MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 28, 2024
6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Chairman Gene King, Vice Chairman Adam Worsley, Commissioner Rosla Plant, Commissioner Emmett Collins, Commissioner Bryan Threadgill
Commissioners Absent: None
Staff Present: County Administrator Jarrod McCarthy, Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole, County Clerk Allyson Stephens, Finance Director John Gorton, Theron Gay, Special Projects, and County Attorney Nathan Lee
Staff Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Gene King.

II. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to Adopt the Agenda. All were in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS

1. Chairman Gene King read a Proclamation naming April 2024, LifeLink National Donate Life Month. National Donate Life Month in Meriwether County is to encourage all residents to consider giving life through organ and tissue donation and to sign up for Georgia's organ and tissue donor registry by visiting www.DonateLifeGeorgia.org. LifeLink® of Georgia is the non- profit organization dedicated to the recovery of organs and tissue for transplantation therapy in Georgia, with a mission to honor donors and save lives through organ tissue donation.

VI. FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director John Gorton provided the Board with the Bank Balances, current as of 3:00 p.m. today. Director Gorton stated that all the funds are holding steady. Director Gorton was able to get the $3.5 million dollar fund for Special Projects verified by the State and is waiting on the paperwork to come in to move those funds to the Investment Pool. Director Gorton stated the Hosting Fees did come about a week after the last meeting, and they were requested to be sent by FedEx. Director Gorton stated that with the committed balances to SPLOST, the SPLOST account is -$766,369.37 and the TSPLOST balance is at $1.15 million ready to spend. Director Gorton stated SPLOST, TSPLOST, and LOST allocations will come in on Thursday.

VII. DEPARTMENT HEADS

Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole stated that Animal Control had a good visit from the Atlanta Humane Society. Public Safety is working on an AED grant along with Finance. Asst.

Administrator Cole stated that Public Safety also took delivery of the new ambulance with chassis installed. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that the Recreation Department will have 5 all- star teams playing baseball and softball on June 6-8, with a couple of teams playing in Carroll County, a couple of teams in Heard County, and 1 team in Macon County. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that Football and Kickball registration will start very soon. Chairman King stated that he had spoken with Animal Control Director Richmond regarding the possibility of obtaining a net gun, due to so many dogs being dumped in the County, and not being able to get too close to them. Theron Gay, Special Projects congratulated County Clerk Allyson Stephens on her recent graduation from the Certified Public Manager program through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Mr. Gay thanked County Clerk Stephens for her accomplishment and her service to Meriwether County. Finance Director Gorton advised the Board that the invoice for the $100,000 dollars for the Flat Shoals Bridge Project came in from GDOT and has been paid out of TSPLOST.

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENT

Chairman Gene King read the procedures for Citizen Comment.
Brian Hudson of 7364 Rocky Mount Road stated that he would try to address his concerns within three minutes, but if he could not, he would like to meet with all 5 Commissioners outside the meeting at a time of their choice. Chairman King stated that they couldn't all meet at one time as that would be a quorum. Mr. Hudson stated that he has several different topics to discuss. Mr. Hudson stated he took a ride through the County and went through several buildings. Mr. Hudson stated he visited the jail and the Courthouse that he states is falling apart. Mr. Hudson stated there is yellow caution tape around the post at the courthouse where concrete is falling off the building. Mr. Hudson would like to know why there is concrete falling off the building and why the County is giving $25,000 dollars for fireworks and the centerpiece of Greenville is falling apart. Mr. Hudson stated the Jail has had hundreds of thousands of dollars thrown at it and asked the Board how much money they are going to keep spending on it. Mr. Hudson asked if there are grants that can be obtained to build a new jail to be better than what we have. Mr. Hudson stated he understands they are inmates, but they have rights too. Mr. Hudson stated that every time a department head comes to the Board and gives them an idea of what they want, the Board always goes with the lesser things. Mr. Hudson stated the Board is making comments regarding department heads, about how, if they do not employ enough people, they can't get the money they deserve. Mr. Hudson asked, "How is that right, does it make any sense to anybody?" Mr. Hudson stated it didn't make any sense to him and that this fell on the Commissioner's feet and not the department heads. Mr. Hudson stated these people are out here busting their tail every single day for nothing and aren't being paid anything and need some money. Mr. Hudson stated that if the Board wants to keep good employees in this County, then the Board needs to start paying them that way. Mr. Hudson stated that is what needs to happen and stated that at whatever convenient time the Board has, he has plenty more he wants to talk about and would rather not do it in the meeting.

Suzanne Pengelly of 619 Pinecrest Drive, Manchester stated that she would like to invite Meriwether County to join the City of Manchester and the Manchester Development Authority in hosting the Independence Day celebration on July 3, 2024. Ms. Pengelly stated that with the County's help last year, and the help of a small events team, they were able to create an incredible event. Ms. Pengelly stated that they had lots of vendors, including food and beverage trucks as well as helicopter rides, kids' activities, and two flyovers with pilots joining and spending time with the citizens. Ms. Pengelly stated there was an incredible band with high energy that played nonstop 80s music and their grand finale. Ms. Pengelly stated that they couldn't have done it without the help of the County. Ms. Pengelly stated that the event was very positive, and people attended from all surrounding areas. Ms. Pengelly stated that they enjoyed the event and let them know. Ms. Pengelly stated that last year the late Judy Foster Pike came and asked the Board for help. Ms. Pengelly stated that Judy asked her to serve on the MDA, and she had the pleasure of working with her for a while before her passing. Ms. Pengelly stated she still serves as the Vice Chair. Ms. Pengelly stated that she would like to extend the opportunity to participate with them in hosting the event. Ms. Pengelly stated all the County would have to do is share in the cost, and they would do everything else. Ms. Pengelly would like to see the County's participation in memory of Ms. Judy Foster Pike. Ms. Pengelly stated this would be for the well-being of both Manchester and Meriwether County, and she looked forward to hearing from the Board.

Collette Berreyesa of 17919 Main Street, Woodbury stated she is a long-time resident of Meriwether County and holds a Master's in Administration-Gerontology, graduating from the Gerontology Institute at Georgia State University just 2 years ago. Ms. Berreyesa stated she is coming to the board to introduce a countywide senior center. Ms. Berreyesa stated that currently 13.6% of the population is over the age of 64 and that meriwethercountyga.gov reports that 21.1% of the county's population live in poverty and within 5 years the numbers are expected to explode. Ms. Berreyesa stated the importance of a senior center to the community is exponentially essential to the survival of its seniors. Ms. Berreyesa stated that as a Meriwether County Elected Official their fundamental job is to function as policymakers who are in charge of the responsibility of providing assistance to local government services that are designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens. Ms. Berreyesa stated that her responsibility as a gerontologist is to advocate for seniors. Ms. Berreyesa stated at this time there are extremely limited services that have been set in place in Meriwether County for its seniors. Ms. Berreyesa stated that the Board must understand when the population gets older it becomes imperative to keep our older generations physically and emotionally healthy, because there is potential for our system to become overburdened, like never before, financially and supportively. Ms. Berreyesa stated that studies show that keeping seniors self-reliant and, in their homes helps to keep them out of the system and helps them to live longer. Ms. Berreyesa stated this puts focus on services such as senior centers to keep our older generations active. Ms. Berreyesa stated that our seniors deserve classes, programs, events, resources, and even a good hot meal. Ms. Berreyesa stated that the possibilities of services that would be provided are endless. Ms. Berreyesa stated she has working knowledge of local, state, and federal programs, in addition to other funding. Ms. Berreyesa stated that by her side are the state's top gerontologists who all share her passion to help the betterment of the older population who reside in her community. Ms. Berreyesa stated that together we can change Meriwether's grim situation of what our seniors face, including social isolation, hunger, and lack of accountability. Ms. Berreyesa stated the older population will have a much brighter outlook with the help of all the County Commissioners. Ms. Berreyesa asked the Board to pray policy, and make her the director of a countywide senior center. Ms. Berreyesa stated the population of Meriwether County deserves so much more than they are receiving today. Ms. Berreyesa stated she is here before the Board as a representative for each and every senior, for their dignity and their well-being. Ms. Berreyesa asked the Board to look into their hearts to enact a policy change that is so desperately needed, because tomorrow it will be you, me, and our family facing these shortcomings. Ms. Berreyesa stated that she cannot express the importance of making the change for our seniors, ensuring they are able to age gracefully in their homes.

IX. MINUTES

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Collins and seconded by Commissioner Plant to accept the minutes of the May 7, 2024; Work Session as presented. All were in favor. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Collins to accept the minutes of the May 8, 2024; Regular Meeting as presented. All were in favor. Commissioner Threadgill abstained.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Case #24-006 – Request from Herbert Crawford to rezone parcel 073A-028 – 15.08 acres from RR to NHC and parcel 073-011-002-2.25 acres from RR to NHC for the proposed use of a lay down yard and storage for grading company. District 2 - A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to open the Public Hearing at 6:23 p.m. All were in favor. Director of Planning and Zoning, Cassandra Sharpe, asked that the Hearing be tabled because Mr. Crawford, the applicant, wasn't able to be in attendance. County Attorney Lee stated the proper procedure is to continue the Public Hearing. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to continue the Public Hearing until the June 25, 2024, Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. All were in favor.

2. Case #24-007 – Request from Deborah Brady to rezone parcel 091-0005-003 – 10.0 acres from RD to RR for the proposed use of a kennel. District 1 - Director Cassandra Sharpe stated that Ms. Brady went before the Planning Commission the previous week and wanted to get rezoning done. Director Sharpe stated that there is a moratorium right now, but Ms. Brady would like to get the rezoning done so that once that moratorium is lifted, she can start to build her kennels and is still about a year out from doing so. Director Sharpe stated that Ms. Brady has 10 acres that are currently zoned RD and has asked to be rezoned A-1. Director Sharpe stated that staff recommendations are as follows: A-1, RR, and LDR, can all be used for kennel use. Director Sharpe stated after doing some research, the 10-acres should be under RR-Special Use as a kennel, because A-1 requires 25 acres to be considered. Director Sharpe stated that Ms. Brady will not be able to do anything until the current moratorium is lifted. Director Sharpe stated that Animal Control Director, George Richmond, is good about the possible rezoning of the special use and would be the one to approve the kennel, before a permit could be issued. Director Sharpe stated that her understanding with the Planning Commission is the recommended approval as Ms. Brady is planning to have 16 lbs. and under dogs. Ms. Brady was in attendance and stated that she lives at 542 Wilson Road in Luthersville. Ms. Brady stated that she wants to be a small-scale preservation breeder of a fairly rare breed of border terrier. Ms. Brady stated that they are small dogs and plans to have at most a couple of litters per year. Ms. Brady stated she is at least a year out from a litter, due to health testing, trying to be a responsible breeder. Chairman King asked Ms. Brady about the moratorium and if she would be okay with the requirements and definitions after the moratorium is lifted. Ms. Brady stated that whatever that is would be fine, and it would be a small-scale kennel. Ms. Brady stated she would welt the puppies in the house. Ms. Brady stated that the litters are usually 5–6 pups. County Administrator McCarthy reiterated that

from the previous meeting the dogs were roughly about 16 pounds. Ms. Brady stated they were about 14–20 pounds. Administrator McCarthy asked Ms. Brady if she would be licensed by the state as well. Ms. Brady stated she would. There was no one signed up to speak from the audience in opposition or in favor of the request. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Plant to close the Public Hearing at 6:28 p.m. All were in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to accept the request from Ms. Brady to rezone parcel 091- 0005-003 – 10.0 acres from RD to RR for the proposed use of a kennel. All were in favor.

3. Case #24-008 – Request from Chad Smith to rezone parcel 054-003-005 – 3.5 acres from RR-to-RR Special Use for proposed use of a clubhouse. District 2 - A motion was made to open the Public Hearing at 6:29 p.m. by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Collins. All were in favor. Director Sharpe stated that Mr. Smith has 3.5 acres that are RR and though he thought he would need to go into NHC, after she researched this, staff recommendations were to rezone RR Special use instead of NHC. Director Sharpe stated that if zoned NHC it would stay that way and transfer with the land, however with RR Special Use it would not. Director Sharpe stated the reason she chose the clubhouse is that Mr. Smith wants to use this nice facility for his family, friends, and anyone that would like to join as a member to have retirement parties, birthday parties, weddings, any small event with less than 50 people. Director Sharpe stated this could not be done as NHC because of the acreage and that is the reason they are trying to have a special use only. Director Sharpe stated the Planning Commission did not recommend the rezone, because they felt that Mr. Smith would not need a permit at all. Director Sharpe stated her recommendation would be for special use and Mr. Smith does have the fee that would be charged to be a member, no loud noise, no activity after midnight, and no alcoholic beverages would be sold on the premises. Mr. Chad Smith stated that he would like this opportunity to move a lot faster, and he realized there are a lot of people to notify. Mr. Smith stated he started out in 2021 in Planning and Zoning, speaking with staff and was in CUVA and realized they couldn't break CUVA to make it worth their while to work then. Mr. Smith stated that since they started the process, he learned that for an event center, it required 35 acres. Mr. Smith stated that this is a very small spot and is a 40x40 building with a lean-to that was added on with a restroom and kitchen area, no cooking. Mr. Smith wants an opportunity to allow people to use their space and enjoy Meriwether County. Mr. Smith stated that they love it in Meriwether County and want to extend that opportunity to friends, family, employees, and members of the group. Mr. Smith stated, with that being said, he would hope the Board would allow him the opportunity. Chairman King asked if it would require a business license. Director Sharpe stated it wouldn't require a business license, but it does require a fee yearly for the club, similar to a hunting club. Director Sharpe stated that the County does charge a yearly fee for clubs. Director Sharpe stated that Mr. Smith is charging a fee, not for profit, but to be able to cover his expenses for electrical, water, and taxes. Chairman King asked if there was anyone there to speak against the request.

Adam Hand of 684 Wilbur Keith Road stated that he lives "sort of" across the street from their event. Mr. Hand stated that Mr. Smith had come before the Board before and it was denied. Mr. Hand stated that they are still having events and had one this past Saturday with loud music playing and squalling tires when people were leaving. Mr. Hand stated he has been where he is for 30 something years and it is a peaceful and quiet neighborhood. Mr. Hand stated he is not for all the loud music and tires squalling when people are leaving.

Franky Whitlock of 2154 Wilbur Keith Road stated he has been at his residence for 36 years. Mr. Whitlock stated that he didn't know Mr. Smith and doesn't have anything against him. Mr. Whitlock stated it is a residential place, and he couldn't see it working in that location. Mr. Whitlock felt like Mr. Hand and stated that you can't listen to music there, because the place is so small. Mr. Whitlock stated that if it was back off the road more, he could maybe understand. Mr. Whitlock stated that Director Sharpe stated that no alcohol would be sold there. However, we all know what that means, as there will be alcohol brought in. Mr. Whitlock stated he didn't know Mr. Smith but he is the 3rd longest employee in the County and has worked for the County for a long time. Mr. Whitlock stated that Mr. Smith may be a good person, but if you allow one in, it will start a domino effect. Mr. Whitlock stated that if you allow one, you can't deny another. Mr. Whitlock stated that we have had clubs in the past and have had loud music, fights, stabbings, shootings, and murder. Mr. Whitlock stated that he is not for the rezone as it is a residential area and too small. Mr. Whitlock stated he didn't have anything against Mr. Smith, but he is not for it.

Paul Gable from 1582 King Road stated that the east line of his property hits the west line of Mr. Smiths. Mr. Gable stated that with what Mr. Smith wants to do with family and friends, there is no permit needed. Mr. Gable stated he has friends and family over to his house all the time, and sometimes he is not there. Mr. Gable stated he didn't make a clubhouse of it, and he could change his barn to one if he wanted. Mr. Gable stated he doesn't see why this would be rezoned, when there really is no need to, unless he is charging fees for weddings and so forth. Mr. Gable stated if your family comes over, and you want to collect money for it, ask them when they leave to give you some money, but he doesn't feel a clubhouse is needed to do that.

Mike Gable of 1379 Wilbur Keith Road stated he moved to the area about a year ago from Coweta County. Mr. Gable stated it is a nice, quiet residential road and he has two new neighbors. Mr. Gable stated they moved here for peace and quiet and Wilbur Keith Road is a residential area.

With no one else signed up to speak for or against the request, a motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Plant to close the Public Hearing at 6:38 p.m. All were in favor. Commissioner Plant stated this is in her district and she would like to express concern about it being residential and with a limit of 50. She is inclined to agree that you would be able to easily get 50 family and friends over and wouldn't need any kind of special permit. Commissioner Plant stated that she is not understanding fully why we would go this route, because she is thinking about previous cases in the County where there have been problems with clubhouses. Commissioner Plant stated they may start out small, but the next thing is problems with alcohol, late hours, and disruption of the peace. Commissioner Plant stated this is a residential area, and she is not convinced on it. Commissioner Plant stated this was nothing personal against Mr. Smith, but she wants to listen to the residents that live around the area. Chairman King stated that he agrees with Commissioner Plant and was confused, because he doesn't think there are any Ordinances or laws that say families can't come over. Chairman King stated that he witnessed 20–30 cars over the Memorial Day weekend at a residence and feels unless they are disturbing the peace, there is no permit required to do this. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Collins to deny the rezoning request at this time. All were in favor.

4. Case #24-009 – Marvin & Carol Montgomery to rezone a portion of their property, parcel 133 039 001, from A-1-to-A-1 Special Use for the proposed use of a cell tower. District 5. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Collins to open the Public Hearing at 6:40 p.m. All were in favor. Director Sharpe stated that Mr. Spence is coming before the Board on behalf of the applicants to request a zoning change from A-1-to-A-1 Special Use to install a Verizon Wireless, 245-foot self-supported tower, surrounded by a 70x70 compound. Director Sharpe stated that Meriwether County will have 10 feet of vertical space, reserved for their use at no less than 120 feet above the ground level. Director Sharpe stated the applicant meets all requirements and the staff recommends approval, and the Planning Commission also recommends approval.

Mr. Greg Spence of 86 Bull River Bluff Drive, Savannah stated that he is happy to be back in front of the Board. Mr. Spence stated that Verizon is looking to build a tower with a 240 ft radiation center, 245 ft with a 10ft lightning rod. Mr. Spence stated this will bring the tower to 255ft overall. Mr. Spence stated that this tower will be for four carriers and Meriwether County is one of those carriers that is allowed space on the tower for advanced E-911. Mr. Spence stated there were no existing structures that were going to be able to meet Verizon's objectives of the 240ft radiation center, which is the minimum required they need to be able to provide the extended coverage and capacity for this portion. Mr. Spence stated that the only thing that they asked the Planning Commission, was that there be a landscape buffer if it was ever needed and the woods that were surrounding it were cleared and there was a need for the landscape buffer. They could then, at that point, if they were contacted by the County, put the landscape buffer in. Mr. Spence stated it is mainly if trees are planted, the bigger trees will drown out the new growth. Mr. Spence stated there was a request from the Planning Commission that if the tower were vacant for more than 18 months, that the tower be pulled down. Mr. Spence doesn't feel this will be an issue as Meriwether County's equipment would probably be the last equipment on this tower at some point in the long term. Mr. Spence stated they are leasing a 100x100 lease area, which is a 70x70 compound. Mr. Spence stated the tower doesn't emit any noise and once the tower is constructed there will be regular maintenance vehicles once per month to check on the facility to make sure there are no problems. Mr. Spence stated there would be a hurricane fence, with security wiring, as per the code. Theron Gay with Special Projects stated there was discussion of the removal of the foundation of this down to 24 inches below grade if the tower is ever removed, because it will be a lattice- type tower and the foundation is going to be substantial. Mr. Gay asked that this be lowered down 24 inches below ground level. Mr. Gay also stated that the County should be allowed to co-locate equipment, allowing County Public Safety Equipment to be placed on the tower, at no cost to the County. Mr. Spence stated that is correct and as part of the lease agreement, it requires them to remove the footings below grade and the only cost to the County for co-locating would be for the structural analysis if the County wanted to put additional equipment on the tower, just to ensure the equipment didn't over stress the tower at that time. Mr. Spence stated that otherwise, there would be a footprint allowed for county usage inside the compound and the RAD center, but for any additional equipment, the cost would be around $1,800-$2,500 for the structural analysis, and it would take about two weeks. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that all the items being discussed, such as potential landscape buffer, 18-months no use removal, when that happens, the foundation be dropped to 24 inches, and the County being able to install and use it for no cost, is in the contract? County Attorney Lee stated that these conditions would need to be stated in the motion and there is no contract needed if the Board sets conditions. Mr. Gay stated that the conditions that are needed are a section of the tower to be designated for county use for public safety equipment, at no cost, with 10ft of vertical space reserved, land scape buffer, removal after 18 months of no use and if removal happens, the foundation is removed to 24-inches below grade. Chairman King asked if the footings would be ground-level. Mr. Gay stated that there would be a large foundation, and they would be responsible for lowering it 2 feet and covering it back up if the tower is removed. Chairman King asked if there was anyone that would like to speak in opposition to the request or in favor of the request. There was no one in the audience to speak in favor or in opposition of the request. Director Sharpe stated that staff recommendation would be for approval with the following conditions: the company follows the landscape buffer ordinance as required in the future, if the tower is abandoned, the company has to remove it 24 inches below grade, if the tower is not used for 18 months, it has to be removed, and the company has to reserve 10 feet of vertical space for the county to co-locate equipment at no cost. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to close the Public Hearing at 6:49 p.m. All were in favor. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Worsley, with the conditions outlined by Planning and Zoning Director Cassandra Sharpe, to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. Voting in favor were, Chairman King, Vice Chairman Worsley, Commissioner Plant, and Commissioner Threadgill. Commissioner Emmett Collins abstained. The motion was approved.

5. Ordinance Amendment – To Amend the Meriwether County Official Code of Ordinances Chapter 4 – Alcoholic Beverages to establish rules, regulations, and fees for the sale of distilled spirits by the package, as approved by Referendum on March 12, 2024. A motion was made to open the Public Hearing at 6:51 p.m. by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley. All were in favor. Mr. Theron Gay, Special Projects stated this is a lengthy ordinance and this was voted on by the citizens. Mr. Gay stated that staff had gone back and tried to rework the Alcohol Ordinance. Mr. Gay thanked all the staff that helped in the process. Mr. Gay stated that after reviewing the changes, it took somewhat of a rewrite of the Alcohol Ordinance to accommodate distilled spirits. The following were changes discussed:

Sec. 4-3. License categories added *f) Distilled spirits for sale by the package.*

Sec. 4-5. License requirements and qualifications, updated:

4.5-(6)… or issued unless the location within such area of the county is, at the time such application is made, located within *an appropriate* zoning designations – permitting such use.

4.5-(7)… No license for the sale of wine, *distilled spirits* or malt beverages by the package shall be issued where the outlet for such sales is located within 100 yards of the property line of any church building, school building, educational building, school grounds, or college building existing at the time of the application.

Sec. 4-9. Restrictions and prohibitions. Updated: (l) It shall be unlawful for any delivery to be made to and/or sales be made outside of the outlet. It shall be unlawful to sell or dispense

alcoholic beverages from drive-in or service windows *except for alcoholic beverage package sales.*
Sec. 4-12. Suspension or revocation of license, updated: (12) Any license shall automatically expire on December 31 of each year *unless in accordance with current regulations.*
ARTICLE II. MALT BEVERAGE AND WINE; ORIGINAL PACKAGE
Sec. 4-35. Type of retail outlet. – Original language referenced as (A) – Beer and wine may be sold at retail by the package, only in outlets maintaining 75% of the floor space and storage area in a manner which is devoted principally to the retail sale of other foods, groceries and general merchandise. Added *(B) If outlet is licensed for the sale of distilled spirits by the package, then beer and wine may be sold by the package without floor space requirements for other food, groceries, or merchandise.*
Updated reserved section numbers: 4-39-4-*45*
ARTICLE III. *– Changed to -DISTILLED SPIRITS; ORIGINAL PACKAGE* (Sections 4-46 – 4-58 were added):
Sec. 4-46 . License fees. The license fee for a license to sell distilled spirits by the package shall be paid to the Director of Community Development, in the amount as set forth from time to time by the Board of Commissioners, by certified
or cashier's check at the time of the filing of the original application in the amount as set forth from time to time.
Sec. 4-47 . Excise tax on the sale of distilled spirits – original package
The county, in addition to other taxes levied by the state, does hereby levy an excise tax of $0.22 per liter on distilled spirits sold by a wholesaler to retail outlets in the county and a proportionate tax on the same rate on all fractional parts of a liter. Said tax is imposed upon wholesalers and is payable on a monthly basis as set out under section 4-135.
Sec. 4-48. Type of retail outlet.
Distilled spirits may be sold by the package only in outlets properly licensed in Meriwether County. No distilled spirits by the package shall be sold at retail except in retail establishments devoted exclusively to the retail sale of alcoholic beverages by the package. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the retail sale within these establishments of liquid commodities and mixes normally used in the preparation and serving of distilled spirits.
Sec. 4-49. Hours of Sale.
Retail package stores shall engage in the sale of distilled spirits only between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 11:45 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and between the hours of 12:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. on Sunday. No package distilled spirits may be sold on Christmas Day or Thanksgiving Day. The sale of distilled spirits is allowed on election days, provided the outlet is not within 250 feet of polling place.
Sec. 4-50. No consumption on premises.
It shall be unlawful for any person to consume any alcoholic beverage on the premises licensed for the sale of distilled spirits by the package and it shall be unlawful for any licensee to open for, or break the package for a purchaser and/or permit the consumption of alcoholic beverages on said premises.
Sec. 4-51. Listing of prices
Licensees shall indicate plainly by tag or labels on the bottles or containers, or on the shelf immediately below where the containers are placed, the prices of all distilled spirits offered for sale.
Sec. 4-52 . License issuance for distilled spirits package sales-Retail building and inventory

requirements.

a) General regulatory licensing and procedures of distilled spirits package sales shall conform to Article I of Chapter 4 Alcoholic Beverage of the Meriwether County Code of Ordinances.

b) The building where the business will be conducted shall be a minimum of 2000 square feet storage and display area. For purposes of this chapter, cooler space shall be considered storage area and spaces such as offices, mechanical rooms, janitorial rooms, breakrooms, and bathrooms counts towards minimum square footage requirements. Dealers for the sale of distilled spirits shall maintain a minimum inventory of at least $50,000.00 in distilled spirits available for sale. The licensee shall submit to the business license director annually reports in a form approved by the business license director of evidence that the required inventory is being maintained.

c) No retail license for the sale of distilled spirits by the package shall be granted under this chapter unless the premises to be licensed is, at the time the application is contemplated by the Board of Commissioners, located in proper zoning districts as set forth in the Meriwether County Zoning and Development Ordinance subject to specific limitations of the respective districts.

d) No premises shall be licensed for the sale of distilled spirits by the package within the prohibited distances set forth in section 4.5 of this chapter.

e) No person, group, or entity with similar members, including family members, shall have an interest in more than one license for the package sale of distilled spirits issued by the county.

Sec. 4-53 . Maximum number of package retail dealer licenses permitted for distilled spirits.

a) Subject to subsection (b) below, the county will not issue more than five licenses for the retail sale of distilled spirits by the package.

b) If at any time and for whatever reason, the number of active licenses for package retail sale of distilled spirits falls below five, then the county shall accept applications for and issue such additional licenses for the retail sale of distilled spirits by the package so as to bring the total number of active licenses for the retail sale of distilled spirits by the package to five.

Sec. 4-54 . Coin-operated or amusement machines prohibited on premises.

No retail dealer of distilled spirits shall permit on the premises any slot machines of any kind or character or any coin operated machines or any machine operated for amusement purposes.

Sec. 4-55 . Lighted electric advertising signs on distilled spirits establishments.

No licensee operating premises wherein package distilled spirits are sold shall operate lighted electrical signs or devices advertising such beverages except during the hours that such products are being offered for sale to the public.

Sec. 4-56 . Stock to be kept on premises; only one public entrance permitted; premises to be open to view.

All distilled spirits possessed by a licensee under this article shall be kept in the package store. No retailer's place of business shall have more than one public entrance which must be open on a public street.

Sec. 4-57 . Access to other establishments prohibited; windows to face on same street as entrance

No package store shall be operated in conjunction with or open into, or have access to or from any restaurant, lunchroom, dining room, dancehall, or other store or business of any

kind or character. The windows in every
package store shall face the same public street faced by the entrance to the package store and such windows shall not be obstructed or obscured in any manner, including posters and lighted or unlighted advertising of products.

Sec. 4-58 . Signage

Any exterior or interior sign must follow the sign ordinance set forth in the Meriwether County Code of Ordinances.

Secs. 4-59 - 4-64. Reserved. (Updated)

The remaining Article designations were re-numbered:

ARTICLE IV. ON-PREMISES CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES – *changed from Article III to Article IV -*

ARTICLE V. PRIVATE CLUBS – *Changed from Article IV to Article V*

ARTICLE VI. WHOLESALERS – *Changed from Article V to Article VI*

ARTICLE VII. DOMESTIC AND FARM WINERIES- *Changed from Article VI to Article VII*

ARTICLE VIII. FARM BREWERIES – *Changed from Article VII to Article VIII*

After continued discussion regarding the changes, there was no one in the audience or online that wanted to speak in favor or in opposition of the Ordinance Amendment. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Collins at 7:08 p.m. to close the Public Hearing. All were in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Collins to accept the Ordinance Amendment. All were in favor.

XI. APPOINTMENTS

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Approval of Wellness Program:** Finance Director John Gorton stated that at the last meeting he forgot to discuss the Wellness Program during the insurance discussion. Director Gorton stated that there are currently 120 out of 165 full-time employees on the medical plan, which is 73% of the County employees. Finance Director Gorton stated that the staff is recommending a wellness program that is roughly $30,000 dollars with Anthem allocating $15,000 dollars to use towards it. Director Gorton stated that by doing this we will be able to educate our employees on what needs to be done when they get their biometric screenings and helping them achieve a healthier lifestyle and reducing claims. Director Gorton provided literature from EHG. Commissioner Threadgill confirmed that Anthem would be providing $15,000 dollars towards this. Director Gorton said that was correct and the County's responsibility would be $15,250, based on the number of employees that would fall into the categories they would be screening on. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if that would be paid out of the General Fund. Director Gorton stated it would be paid out of the General Fund under Employees Other Benefits. A motion was made to approve the Wellness Program by Vice Chairman Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.
2. **Confirmation of County paying Insurance Premium Increase for Employees from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025**: Finance Director Gorton stated that when this was originally presented, staff were given the incorrect data from NFP and instead of 81 employees on the County insurance, there were 120 employees on the County insurance. Director Gorton stated that for the coverage for the three remaining three months of the fiscal year, the cost would be

$176,583.00 and there is $225,000 dollars left in the budget, so we are covered for fiscal year 2024. Director Gorton stated the estimated additional cost for FY25 would be $566,500.00. Director Gorton stated that it is with all 120 employees covered with no additional costs for the employees, leaving their cost at $149.50 per month for single coverage. Director Gorton stated that staff recommendation would be approval of this with hopes of retaining our employees and bringing that number down with the implementation of the wellness program. Chairman King asked who would be promoting the wellness program and educating employees to help get the cost of claims down and so forth. Director Gorton stated that after open enrollment a wellness committee will be formed, encouraging every employee that enrolls in the insurance to participate in the wellness program. Director Gorton stated employees can't be forced but can be encouraged. Commissioner Threadgill wanted it noted that with the amount of $566,500 dollars and 120 employees that are actually on the insurance, it is increasing what the County pays each year to $4,720 dollars per employee. Commissioner Threadgill stated that if this is based on 2,080 hours that the employee is working each year, that averages out to $2.27 per hour to the employees' pay. Commissioner Threadgill stated that there is an increase on the backend that the County is taking on. Vice Chairman Worsley had concerns regarding the incorrect data given to the County by NFP, resulting in almost a quarter-million-dollar increase. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if this could be tabled until the next meeting. Finance Director Gorton stated that open enrollment is scheduled for June 10-16th. Chairman King asked County Administrator McCarthy what the recommendation would be. County Administrator McCarthy stated staff recommendation would be approval. Commissioner Threadgill stated there really isn't much of a choice at this point and a lot would be put in jeopardy if this is tabled or not moved on at this point. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill to move forward and approve the County paying the insurance premium increase for employees from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. This was seconded by Commissioner Plant. Voting in favor were Chairman King, Commissioner Plant, Commissioner Collins, and Commissioner Threadgill. Voting opposed was Vice Chairman Worsley stating that he wanted to be on record that he didn't want to hurt the employees.

3. **Approve Contract with Southern Sky, LLC, with Chair to sign for Fireworks on July 6, 2024**: County Administrator McCarthy stated the contract was available in the packet for the Commissioners for consideration and there were some negotiations with Southern Sky about the content in the contract, and they worked with staff on that by removing indemnifying language that was of concern regarding holding the company harmless and not seeking restitution for certain things and the company removed the language. Administrator McCarthy stated that Southern Sky also softened language on any payment for postponement or cancelation. Administrator McCarthy stated that if the County did have to postpone due to weather, they would be responsible for payment of 25% of the contract. Administrator McCarthy stated this is unfortunate, but when based on weather, it is typically a game-time decision, and the company has to mobilize. Commissioner Threadgill asked if it was 100% definite that this event was taking place with everything lined up, and all clearances from the health department on food. Administrator McCarthy stated some sponsorship money has been collected and there is an update to the firework event for the Board. Administrator McCarthy stated that the staff hasn't committed money, but the plans have progressed with everyone assigned to their task. Administrator McCarthy stated that a traffic plan has been developed for the permit and research has been conducted for what is required. A motion was made by

Commissioner Collins and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to approve the contract with Southern Sky, LLC with the Chair to sign for fireworks on July 6, 2024. All were in favor.

4. **Approve Band Contract with Chris McDaniel, LLC, with Chair to sign for Fireworks on July 6, 2024**: County Administrator McCarthy stated that this is another contract that was trimmed back a little to get the language right and thanked the County Attorneys for their help in reviewing the contracts and keeping everyone on track with time. A motion was made by Commissioner Collins and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley with the stipulation that changes requested by legal are made. Commissioner Collins stated that he thought changes had already been made. Administrator McCarthy stated they were. Commissioner Threadgill stated he understood there was a motion and second on the floor, but wanted to know if the payment was coming out of Lake Meriwether or what fund it was coming out of. Chairman King stated that it should come out of the $25,000 the Board approved. Finance Director Gorton stated that it was coming out of the General Fund. However, Lake Meriwether had the funds to cover the event as well. Chairman King called for the vote. All were in favor.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Consideration of moving billing provider for EMS from ELEVOS to ESO**: Finance Director John Gorton stated that the current EMS billing provider is ELEVOS, and staff is recommending the change to ESO, pending legal review sign-off and allowing the Chair to sign. Fire Chief Danny Stephens stated that by moving from ELEVOS to ESO, he would no longer have to communicate with a sales rep by email. Chief Stephens stated that ESO offers an online platform that will allow him to view the status of EMS bills, payments that have been made, the ability to upload death certificates, and patients and clients will have the same access to the portal, allowing them to log on and view what their insurance has paid. Chief Stephens explained that the new system will streamline the entire billing process as well as provide services on the fire side to include fire reports and the ability to track maintenance of facilities and apparatuses. Chief Stephens stated he has been questioned several times before the purchase of trucks and ambulances on how many times current vehicles have been worked on and the cost of the repairs. Chief Stephens stated this system will allow staff to track the repairs and costs for repairs, as well as when the truck is taken out of service and put back in service. Chief Stephens stated the current billing company gets 5.2% of the collections they take in and that will increase to 5.85% with ESO, which he feels is very reasonable. Chief Stephens stated there is an annual fee of $18,685 dollars for the fire tracking portion of the software and the company cannot increase that amount by more than 3.5% each year. Chief Stephens stated he has the money in his budget, and they have been going back and forth with this for quite some time. Chief Stephens stated last year the governor removed the requirement to pay the EMS licensing fees. Chief Stephens stated that he was paying $18,685 in licensing fees every year and that money can be used for the new program as he already has it in his budget. Chief Stephens explained that the system also provides grading to ensure that each provider is tracked to make sure they are obtaining identification and insurance information. With the new system, the company feels collections will go up 7%. Chief Stephens stated the new billing platform would be very beneficial. Vice Chairman Worsley asked Chief Stephens if he had the money in his budget to pay for it and verified that with Finance Director Gorton. Commissioner Plant asked if EMS was under a current contract. Chief Stephens stated it expired and is month to month. Commissioner Plant asked when the change would go into effect. Chief Stephens stated it would be about a 90-day

transition. Finance Director Gorton stated that by state law a 90-day notice is given, and this is the reason to make it contingent on legal review and a 90-day notice being sent. Commissioner Plant asked if the new platform would be able to track what equipment we have as well as the working condition of the equipment. Chief Stephens stated it would. Commissioner Plant also asked if the system would be able to track supply usage as well. Chief Stephens stated it would be instrumental in that aspect as well because he is working with a company that are providing lockers with RFID tags that will communicate with the reports showing what was taken out and allowing them to itemize and keep track. Commissioner Plant stated it sounded like an improvement and made a motion to approve the change from ELEVOS to ESO contingent on review from legal and the 90-day notification period. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

2. **Intergovernmental Agreement for Development Plan Review, Permitting, Inspection Services, and Code Enforcement - Town of Lone Oak with Chair to sign:** Planning and Zoning Director Cassandra Sharpe stated that the Intergovernmental Agreement for Development Plan Review, Permitting, Inspection Services and Code Enforcement with the Town of Lone Oak has expired. Director Sharp stated that the Town of Lone Oak has already signed their portion and is requesting the County to sign. Director Sharpe stated that nothing has changed from what the County has been doing for the Town of Lone Oak, and this is just to update the Intergovernmental Agreement. Theron Gay with Special Projects stated that there is an outstanding issue that the County has been trying to work with Lone Oak on for an extended period of time and staff would like the Town of Lone Oak to work with the County to get the outstanding document signed, while the County is working with them to get this current IGA signed. Mr. Gay stated that his recommendation would be approval with the Town of Lone Oak working with the County to get the existing document signed which involves the lease on the fire department property. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill for the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Chair to sign, based upon Lone Oak signing the additional contract the County has been waiting for Lone Oak to sign. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley. All were in favor.

3. **TSPLOST Renewal Process:** Theron Gay, Special Projects stated that in the Board's packet there is an Intergovernmental Agreement and Referendum Resolution for TSPLOST, with the documents being updated to include the new distribution formulas, based on the 2020 Census. Mr. Gay stated the first step in the process would be to set up a meeting with all the cities to discuss projects for inclusion in TSPLOST and reach an agreement on the projects as well as the distribution percentages. Mr. Gay stated that once that process is complete, with the IGA signed, the Board of Commissioners would need to approve the Referendum and ask the Board of Elections to place the question on the ballot for the November 5, 2024, election. Mr. Gay stated that staff wanted to update the Board on what staff had been doing, and that legal had reviewed the documents. Mr. Gay stated that informal meetings with staff and individual cities would start taking place next week and then a time would need to be considered to have a called meeting with the Board and each city to go back over all documents and discuss projects. Mr. Gay stated there are certain advertisements for this process. Mr. Gay stated the deadline to have this done is the end of July, but he would like to have it completed by the end of June. Mr. Gay stated a lot of work and projects have been done with TSPLOST. Mr. Gay stated that he wanted to get the process kicked off and possibly get the meeting with the cities this week and next week and would like to get a called meeting with the cities as soon as possible. Commissioner Threadgill stated that Mr.

Gay did a phenomenal job on the last TPLOST process, presenting it to the cities and asked County Administrator McCarthy if he had any experience in this process. County Administrator McCarthy stated that he had experience and successfully passed TSPLOST in Taylor County. Administrator McCarthy stated that one thing that really resonated with the residents was that a lot of money from TSPLOST goes towards equipment that maintains all roads and not just a road near a certain person, but the quality of all roads.

4. **Billing Changes to County's Municode Supplement and Codification Services**: Finance Director Gorton stated that Municode, which is the County's Ordinance and Codification Service, has changed their billing to an average annual cost, rather than per page cost. County Clerk Stephens stated that Municode has been acquired by CivicPlus. With this change, County Clerk Stephens stated that the company is proposing the annual fee to be based on the average of supplements that the County has sent in the past and an average for annual billing, instead of a per page rate. County Clerk Stephens explained the charges and that the total cost for Full-Service Supplementation is $3,030.80. County Clerk Stephens explained that a new Statement of Work would have to be signed and that Legal had reviewed and made minor changes to the contract that the company accepted. County Attorney Lee stated this is required to have by Georgia law. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill to approve the Billing Changes to the County's Municode Supplement and Codification Services and allow the Chair to sign. All were in favor.

5. **Filming Permit Request: Woodbury Research Facility**: Planning and Zoning Director Cassandra Sharpe stated the filming company Rochelle Rochelle has filmed on Cove Road in the past and is requesting another permit to film on June 11, 2024, with preparation days from June 6, 2024, to June 12, 2024. Director Sharpe stated that she does have the company's certificate of insurance and the company has spoken with the Sheriff's Office as well. Director Sharpe introduced Billy and Andrea with the production company for any questions. County Administrator McCarthy stated it sounds like businesses and residences will still have access to their property, with just a slight delay during the driving scenes on 6-11 and there shouldn't be much impact on emergency response. Billy of Rochelle stated that passes would be given out to the residents and the officers at each end of the closure would be able to let residents in easily. Billy stated that there would be a fire lane left open and 5–6 officers with them during the filming days. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Vice Chairman Worsley to approve the Filming Permit Request at the Woodbury Research Facility. All were in favor.

6. **Deductibles for Meriwether County's Medical Plan/Remove Buy-up Option**: Finance Director John Gorton stated that during the NFP presentation, NFP offered a buy-up plan and after running the calculations, the buy-up plan did not benefit the employees. Director Gorton stated it would cost the employees an additional $500 dollars per year and the employee would still be responsible for their full $2,000 dollar deductible. Finance Director Gorton stated that staff would recommend removing the buy-up option for open enrollment, as staff asked for it just to get a comparison of the cost for the employees. Director Gorton stated that the second item is MedCom. Director Gorton explained our current deductible is $6,000 with MedCom paying $4500 towards the deductible, leaving the employee responsible for $1,500. Director Gorton stated that he reached out to NFP regarding MedCom and the response was that MedCom administers the HRA and is a way for the County to partially self-fund the health plan instead of paying higher monthly premiums for a lower deductible. The County

refunds part of the deductible for those that meet the higher amount. This limits the member's liability to those that meet the deductible without the County paying for a lower deductible for all members. Director Gorton explains that this is basically the employees pay $1,500 and MedCom pays $4,500, which is County-funded through the HRA. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if there was any cost related to this. Director Gorton stated that this is the same as what we have had in the past, with no extra costs. Director Gorton stated that the staff recommendation is to approve HRA through MedCom at the same rate and to remove the buy-up option for open enrollment. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill to approve the HRA through MedCom at the same rate and to remove the buy-up option for open enrollment from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. All were in favor.

7. **Award 2024 Road Patching**: Mr. Gay stated that at the request of the Board, staff advertised a request for bids from qualified contractors to perform pothole patching and repairs on various roads in Meriwether County. The proposal established standards and specifications for work and the bid requested a price per square yard for patching. The square yard price gives staff a way to fairly evaluate the cost of work without having to calculate all the quantities of the roads up front. Once approved by the Board, staff will mark and measure the areas that need work for roads selected by the Board. Bids were opened on Friday, May 17, 2024, with two proposals being received. Mr. Gay stated that since that time, it has been suggested to seek a per ton asphalt price as well. Mr. Gay stated the thought was to see to see how the per ton would compare to the per square yard cost. Mr. Gay explained that the per square yard price we have now is 220lbs of asphalt, which means it is 2 inches thick. Mr. Gay stated that the Board can move forward with one of the bids received, or staff can issue another proposal for a price by ton and come back to allow the Board time to analyze it. Mr. Gay stated there are pros and cons to each. He stated a better price may be given per ton. However, you may end up with a lot of waste material as it is a hot patch. Chairman King stated that the majority of the time when dealing with asphalt, you go by tons and not yards. Chairman King stated the reasons for that is that 1 ton of asphalt equals 9 yards 2 inches thick, at 220 pounds. Chairman King stated that what the concern would be is the going rate if you did go by yards. Chairman King stated that the going rate if going off tonnage, should be around $35 to $40 dollars per yard. Chairman King stated the reason for that is if a ton equals 9 yards, and we accept a bid for $125.00 per yard, that is $1,125.00 a ton. Chairman King stated that one dump truck load holds 18 tons. Chairman King stated that it would total $20,250 for one tandem dump truck load, based on yardage. Chairman King stated that a pothole cannot be fixed at 2 inches thick and would have to be at least 4 inches thick at minimum. Chairman King feels that it should be offered on the difference based on tonnage and not the yard. Commissioner Collins asked if it was necessary to go out and measure, if it was done by ton. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant to table the current proposal by yard to allow staff to submit a proposal by tonnage and review and bring it back to the Board, as well as a list of roads. This was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

County Administrator Jarrod McCarthy stated that he has continued to work on a number of personnel matters and stated that Ms. Valerie does a good job and has a lot going on. County Administrator McCarthy stated he participated in the Alcohol Ordinance discussion, attended the Industrial Development Authority Meeting, attended a Fireworks Event Meeting, attended a meeting regarding the traffic development plan with Col. Hadley and Lt. Gilbert regarding parking, access for emergency vehicles and security. Administrator McCarthy and attended a Tax Assessors Meeting, Department Head Meeting, and Agenda Meeting. County Administrator McCarthy stated he had a good meeting with Asst. Administrator Cole regarding projects he is working on. Administrator McCarthy attended a Planning Commission meeting and really enjoyed the meeting and their process as they were thorough and asked a lot of good questions. Administrator McCarthy watched County Clerk Allyson Stephens' graduation online and wanted to mention that during the graduation it was mentioned that it was one of their most challenging programs, and he was proud of Allyson. Administrator McCarthy stated he stayed in contact with the Board regularly by email and touched base with department heads to make sure some items were on track. Administrator McCarthy stated he talked with Ms. Valerie about some future personnel policy updates and attended a department head pay scale meeting and started talking about the evaluation process and gave his thoughts on how that would work. Administrator McCarthy stated there are some jail projects taking place for the roof, plumbing, locks and doors and HVAC. Administrator McCarthy stated the jail roof has actually been repaired, bids have been approved for the jail doors and locks as well as the plumbing repairs and replacements at a cost of above $1 million dollars. Administrator McCarthy stated that bids are also back for the courthouse roof, and RFPs have been drafted for the HVAC system at Courthouse, as well as for mold and mildew remediation. Administrator McCarthy stated those repairs will also exceed $1 million dollars. Administrator McCarthy stated it was mentioned that materials had been falling from the Courthouse, and he spoke with Mr. Lee with Building Maintenance, and he said that will be something that will have to be addressed after the roof is repaired because moisture is contributing to that. Administrator McCarthy stated that TSPLOST meetings are being set up with the cities, and he looked forward to that. Administrator McCarthy thanked Matt Brown, Director of I.T. and stated that Matt is always accessible and able to handle those issues and appreciated him for going above and beyond, whether it be at Lake Meriwether or anywhere else.

Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole provided a handout to the Board with an update on the Pathways building. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that he attended the Industrial Development Authority, Water and Sewer Authority, Tax Assessors, Department Heads, and Planning Commission Meetings. Asst. Administrator Cole stated he also attended Leadership Meriwether. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that the Commissioners also received feedback on the Woodbury Development of Regional Impact and there will be internal meetings on that to come up with questions and comments later this week. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that staff would like to get feedback and directions on the Pathways building that was discussed in late 2023. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that when this was discussed, the project came back with a price of $500,000 and there are still the remaining deadlines for the November elections and for this project, there is a move in date of July 1, that could be flexible to July 15th. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that over the last 3-5 weeks, facilities and maintenance staff have been working inside the Pathways building to get the building ready by doing demolition, prepping electrical, marking the areas for the flooring, and a lot of the beginning things that need to be done. Vice Chairman Worsley asked who had been doing the work. Asst. Administrator Cole stated it was Public Works - Facilities and Maintenance. Vice Chairman Worsley asked if the $500,000 dollar bid was approved, and if not, why is Public Works out working on an item that wasn't even approved to be worked on? Asst. Administrator Cole stated the bid was not approved and because of that, staff started looking at ways to reduce the amount and sent Public Works - Building and Maintenance to the building to do some of the demolition, pre-electrical work, and some of the other work that needs to be done. Vice Chairman Worsley stated there are all the other buildings that the Board has been trying to get worked on that are inhabited and the Pathways building is sitting empty, and Public Works employees are being sent out to dismantle a building that no one is in. Vice Chairman Worsley asked under whose guidance and direction. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that this was for an election that is happening in November. Commissioner Plant stated that this was discussed over a year ago and thought the Board had collectively agreed. Commissioner Plant explained that at the time the RFP came back at a cost of over $500,000, there was no money to spend on the contract. Commissioner Plant stated the alternative, in order to get Elections moved, because there are problems in the current building, and the need, she felt, was a collective Board agreement to move forward. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he remembers the conversations regarding the Pathways building being a good idea, because it was a large facility area, that was uninhabited, and we didn't have the money, and thought the conversation stopped there. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that if it could be found in the minutes when he agreed, and it was done, he would apologize. Commissioner Plant stated that if you don't do something with the building, you will have more problems with it. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that you have staff that are working in buildings that need being addressed now. Commissioner Threadgill stated that the County is also renting an additional building for the extra storage which is costing extra on a monthly basis. Commissioner Threadgill stated he doesn't think that the Board has to approve something that is done in-house. Commissioner Threadgill stated the bid did come before the Board at $500,000, but the Administrators have the authority over the County when the Board hires them to make the internal decisions. Mr. Gay stated that originally, with the bid coming back at $500,000, he remembered that the cost was too high, and the staff went back to look at what could be done in- house and then bring back to the Board the costs of work that could not be done in-house. Chairman King stated that he remembered conversations about moving the Elections office, and thinks it is a good idea. However, he doesn't recall an actual movement to go ahead and start getting the building ready. Commissioner Collins stated he remembered the bid coming back at $500,000 dollars and Mr. Gay stated that was too high but doesn't recall any more discussion on it. Commissioner Collins asked that when this building is finished, could the tax building where the soffits are rotting off the building be taken care of. Mr. Gay stated that was a problem, and we could look at putting out an RFP, but it needed to be looked at and decided on because the building still wouldn't be very functional with the small offices. Mr. Gay stated that this was inhouse work that had only started 2–3 weeks prior. Mr. Gay explained the need for the Board to provide directions on what they wanted. Mr. Gay stated that it had been determined to move forward with Elections moving to the Pathways building. Vice Chairman Worsley asked when this was done and approved. Commissioner Threadgill stated that this was done at a meeting and the spaces were allocated to the Sheriff's Office as well as the Elections Office. Commissioner Plant stated that before renovations start on some of the buildings, it would be wise to relocate some offices and maybe consolidate a lot of the government offices together. Chairman King stated that he recalls a lot of discussions about moving certain offices but doesn't recall agreeing to go ahead and get started with work. Mr. Gay stated that the only work done was in house, and it wasn't that much. Mr. Gay explained that he wanted to propose an RFP on repairs that could not be made in-house. Mr. Gay stated that he is concerned with the timeline and the current building has problems with the ceiling dipping and actually cracking one of the windows. Mr. Gay explained that elections have to rent another building for storage and security of the machines is a high priority. Vice Chairman Worsley stated he doesn't have a problem getting the buildings up to where they need to be for the employees, but he doesn't understand and can't remember, and has all the meeting notes from every meeting and will go home and pull them, but he doesn't recall where this was a unified Board decision to move in this direction with impending costs coming. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that to finalize the plan, there would be significant costs, with people and machines sitting there, forcing the hand of the costs, under the disguise of the election coming. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that it was not approved by this Board. Mr. Gay stated that he doesn't feel it was a disguise and that they are not forcing our hand, due to not accepting the $500,000 dollar bid. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that is because they knew they couldn't get it, and now they are moving the equipment all over there. Commissioner Threadgill stated the equipment had not been moved. Mr. Gay stated that equipment cannot be moved, and this process is a long way from being ready to move equipment. Mr. Gay stated that there are a lot of things that have to be done before that can happen. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he is not going to keep dragging it out and will pull the minutes. Commissioner Plant stated that there would be a run-off election in June. Commissioner Threadgill stated that the Board did allocate the two buildings in a meeting, and it was voted on. Commissioner Threadgill stated that there was discussion about doing some of the work in house. Commissioner Threadgill understood that the bid was rejected. However, there are certain buildings in the County that fall under federal and state regulations and the Elections building is one of those, which is held to really strict stipulations and at this point the building is not safe for those coming in and out of the building, due to its structure for early voting. Commissioner Threadgill stated that not too long ago, the Secretary of State came down and presented Patty with an award. Commissioner Threadgill stated it is not being said that the other offices won't be moved, but it is easier to move one building at a time, then focus on moving the others. Chairman King stated he understood the bid was too high at $500,000, but there should have been discussion that came back to the Board explaining that the work would be done inhouse, getting the total down to $285,000 to $300,000. Chairman King stated that right now if inhouse work is done and there is still a significant amount of work to be done, we have to know if it is in the budget. Mr. Gay stated that his goal is to see what can be done in house and what can't and the amount we are looking at having to contract. Mr. Gay stated that none of this was being done to go behind the Commissioners. Chairman King stated he personally didn't feel anyone was trying to pull anything. Commissioner Collins asked who the contractor was. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that it says above that to identify a contractor. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that the timeline he provided came from a meeting with Lee, Patty, and the Elections Board and Chairman. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that Lee has reached out to local contractors just to discuss the things that need to be done and the time frame. Asst. Administrator Cole stated there were a couple of contractors that could not meet the deadline, but one that could get elections into the office by July 1st, with multiple crews working. Chairman King asked if that had to be put out to bid. Asst. Administrator Cole stated there are some requirements in our purchasing policy. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that either it is a legal requirement or not. County Attorney Lee stated that there are state requirements. Asst. Administrator Cole stated that the price that

Mr. Chapman quoted for labor only, was $45,000 dollars and the price quoted for materials, after talking with Lee, would be about $20,000 dollars. Commissioner Threadgill left the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Mr. Gay stated that the intent was to get the price and bring it back to the Board. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that he would state that he didn't believe the intent was to bring it back to the Board. Mr. Gay stated that it was the intent. Vice Chairman Worsley stated it was nothing personal to Mr. Gay, but the timeline was made the week of 5/20, with final dates to move machines, final security approvals, and move staff. Vice Chairman Worsley stated that the Board hadn't seen that on email or anything until May 28th, 8 days after the timeline was put into place, and he doesn't believe it was initiated with the intention of the Board having full knowledge. Commissioner Threadgill came back to the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Mr. Gay stated that this wasn't the intent and the timeline provided would not work. Commissioner Collins stated that regardless of that, the Board had to get approval for a $20,000 dollar engine for an ambulance, but it is being stated that it is $45,000 dollars to do the renovations and nobody has given any approval. Mr. Gay stated that what was given was just an estimate. Chairman King felt the item should have been placed on the Agenda and not during Administrator comments. Chairman King felt that a motion was needed to move forward with what needed to be done on the Elections building. Commissioner Plant made a motion that any inhouse work that could be done, be done, and also work be done to get proposals together, if it needs to be contracted out. Commissioner Plant stated that we have a need for the building and as soon as elections can be moved in, they would be able to know the amount of space left to allocate. Commissioner Plant stated that the Board needs to address the buildings that are in dire need of repair. Commissioner Plant stated she would like to do this in the form of a motion. This was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor. Chairman King stated that it is to move forward and get back.

XV. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Bryan Threadgill: Commissioner Threadgill had I.T. Director Brown bring up a picture. Commissioner Threadgill stated he had the opportunity last week to visit the local hospital, Meriwether County Memorial, with the picture portraying three Hospitalists that are on staff 24/7. Commissioner Threadgill stated that also pictured was CEO, Karen Daniel, who is a registered nurse and took over as CEO seven years prior and has brought the hospital from the red into the black. Commissioner Threadgill stated that the three Hospitalists are contracted and that is something that the local hospital has not had in the past. Commissioner Threadgill stated that the Hospitalists are able to provide services that were not provided in the past and being in the medical field himself, this was a great opportunity, and wants it part of the record, so the public does know that we are moving forward and have additional health services.

Vice Chairman Adam Worsley: Vice Chairman Worsley thanked the staff for all the work they were doing. Vice Chairman Worsley stated there was a lot of work that went into the documents presented, with a lot of headaches and work. Vice Chairman Worsley stated he is getting good responses from staff here, County staff and support staff, regarding quick responses to requests. Vice Chairman Worsley thanked the Department Heads and stated the citizens are pretty happy with the work being done, good responses, and positive interactions. Vice Chairman Worsley thanked everyone for the good job they were doing.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: Commissioner Plant stated that she shared on her Facebook page, to make the community aware that the state will be closing Hwy 109 West for bridge replacement. Commissioner Plant stated that she is looking forward to the reduction of truck traffic. The Sheriff may not feel that way, because it is a main thoroughfare. Commissioner Plant stated that it would be interesting to see how traffic will navigate around Greenville. Commissioner Plant reminded everyone about Peaches in the Pines on June 8, 2024, from 10 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Emmett Collins: Commissioner Collins would like to thank all the staff, department heads, and employees for all the work they are doing. Commissioner Collins stated there are still some issues with some dirt roads, but other than that, he is not getting many calls.

Chairman Gene King: Chairman King stated he also talks a lot about dirt roads and improvements that are being made. Chairman King stated that he spoke with Cassandra and there was a gentleman that lives on a dirt road in our County, who was out of state working, gets a phone call from the school that he needed to get someone to come get his kids due to hard rain. Chairman King stated the gentleman had no one to pick up his kids and the school stated the bus would not go down the road due to the hard rain. Chairman King stated that Cassandra went out and picked the kids up for the gentleman and got them home. Chairman King stated she took pictures of the road, and it needed work and Public Works got out there. Chairman King stated the school bus people refused to go down the road, yet Cassandra went down the road, and there were a couple of ruts, but it was passable. Chairman King stated he understands we don't control the School Board, but it is hard to call someone and tell them they need to come get their kids, that you are not bringing them back home when you picked them up that morning. Commissioner Threadgill asked if Chairman King was involved in that. Chairman King stated they called him. Commissioner Threadgill stated that what Chairman King did, in having Cassandra go and pick them up, created a liability issue, by issuing a County truck. Chairman King stated that Commissioner Threadgill didn't know the entire story. Commissioner Threadgill stated he does know the whole story and that Chairman King put the County at a huge liability, by having a County employee in a County vehicle pick up kids. Chairman King stated that it would be addressed. Commissioner Threadgill stated it would be addressed in the Executive Session. Chairman King stated that in talking with the School Board, and Principal, when trying to figure out something to do, he assured them that the County does not provide these types of services, and the gentleman has been twice before the Board, asking for his road to be fixed. Chairman King stated the gentleman pays his taxes, and now his kids can't even get home. Chairman King stated the gentleman's daughter-in-law is at the home with two babies and no car to drive. Chairman King stated that if he did wrong by asking someone to help little kids, he wanted to apologize to the County. Commissioner Threadgill stated that it wasn't the fact of helping the kids, it was that there was a liability put on the County. Chairman King stated that no one got hurt that day, and the kids got home safely. Commissioner Threadgill stated the school board had some words for Chairman King as well. Chairman King gaveled Commissioner Threadgill. Commissioner Threadgill stated that Chairman King was not to gavel him, and he would speak when he wanted to. Chairman King stated he is the Chairman. Commissioner Threadgill stated that Chairman King is an appointed chair and not an elected chair, and if he wanted to talk, he would talk all day as he had been on the Board for twelve years. Chairman King stated that Commissioner Threadgill keeps telling them he has been on the Board for twelve years. Commissioner Threadgill stated that is right, and that Chairman King acts like a two-year-old most of the time. Chairman King stated he had nothing further to say and apologized to the people in the audience and online. Commissioner Threadgill stated he apologized to the people as well, but not to Chairman King.

XVI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Lee had nothing to report.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was a need for an Executive Session for Personnel, Real Estate, and Litigation. A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Collins to go into the Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. All were in favor. A motion was made by Chairman King and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill to go out of the Executive Session at 9:40 p.m. Voting in favor of the motion were Chairman King, Vice Chairman Worsley, and Commissioner Threadgill. Voting opposed were Commissioner Plant and Commissioner Collins. A motion was made to go back into the Regular Session by Commissioner Plant at 9:40 p.m. This was seconded by Commissioner Collins. All were in favor. Commissioner Threadgill did not return to the Regular Session. There was no action taken in the Executive Session.

XVIII. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman King announced the Future Meetings and Holidays, prior to Executive Session.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Collins to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority Vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Allyson L. Stephens, County Clerk

Date: June 12, 2024