County Administrator Jarrod McCarthy, Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, in attendance, Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens, Finance Director John Gorton, and County Attorney Michael Hill

Staff Not Present: Special Projects Theron Gay.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gene King called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by former Finance Director, William "Bill" Gregory.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Commissioner Bryan Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to Adopt the Agenda with the following additions: *Under New Business #10 – Change Plan Administrator with Empower. Under New Business #11 – Discuss County Fireworks for July 6, 2024.* All were in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Proclamation for Bill Gregory: A Proclamation was read for Mr. William R. "Bill" Gregory for his outstanding service to Meriwether County as Finance Director from January 14, 2013, until December 2023. Mr. Gregory was in attendance with his wife Pam and a Proclamation and Flag were presented to him with best wishes on his retirement.
2. Proclamation for Beverly Thomas: A Proclamation was read for Mrs. Beverly Thomas for her outstanding service to Meriwether County as County Clerk from June 9, 2003, until March 31, 2024. Mrs. Thomas was in attendance with her husband Stanley and a Proclamation and Flag were presented to her with best wishes on her retirement.

VI. FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director John Gorton provided the Board with handouts of the bank balances as of 4:00 p.m., March 26, 2024, and all the bank balances are holding good. Director Gorton stated that still listed on the report is the ARPA which will be renamed Opioid Settlement due to classifications from DCA. Director Gorton stated that the money was moved to the General Funds Special Projects Account. Director Gorton provided the SPLOST and TSPLOST commitments and advised with the monthly allocations that will come in on March 28, 2024, the availability to spend in SPLOST will be roughly \$101,000 dollars and approximately \$1.56

million dollars in TSPLOST.

VII. DEPARTMENT HEADS

Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole stated that the Department Heads had a productive week and County Administrator McCarthy was able to attend his first meeting. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that topics of discussion for the Department Head meeting included budgeting, personnel, and general communication.

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENT

Chairman King stated there were three speakers signed up to speak during Citizen Comment. Chairman King read the procedures for Citizen Comment.

1. Karey Murphy – Mrs. Murphy thanked the Board for allowing her to speak on the topic of Recreation. Mrs. Murphy stated the following was her wish list and she is asking the Board to fulfill a 30-year promise of countywide recreation by continuing with the commitment made by the Board to fund and support their own recreation department. Mrs. Murphy provided some historical background, stating during the land acquisition from Greenville High School, \$100,000 dollars changed hands from the Board of Education to the Board of Commission for recreation, with \$10,000 dollars being spent on the drawing of the County's recreation plan and the remaining \$90,000 dollars was absorbed in the General Fund during the time of Arthur Pearson's Chairmanship. Mrs. Murphy stated the land dedicated for the countywide recreation plan to go on was in between Meriwether County Jail and present Greenville High School. Mrs. Murphy stated that Meriwether County Schools, through alumni or SPLOST, was to develop the stadium and the track with the plan at the time being developed for shared use of the athletic fields. Mrs. Murphy stated that her hope, by giving the Board the history of this, helps them to understand why the community of Greenville feels the way it does, given the fact that they would have been within walking distance of this recreational park. Mrs. Murphy stated that we can't undo what has been done in the last 30 years and the only thing we can do is learn from our mistakes. Mrs. Murphy stated her suggestion to the Board is to bring our countywide recreation program to where the program in Manchester is at present day, all the while holding intergovernmental agreement meetings. Mrs. Murphy stated for direction, do we go to a percentage between County and Cities, do we use SPLOST funds, or a stand-alone Recreation SPLOST? Mrs. Murphy stated we all must be invested in this plan for it to work as it will not work otherwise. Mrs. Murphy thanked the Board for their willingness to serve and for listening to her.

2. Susan Beaver of 1490 Panther Creek Road, Luthersville – Mrs. Beaver stated that she is there to speak on her road condition. Mrs. Beaver thanked the Commissioners and felt they seemed to be doing something to accomplish things on the roads. Mrs. Beaver stated the roads are in such bad condition and knows it will take a while. Mrs. Beaver provided pictures of her road to share with the Board as well as Petition that she had signed by the residents that states, "We the residents of Panther Creek Road are requesting our road be made useable by emergency vehicles, school buses, mail service, and our own personal use getting to our homes." Mrs. Beaver stated the creek seems to be flooding more than it ever has and she is not sure if it is because of development in the area or what is causing it, but the ditches have got to be pulled because if not the roads are not going to work at all. Mrs. Beaver stated that she would like to get her road on the list of roads that are considered as work is done in the area. Mrs. Beaver stated that the grade-all for the ditches or other equipment is moved somewhere for one day, used for about 400 feet and then moved back to Greenville. Mrs. Beaver states to her that doesn't make

sense, and she feels they should leave the equipment in one place and keep going with it until they get a road done and not just bounce all over the place. Mrs. Beaver stated that is just her opinion. Mrs. Beaver provided the Board and Administrator with pictures as well as a copy of the petition and thanked the Board for listening.

3. Susan Pritchett of 250 Twin Lakes Road, Gay, Ms. Pritchett stated that she would like to discuss trucks on Flat Shoals Road and stated Flat Shoals Road is a disaster. Ms. Pritchett stated that this is due to the tremendous amount of rain and thanked Public Works for the job they are doing. Ms. Pritchett thanked Chairman King as she stated she brought him a picture of a sign being used in Lamar County that stated no semi-trucks beyond this point and the only thing needed is someone standing there with a pistol pointed at them because it hasn't slowed them down any. Ms. Pritchett stated they also went to Pike County and talked to the Commissioner on that side of Twin Lakes Road, and they put up signs as well and were happy to do so as they had just paved that side of the road a few years ago. Ms. Pritchett stated today that a big red Peterbilt went down the road with a big piece of heavy equipment and crossed Flat Shoals Bridge. Ms. Pritchett stated that at some point that Peterbilt will be parked in the Flint River because the bridge has had it, and DOT has been out to look at it again. Ms. Pritchett stated that she knows there are plans to fix the bridge, but if the truck traffic is not stopped, they will have to fix it a little quicker, because it will look as bad as what happened in Baltimore. Ms. Pritchett stated the bridge is going to collapse and there is a reason why there is a 5-ton limit on the bridge. Ms. Pritchett stated that everybody here has done everything they can do and now the Sheriff's Office needs to get involved or the Department of Public Safety. Ms. Pritchett stated that if the Board would let her, she would sit at the end of the road and she would stop the trucks, but it wouldn't be nice. Ms. Pritchett stated the trucks are tearing up the roads. Ms. Pritchett explained they ride horses across that road and as you come over the hill at the top of the ranch you go down into a depth and recently a large truck was rolling very fast and came over the hill and had they not stopped, the truck would have hit a group of people on horseback. Ms. Pritchett stated she doesn't know what the answer is and feels they have been as proactive as they can be, even stopping one of the container trucks. Mrs. Pritchett wanted to know when it could be discussed as she would make herself available to discuss.

IX. MINUTES

A Motion was made by Commissioner Emmett Collins and seconded by Commissioner Bryan Threadgill to accept the Minutes from the March 13, 2024, 9:00 a.m. Regular Meeting. All were in favor.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

None

XI. APPOINTMENTS

1. Motion was made by Commissioner Bryan Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Adam Worsley to table the Appointment to the Planning Commission to fill an un-expired term that will end on 1-5-2025, District 4. All were in favor.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Pay Scale Update – Finance Director John Gorton provided an update on the Pay Scale explaining that they had spoken with all Department Heads and still have Public Works left to

discuss. Director Gorton stated after that, Finance will work to get the numbers together and will sit down with upper management to go through everything with a rough draft being ready to present to the Board at the first meeting in April. This will give the Board two weeks to look over and address any questions. Director Gorton stated this will then be brought back to the Board for adoption at the last meeting in April.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Appoint County Clerk effective April 1, 2021 – County Administrator Jarrod McCarthy stated that this was something that would be discussed more in Executive Session, and it was good to have on the Agenda because the Board will come out and vote on it. Chairman King asked if this was the norm because with Mrs. Beverly retiring, there had been discussion to appoint Mrs. Allyson Stephens. Commissioner Threadgill stated this was not the norm. Administrator McCarthy stated that if there was no discussion, the Board could take a vote. Chairman King asked if there was any need to have further discussion and if not, did he have a motion. A motion was made by Commissioner Rosla Plant and seconded by Commissioner Bryan Threadgill to appoint Allyson Stephens, County Clerk effective April 1, 2024. All were in favor.
2. Memorandum of Understanding- Evidenced Based Associates, LLC. County Administrator McCarthy stated that this is something that is done every year and is more of a housekeeping item. Administrator McCarthy stated that EBA works with at-risk youth in the area. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Plant to approve the renewal of the MOU with Evidenced Based Associates, LLC, allowing the Chair to sign. All were in favor.
3. Consideration of Purchase of a Caterpillar Motor Grader – County Administrator McCarthy stated that Public Works has been looking at purchasing an additional motor grader and the one presented to the Board in their packet comes with a 7-year powertrain warranty. Administrator McCarthy stated that staff estimated the value at being around \$450,000 dollars with the actual cost at around \$300,000 dollars. Administrator McCarthy stated he feels this is a good deal and from what he understands. Public Works has worked hard to reduce the number of problems and still have some, but this purchase would help Public Works respond in a timelier fashion and cuts down on mobilization costs. Vice Chairman Worsley asked how many certified motor grader operators were employed, because at the last few meetings there were not enough employees to run the existing motor graders. Assistant County Administrator Cole stated he believed there were 3-4 employees. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he needs more than believes, as in his opinion he doesn't see buying it at \$305,000 dollars if we don't have anyone to operate it. Assistant Administrator Cole stated to Vice Chairman Worsley that Public Works has individuals that can operate the equipment. Chairman King asked if we are going to buy this one and leave another sitting because we don't have enough operators to run them. Commissioner Threadgill stated that we did have two on lease and let one go back and asked if the lease was continued or if we owned that motor grader. Finance Director Gorton stated that there were two motor graders that were leased, and one was sent back, and we are purchasing the other through Caterpillar and making monthly payments on it. Vice Chairman Worsley stated he feels there needs to be more data on how many certified motor grader operators we have, how many motor graders we have and their condition, before spending this kind of money. Vice Chairman Worsley feels they need answers to those questions. Commissioner Threadgill stated he is with Vice Chairman Worsley and feels there needs to be more definitive answers, not saying that it is

not a necessary purchase, but if it is not necessary to purchase, the \$305,000 dollars would go a long way on some of the dirt roads to get those where they need to be. Commissioner Threadgill stated that if we do need the equipment, he would like this brought back with some additional data. Chairman King asked if this was purchased, where would the money to purchase would come from. Finance Director Gorton stated that it would come from TSPLOST, where there is \$1.4 million dollars in the bank to spend. Chairman King stated he wanted this on the record. Finance Director Gorton stated that transportation related equipment could be purchased out of TSPLOST. Commissioner Plant asked if we were in danger of losing this purchase if delayed. Finance Director Gorton stated this is under a government contracting quote and to answer her question, probably, because it is brand new and at the cost someone else could possibly pick it up fairly quickly. Commissioner Plant stated that her concern is losing this motor grader and feels that staff should be given the authority to act as long as these questions are answered.

Commissioner Collins asked if the motor grader that had been in the shop was returned yet. Asst. Administrator Cole explained that it is still being worked on and is not back yet. Chairman King stated that he understands Vice Chairman Worsley's concerns but would hate to know that we lost out on this as they typically cost \$450,000 dollars. Administrator McCarthy suggested the Board could approve contingent on him providing the requested information. Commissioner Threadgill made a motion contingent on a call being made to each individual Commissioner in the a.m. confirming the following: how many motor graders we have, how many people we have certified to run them, what do we have there now and how useable and old are the pieces of equipment, and when is the lease complete. Commissioner Threadgill stated that his motion is contingent on a call to each individual Commissioner in the morning on the information received from the questions to be answered. This was seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.

4. Resolution for Recreation GRPA. County Administrator McCarthy explained that this Resolution would be to form a countywide recreation department, still leaving the door open to work with the Cities. Administrator McCarthy stated he understands that the Agreement with the City of Manchester had expired, and this would allow us to make sure the kids could still participate in tournaments. Administrator McCarthy stated that GRPA will have a vote tomorrow and he believes there was an expectation of us pursuing the paperwork. Commissioner Threadgill asked where that expectation came from. Administrator McCarthy stated this is the information he had received. Commissioner Threadgill stated that he did not know there would be a Resolution based on what was discussed at the last meeting and that this was to be discussed with the Cities, based on the Minutes. Commissioner Threadgill stated here we are today asking for the Chairman to sign a Resolution for the creation of something that's been created in the past. Commissioner Threadgill stated there is a Recreation Department for Meriwether County that the Board created many years ago and it was also established as a Recreation Advisory Board, and he is perplexed as to why there is a Resolution here tonight prior to what was discussed in our open meeting of having discussion with the Cities prior to anything like this. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that according to the Minutes from the last meeting, "Mr. Theron stated there has to be a sanctioned program with advantage to being a member of GRPA." Vice Chairman Worsley stated in the last meeting the motion was made to approve the membership to the GRPA. Vice Chairman Worsley stated they were under the understanding having been told during all the conversations that we have a countywide recreation program, however in the Resolution, it does say that any other resolutions, acts, or ordinances in conflict with this Resolution shall be, and they are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby repealed. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that this Resolution would replace the existing one. Chairman King stated that the

State came down and did an inspection of the County facilities to include the ballfields in Woodbury at Lake Meriwether, and liked what they saw and stated that Meriwether County was blessed. Chairman King stated that this was brought to his attention from Theron and Randy Carter, because in order for the kids to participate this year in any tournaments or games other than their regularly scheduled ball games, they had to have some type of letter to show intent to join GRPA. Chairman King stated the Resolution does not mean the Cities are being cut out and the way it was explained to him and the Board was this Resolution was to initiate and get the countywide recreation up and going and there would still need to be a 5-member Advisory Board that would participate and speak with each City to discuss future input from them and what they are going to contribute and what the County is going to do and so forth. Chairman King stated the main reason for this tonight was to go ahead and join the GRPA because when they start playing ball in the next two weeks it makes them official and registered with the State of Georgia and not just out there playing and going home. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he asked in the last meeting was Mr. Carter a county employee and was told he was for the Recreation Department, so the Resolution tonight is a lot to digest. Commissioner Threadgill stated he didn't recall the Board authorizing the Chair to sign a letter of intent, but he is hearing that the Chairman signed a letter of intent. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that this letter explained our intent to join GRPA once we had the conversations with the Cities. Commissioner Threadgill asked if the Board authorized that letter to be signed. Asst. Administrator Cole stated to his understanding yes. Chairman King stated that to his understanding from the State there is a deadline. Commissioner Threadgill stated to Chairman King that this is not what he is asking, and this Board did not authorize a letter to be signed by the Chair for any intention. Deputy Clerk Allyson Stephens stated that in the last meeting the motion was made to allow the County to join GRPA, and in doing that there was a letter of our intention because GRPA is ready to make a vote in their regularly scheduled meeting tomorrow. Commissioner Threadgill asked if there was a vote made by the Board allowing the Chairman to sign that. Deputy Clerk Stephens stated the motion was made to join GRPA. Chairman King stated that is where the letter came into play. Commissioner Threadgill stated a letter of intent is a different situation. Chairman King stated that they required the letter and if we make a motion to join and they stated okay, in order to join they need this letter and that would fall under the same thing. Commissioner Threadgill stated it sounds to him that Chairman King had a lot more conversations than the rest of the Board. Chairman King stated that he may have, as staff called him. Commissioner Threadgill stated that it didn't matter if Chairman King was the Chair or not that this was a Board of 5 and he is put in his place by this Board. Chairman King stated he did not vote for that and was called in and asked to sign the letter. Commissioner Threadgill stated to Chairman King not to throw the chair part in his face and to sit there. Chairman King stated he is the Chair and sitting there. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if a new Resolution was needed to replace the Resolution we currently have in place. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that we were never able to find the earlier Resolution that stated a County Recreation Department had been made after going back as far as we could in the records. Asst. Administrator Cole stated he was hoping and believed that the letter would be enough, but Mr. Theron may have received additional information that stated we needed the Resolution as we have typed out now, but it is very clear in our directions to go back with the cities and communicate with them and work towards it and this is simply to allow us to join GRPA. Commissioner Threadgill stated that in 2011 a Recreation Director was hired, and the Recreation Advisory Board was created. Asst. Administrator Cole stated he would go back and look to try and find it. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if they would be voting on this

tomorrow. Deputy Clerk Stephens explained that GRPA would be having their regularly scheduled webinar tomorrow and that staff will be attending. This is for GRPA to vote to allow Meriwether County to join and the deadline is May 7th. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he suggests tabling this to the next Meeting and staff bringing prior Resolution for comparison. Commissioner Threadgill stated that he is all for countywide recreation and we need to move forward to that but he doesn't like coming to the meeting and having something laid in front of him that he had absolutely no idea about, because it is hard to sit there and make an educated vote on something that is thrown in his face being told that it is the next day this has to be done and this is not okay with him. Commissioner Threadgill stated he needed more information presented to him to make an educated decision and he is all for countywide recreation and feels we need to move forward to that. Commissioner Threadgill stated that just because he is from Manchester doesn't mean he supports everything going through Manchester. Commissioner Threadgill feels that we need to move toward countywide recreation. Commissioner Threadgill stated that he cannot move forward with this and did not know there was a letter of intent being signed by the Chair and doesn't like this and in his opinion, there are conversations happening with certain members of the Board that are not happening with all members. Commissioner Threadgill stated this is his 12th year on the Board and there has never been a situation to where this has happened. Administrator McCarthy stated that if it helps any, Mr. Theron did write in the Resolution with the intention to meet with the Municipalities. Commissioner Threadgill stated he understood that but he does know there was a Resolution in place in 2011 before he took his seat because a Director was hired and it did not work out as he was not the fit for Meriwether County, but believes there is a Resolution that was done in 2011 and he would like to see what that Resolution states to make sure the new Resolution doesn't take something away that is in place, or it could be the new Resolution offers more. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to table the Resolution for GRPA to the next meeting. All were in favor.

5. Massengale Mill Road no through truck designation. Administrator McCarthy stated this was brought to the attention of staff by Mrs. Faye Perdue. Administrator McCarthy stated that there are signs on that road and Mr. Theron agreed that trucks are tearing up the road. Administrator McCarthy stated that County Clerk Beverly Thomas investigated this and could not find a record of the road previously receiving a no through truck designation and those existing signs could have been put up by someone. Administrator McCarthy stated that the staff recommendation would be to designate Massengale Mill Road as a no through truck designated road. Chairman King stated that the Board agrees that a major issue is roads and citizens are coming to speak regarding the trucks, but he is hearing that the D.A. is throwing out a lot of the cases and is not sure if it is because of technicalities. Chairman King spoke to the D.A. and the Deputy has to have everything just right or the case doesn't get prosecuted. Chairman King stated there needs to be focus in the future of how we hold these people accountable and make them start paying fines, realizing that Meriwether County is not going to tolerate it anymore. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Collins to designate Massengale Mill Road a no through truck designated road. All were in favor.

6. Intergovernmental Agreement between Meriwether County and the City of Warm Springs for Development Plan Review and Inspection Services. Planning and Zoning Director Cassandra Sharpe stated that before the Board is the IGA for the City of Warm Springs. Director Sharpe stated that they had normally been handling Warm Springs uniquely and they would take in their building permits, collect the money and then send the County the permits and their office

would go inspect the sites and this was getting very confusing. Director Sharpe stated that she spoke with the City Clerk and the Mayor agreed to sign the Intergovernmental Agreement allowing their office to do all the inspections and permitting and collecting the money. Director Sharpe stated that this would make everything a lot easier and would be consistent with other cities such as Greenville and Luthersville. Vice Chairman Worsley asked County Attorney Hill if he had reviewed this. County Attorney Michael Hill stated that this is consistent with Greenville and Luthersville and those were perfectly fine. County Attorney Hill stated he didn't see anything any different with this one. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Collins to accept the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Warm Springs for Development Plan Review and Inspection Services and allow the Chair to sign. All were in favor.

7. Request to apply for a Grant sponsored by the Rachel Ray Foundation in partnership with the Atlanta Humane Society. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that this is a grant that Director George Richmond found with two options, the first being a \$30,000 dollar option to install a new roof and replace some interior walls and the second option is for \$50,000 dollars and will include a cremation unit in addition to the roof and interior walls. Assistant Administrator Cole stated there is a match that is a small match amount required and after speaking with Director Gorton and Director Richmond, the funds are available in the Animal Shelter account. Asst. Administrator Cole explained if the Animal Shelter is awarded the \$50,000 dollar grant, then the match would be about \$17,000 and if they received the \$30,000 dollar amount, the match would be \$1,750. Animal Service Director George Richmond stated to the Board that this was to put the grant in front of them and let them know that if awarded the \$50,000, there were funds to match the \$17,000 to complete the project. Director Richmond stated that the Shelter would automatically be considered for all three options, with the state selecting 4 shelters for the \$30,000 dollar option and 1 shelter for the \$50,000 dollar option. Director Richmond wanted to make sure that the \$17,000 would be approved if awarded the \$50,000. Commissioner Threadgill stated it was a big difference between the \$17,000 match for the \$50,000 grant and the \$1,750 for the \$30,000 grant. Commissioner Threadgill asked if Director Richmond knew what a new cremator would cost. Director Richmond stated the one that they are looking at is \$35,000 dollars and is big enough for deer and small livestock that Public Works can use for picking up off the road, where we didn't have that before. Director Richmond stated that this would be able to be used countywide. Commissioner Threadgill stated so a commissioner would fit in it? Chairman King asked Director Richmond if other counties could pay to use our cremation machine. Director Richmond explained that that could be an option later on to bring in front of the Board as well as allowing other law enforcement agencies that do not own a cremation machine to burn narcotics. Director Richmond stated this could be a revenue source. Finance Director Gorton explained that what Director Richmond needs is the authorization to use \$17,260 to come out of the Animal Shelter restricted funds for the Animal Shelter project. Director Gorton explained that there is almost \$49,000 dollars in the bank, and they were able to identify another almost \$30,000 through the audit that will have to be reclassified giving him close to \$80,000 dollars in the account. Commissioner Threadgill confirmed with Director Gorton that most of those funds are donations. Director Gorton stated that is correct. A motion was made if the \$50,000 dollar option is approved for the \$17,260 to be paid for the match out of the Animal Shelter Fund by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.

8. EMA Mutual Aid Agreement. Administrator McCarthy stated that this is being requested from Brin Jones and is a statewide agreement in the event of a large-scale disaster, allowing other governments to come to each other's aid. Administrator McCarthy stated this is done every year and he has been assured by Director Jones that the agreement lines out who comes to who's aid and what their needs are and who has what resources. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Collins to approve the EMA Mutual Aid Agreement and allow the Chair to sign. All were in favor.

9. Request to move forward with the purchase of 2 SCBA Fill Stations: EMW-2021-FG-09877: Assistance to Firefighter Grant. Administrator McCarthy explained there was an attachment provided by Chief Stephens with the original projection of what the total cost of the project would be for this equipment and essentially the cost went up. Administrator McCarthy explained that staff is stuck in the position and understands that we need the breathing apparatuses, and it will cost some additional money. Administrator McCarthy explained that he spoke with Chief Stephens and there were costs for electrical wiring, and this was a known part of the project, which we just received the amount for and it is \$7,264.36, but we just got the amount. Deputy Clerk Stephens explained this was so the equipment would fit and accommodate any electrical modifications. Administrator McCarthy stated that staff needs a motion to proceed at the higher cost. Commissioner Plant asked if we had received the grant. Deputy Clerk Stephens explained that the grant was received in the amount of \$94,545.45 and the original cost to the County for the pieces of equipment was \$34,149.29 which has now increased due to the cost of the equipment going up and now the County responsibility is \$68,190.19. Commissioner Collins asked why the price had gone up so much and if it was because of waiting so long. Vice Chairman Worsley asked when the grant was initiated. Deputy Clerk Stephens stated she was not sure of the exact date. Administrator McCarthy stated that he is not familiar with the project from start to finish however, after dealing with grants it does happen sometimes that by the time the applications are all reviewed and they have time to select the applicants that have the true need, the prices go up. Finance Director Gorton stated with a grant number 2021, the funds were probably not received until 2022 and is about to expire. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that is the reason for his question. Finance Director Gorton stated that the grant was never funded or acted upon. Commissioner Threadgill stated that the grant was approved. Deputy Clerk Stephens stated that the grant was approved and there was some confusion about if this needed to go out to bid or not. Commissioner Threadgill stated that it did not have to go out for bid for the grant. Deputy Clerk Stephens explained there was some confusion on that. Administrator McCarthy stated that he has dealt with a firefighter grant before that was for turnout gear and having all the gear in stock was a very big problem. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he hoped that Administrator McCarthy could understand the concern with the grant being applied for in 2021, approved in 2022, and a bid not given until March 2024. Commissioner Threadgill explained that he remembers when these fill stations were approved. Commissioner Collins explained that the project must be completed and operating with all funds dispersed by 09/01/2024. A motion was made by Commissioner Collins to table this request until the next meeting. This was seconded by Chairman King. Finance Director Gorton stated that everything must be spent by 9-1-2024, but the quote expires on 3-30-2024. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that the quote could go up more. Chairman King stated the motion was on the floor to table until the next meeting. Voting in favor of the motion were Chairman Gene King, Vice Chairman Adam Worsley, and Commissioner Emmett Collins. Voting opposed were Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Bryan Threadgill.

10. Change Plan Administrator with Empower. Deputy Clerk Allyson Stephens explained that herself and County Clerk Beverly Thomas are the current Plan Administrators for Empower and with the upcoming retirement of County Clerk Thomas, there needs to be a Plan Administrator Change to remove County Clerk Thomas and add Finance Director John Gorton to remain in checks and balances. Deputy Clerk Stephens explained that Human Resources Director Valerie Chambers processes the retirement every two weeks and cannot be a Plan Administrator on the account. Commissioner Threadgill asked who the Plan Administrators would be. Deputy Clerk Stephens stated the administrators would be herself and Finance Director John Gorton. Finance Director Gorton stated that Finance doesn't handle anything on the HR side. Commissioner Threadgill stated he was asking because the Clerk needed to be an administrator. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill to approve the Plan Administrator change for Empower from County Clerk Beverly Thomas to Finance Director John Gorton. All were in favor.

11. County Fireworks for July 6, 2024. Commissioner Collins stated that last year the County gave the City of Manchester \$12,500 for fireworks and because the County used to have fireworks at Lake Meriwether, he reached out to Southern Sky Fireworks in Sycamore, GA. Commissioner Collins stated that he asked the gentleman about doing fireworks on July 4th and he stated he could do that but the cost would be \$20,000 dollars and he could do them until July 4th, 2026. Commissioner Collins stated he reached out to the City of Woodbury, City of Greenville, and the Chamber of Commerce and they are all willing to help and feels some of the businesses in Woodbury would help also. Commissioner Collins stated that he would like to have activities for the kids and possibly some food trucks. Commissioner Collins stated that the vendor stated he has \$5 million dollars' worth of insurance. Commissioner Threadgill asked if Commissioner Collins had reached out to the City of Manchester as they may want to help. Commissioner Collins stated he had not reached out to them because he figured they were going to do their own fireworks, but if approved he could reach out to them. Commissioner Threadgill stated that they had made the statement a couple of years ago that if the County went back to doing the event that they may like to join in. Commissioner Threadgill stated that \$12,500 is the part the County did but the City of Manchester spent \$50,000 to \$60,000 dollars for that event. Deputy Clerk Stephens advised that she had reached out to the County insurance company and explained that the vendor that oversaw the fireworks would have to provide insurance and a certificate of liability and would need to add the County as an additional insured party. Commissioner Threadgill stated that if there are food vendors then the Health Department would have to sign off as well as the County Attorney reviewing the information. Planning and Zoning Director Cassandra Sharpe explained the permitting process as well as the Probate Judge having to sign off. Administrator McCarthy stated that he understood the permitting fee would be waived for the County. Administrator McCarthy stated he also reached out to some other counties to get an idea of their contract for such events and can use their template and this may save some time. Chairman King suggested that the two top teams in baseball possibly come out and play a game before the event, for the citizens to see what recreation is going to be like and what they are doing. Chairman King stated that it would give the citizens something else to do and watch. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that it sounds like a great idea and feel like it is something that needs to be done but would require more planning. Commissioner Threadgill asked if there was a deadline to get back to the vendor. Commissioner Collins stated that he would basically pencil in the date. Commissioner Threadgill stated that Lake Meriwether is the perfect location and feels if the cities are reached out to and want to be involved it would be a

great opportunity to bring the entire County together. Commissioner Collins made a motion to table any further discussion to the next meeting. This was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that there is a lot of work that would need to be done to bring more information. Chairman King asked who would reach out to Manchester and the cities. Commissioner Collins stated that he would reach out to Manchester. Director Sharpe asked the cost. Vice Chairman Worsley stated the cost was \$10,000 dollars for 882 shells. Commissioner Threadgill stated if the Board is able to get all the cities involved and get that in order then the Board will be able to say yes let's do this and everything else would have to fall into place with legal. Chairman King stated that at least the Board is extending out an invitation to the cities. Chairman King suggested to Commissioner Collins that he could give the vendor a courtesy call and let them know that the Board is going to make a decision in two weeks, and they could possibly pencil in the date. The motion passed and all were in favor.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

County Administrator Jarrod McCarthy stated he has continued to reach out and meet people, as there is a lot to meet, but he has been able to meet most of the County people and will continue to reach out to the Cities. Administrator McCarthy stated that he has also started to email out his contact information to others that he has not been able to meet. Administrator McCarthy stated he has been attending a lot of meetings and has attended most of the pay scale meetings and commended Finance Director Gorton for the job he is doing on the pay scale. Administrator McCarthy stated that he met regarding the tax digest schedule, and everything seemed to be on track with that. Administrator McCarthy stated that he attended an Agenda Management Software training course, and it looks very promising. Administrator McCarthy stated he was able to attend a Department Head meeting and it was great to be able to hear about the individual departments. Administrator McCarthy also attended Leadership Meriwether and was glad to be able to be a part of that and enjoyed the enthusiasm from leaders throughout the County. Administrator McCarthy stated he attended a pay scale webinar that went over strategies to achieve the pay scale and attended a DNR webinar for a grant that Asst. Administrator Cole is working on. Administrator McCarthy provided updates to include the 2023 LMIG being 90% complete as well as work starting on the TSPLOST project for Beulah Evans Road and the County receiving the first invoice on the work. Administrator McCarthy stated that Asst. Administrator Cole has started to schedule meetings to discuss the upcoming TSPLOST with the cities. Administrator McCarthy stated that staff is looking to address the request from the previous meeting regarding speed bumps on Mt. Pilgrim Road and he and staff had been out to Caldwell Road to assess how to best address the storm water on the road. Administrator McCarthy stated he did speak with Mr. Barry regarding reflective gear for Public Works and was assured by him that Public Works did have sufficient reflective gear. Administrator McCarthy stated that in the past when he has worked with rural local governments there are a lot of small things that he likes to check off and make sure are in place and Meriwether County has done a good job in having those things in place and it shows a lot of forward thinking by the Commissioners and staff.

Assistant Administrator Blue Cole stated that he spoke with Mr. Carter with Recreation, and they have 6 age groups and 17 teams playing on the fields in Woodbury and the season will begin on April 6, 2024, and run through May 17, 2024. Assistant Administrator Cole stated that he is working on a 319H grant that he will bring to the Board at the next meeting, and it is due by

April 30th. Assistant Administrator Cole stated this will be to work on the water quality coming off the County dirt roads. Assistant Administrator Cole explained that sedimentation and silt get into the water and you can't fish or swim in it. Asst. Administrator Cole stated the focus will be on the Chattahoochee side where a lot of the sedimentation is. Asst. Administrator Cole stated he will bring more details because the grant will pay for training, materials, and supplies. Administrator Cole stated that Fire Chief Stephens received money from the State from the Fireworks Excise Tax and will receive \$25,000 dollars that they will use for turnout gear and will probably be able to get 4-5 sets. Asst. Administrator Cole stated he attended the Keep Meriwether Beautiful meeting, and the cleanup is coming up on April 27th. Asst. Administrator Cole stated on April 8th there be a Prevent Child Abuse Georgia event at the Warm Springs Medical Center.

XV. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Gene King: Chairman King stated that staff was doing a great job, even though the rain keeps coming and most of the calls are asking for help, but at the same time most pause and thank Public Works for the work they are doing. Chairman King reminded everyone that on June 22nd the Cotton Fairgrounds will host a Country Music Festival with Alabama, The Marshall Tucker Band, Diamond Rio, and two or three others. Chairman King stated that tickets are still on sale with over 3,000 tickets being sold during presale. Chairman King stated this will be a huge event bringing people down to see Meriwether County. Chairman King stated there will also be a one-day turkey hunting competition event with vendors and live music on April 13th 2024. Chairman King stated that people can register as a team and go out and hunt that morning and check in by 3:00 p.m. that afternoon. Chairman King stated there will be a substantial money valued prize to the largest bird or largest beard. Chairman King stated this event is going on in other states and has grown significantly and Blake Monroe and others have gotten together to promote the event. Chairman King stated that he, Commissioner Collins, and Asst. Administrator Cole went to Atlanta a couple of weeks back for the ACCG Legislative Breakfast and was glad to see that the County will be getting back \$1,013,000 dollars with no match for roads. Chairman King stated this is definitely a blessing for Meriwether County to address some of the issues on the dirt roads and ditches.

Vice Chairman Adam Worsley: Vice Chairman Worsley thanked everyone for what they are doing and stated that he was getting some good feedback, although it is raining again and he has had several emails and complaints, however mostly people are appreciative of the things that are being done.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: Commissioner Plant gave a shout out to Elections Superintendent Patty Threadgill and her staff at Elections as it was a pleasure to meet with Secretary of State Brad Raffensberger yesterday as well as Liz Hausmann the Community Initiative Director with the Secretary of State's office. Commissioner Plant stated that Ms. Patty was presented with the EAGLE award which stands for Georgia Election Administration Golden Leader and Excellence Award. Commissioner Plant stated that it was very nice to hear all the compliments as we knew Patty did a great job, but to be recognized at the State level and to have the County support from surrounding Counties was very heartwarming. Commissioner Threadgill stated there were other Election supervisors from surrounding Counties that came to back Patty and show their support and that really said a lot to her. Pictures were put up on the screen in the Meeting of the

Presentation of the award to Elections Superintendent Patty Threadgill. Commissioner Plant stated that the Keep Meriwether Beautiful Spring Cleanup is April 27th, 2024 and there is a list of the dumpster locations to include: Durand at the old fire station, Gay City Hall near the Community Building, Public Works in Greenville off County Farm Road, Luthersville City Hall, 420 Magnolia Lane in Manchester, across from the old store in Rocky Mount at their usual location, Eleanor Roosevelt School on Parham Street in Warm Springs, 193 Dogwood Lane at the Woodbury Fire Department, and Lone Oak will have their location at the Turkey Run Landfill from 9 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Commissioner Plant encouraged everyone to participate and get the trash cleaned up. Commissioner Plant stated the Cotton Fair is the following weekend in Gay. Commissioner Plant stated that she will be participating in Harris County for the Opioid ACCG meeting and hopes to be back in time for a reception for Mrs. Beverly Thomas.

Commissioner Emmett Collins: Commissioner Collins thanked the staff and all the employees for the work they are doing. Commissioner Collins stated that out at Lake Meriwether we lost Mr. Robert Lovett as he stated it was time to hang it up and asked if anyone knew anyone that might be interested in taking care of the lake to please let him know. Commissioner Collins stated that the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board already discussed online campsite reservations and he will have more information for the Board at the next meeting.

Commissioner Bryan Threadgill: None

XVI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

There was no report from County Attorney Michael Hill, however there was a need to go into Executive Session to discuss Litigation.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made to go into Executive Session for the purpose of Litigation by Commissioner Threadgill at 7:29 p.m. This was seconded by Commissioner Collins. All were in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Collins to go out of Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. All were in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill to go back into Regular Session at 7:43 p.m. There was no action taken in Executive Session.

XVIII. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman King announced the Future Meetings prior to Executive Session.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Commissioner Bryan Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Emmett Collins to Adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Approved by: Majority Vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Allyson R. Stephens, County Clerk

Date: April 10, 2024