



Fannin County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Jury Assembly Room
August 27, 2019 5:15 p.m.

OPENING REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Helton called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Present in meeting were Chairman Helton, Post One Commissioner Earl Johnson and Post Two Commissioner Glenn Patterson.

Chairman Helton began the meeting by asking for a moment of silence in honor of Michelle Sowers.

The Invocation was led by Commissioner Glenn Patterson and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Earl Johnson.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Helton made Motion first to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2019 Regular Meeting. Motion made second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Jan Eaton approached the podium to comment on the poor quality of work that was done on the Animal Control parking lot with the chip and seal.

Public Commentary closed at 5:22 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

First on the agenda was Item #3, Variance Request from Gregory Parker to place a house 29 feet from the center line of the present road and 23 feet from the edge of Toccoa Camp Trail. Chairman Helton asked if anyone was present to oppose the variance. County Attorney Lynn Doss spoke regarding an email from the opposing parties that attended last Board Meeting. Ms. Doss stated they were no longer opposing the Variance Request. Chairman Helton asked for a Motion to grant the variance. Motion made First by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made Second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was Item #4, the reappointment of Mayor Donna Whiener to the Highland Rivers Health Governing Board of Directors for another three-year term. Chairman Helton made Motion First to approve the reappointment. Motion made Second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was Item #5, the appointment of Joe Cipolla as Fannin County's Nonpublic Member of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Council. Chairman Helton made Motion First to approve the new appointment. Motion made Second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was Item #6, Chief Financial Officer Robin Gazaway gave the 2019 Budget Report for January 2019 through July 2019. Commissioner Patterson asked about the numbers on the Risk Management as far as looking back on last year, we should save around \$100,000 or \$300,000. Ms. Gazaway stated it just depended on how much reinsurance we would get back. Commissioner Johnson wanted to know when we would know that number precisely. Ms. Gazaway stated we would not know that number precisely. It was just something that Ms. Kirby anticipated based upon what was published in the paper. Commissioner Johnson asked if the numbers were off of someone else's numbers. Ms. Gazaway referred to what was published in the paper that year. Ms. Gazaway stated she had emailed the Board the articles to show where she got her numbers. Chairman Helton, Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Patterson stated they had no further questions.

Next on the agenda was Item #7, Director of Recreation Eddie O'Neal. He presented bids for a new maintenance truck. Mr. O'Neal stated the 1999 truck they were using; the transmission was currently out. Mr. O'Neal stated he felt like the transmission would be more than what the truck was worth. Mr. O'Neal presented three quotes for the vehicle. The first was from Bill Holt Chevrolet of Blue Ridge for \$32,878.00, North Georgia Ford for \$25,643.00, and Ronnie Thompson for \$25,145.40. The Board discussed the difference between the quotes and agreed to stay in the County for the quote just being over \$500.00 more. Chairman Helton asked for a Motion to approve the purchase of the 2020 F-150 from North Georgia Ford for \$25,643.00. Motion made First by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was Item #8, Fire Chief Larry Thomas spoke regarding the ISO rating. Mr. Thomas stated he had been meeting with the Cities to discuss the water studies, all except Blue Ridge and it was due to the death of the Mayor's father. Mr. Thomas stated the ISO scoring has shifted and are they are now requiring more personnel. He stated the requirements for training and response time had increased and explained the number of firefighters and volunteers. Commissioner Johnson asked if that was one of the new rules and when it came into effect. Mr. Thomas stated the new rule was set in 2014/2015. Commissioner Patterson asked if we knew that was coming. Mr. Thomas explained how the page out method worked when responding. Commissioner Patterson stated it was strength in water and strength in numbers, with three volunteers to one full time. Mr. Thomas stated the county now has more commercial buildings also. He stated the volunteers has less time to dedicate to volunteering; and EMS are trained firefighters; but they are primary EMS and their numbers had also increased. Mr. Thomas stated they needed the cites to assist in this hydrant testing and flow testing. Mr. Thomas explained the surrounding counties scoring and Fannin's scores back in 2012 being a 5. He explained his strategy and time frame for getting the rating back to where it needed to be. Mr. Thomas stated he was hoping to have the rating back in place around July of next year. Chairman Helton asked when the ISO inspections was done. Mr. Thomas stated it was 2018. Chairman Helton asked about the action plan to attack the ISO rating, and how soon would it be taken care of. Chairman Helton stated this rating would be effective around the 1st of November. Commissioner Patterson asked if the standards had changed and to get us back to a 5, would we have to have more firefighters. Mr. Thomas stated we could use more volunteers also. Commissioner Patterson asked if we want to get back, how soon would we have to hire the firefighters if we want to get inspected in July. Mr. Thomas stated we would get into that during the budget; but we would ask for two next year for a total of six. Commissioner Patterson asked if that would be enough to get us back to a 5 in July. Mr. Thomas said he couldn't promise. Commissioner Patterson stated they should give you some ratio on how to help yourself because they know counties want to get a good rating. Commissioner Patterson asked if he had a plan. Mr. Thomas stated he wanted two on each shift and wanted to start that in January and continued to recruit volunteers. Chairman Helton stated the two big items was the lack of full-time firefighters and training. Mr. Thomas stated he wouldn't say it was lack of full-time firefighters, it's the lack of firefighters. Mr. Thomas stated they were already working on the training issue. Commissioner Patterson stated that Morganton and McCaysville had already given the okay they would help with the testing but wanted to know about any anticipation that there would be a concern with Blue Ridge. Mr. Thomas stated there wouldn't be any problem there; the only reason he had not met with the Mayor was because her father had passed away. He stated they had always worked well with the cites. Mr. Thomas stated he was going to try to go for a better rating. Commissioner Johnson expressed his concern about the insurance rating going up and he felt it should have been brought up somewhere in a meeting that we were facing this and we are going to have to face it. Commissioner Johnson stated they were getting ready to roll back the millage rate and if he had known all this was going on maybe he wouldn't have agreed to that to help alleviate some of this problem. Commissioner Johnson stated he didn't like Mr. Thomas knowing this in 2018 and we are now in August of 2019. Mr. Thomas stated it's like an audit, you don't get your results for a long time. Commissioner Johnson wanted to know when the results came. Mr. Thomas stated he didn't know right off. Commissioner Johnson asked him to take a guess. Mr. Thomas stated this past month and they told us in a letter that we might regress in a letter. Commissioner Patterson stated they made it known. Mr. Thomas stated they made it known through the website. Chairman Helton asked about the new fire station having an impact on the rating. Mr. Thomas stated that was something they didn't even look at and they didn't even look at the equipment. Commissioner Johnson stated that was precisely what he was thinking because there has been a lot asked for and a lot given. Commissioner Patterson stated they didn't stay as long this time. Mr. Thomas stated they only stayed four hours and only looked at paperwork. Commissioner Johnson stated they had spent lots of money for resources for this to crop up. Commissioner Johnson stated he did not like knowing something after the fact and he promised he would be doing more research. Commissioner Johnson stated he felt sure the insurance offices had been covered up with phone calls since it hit the papers. Mr. Thomas stated he felt like it hit the papers to soon. Chairman Helton suggested that Mr. Thomas give a bi-monthly update on ISO issue. Mr. Thomas stated he felt like there were things overlooked. Commissioner Patterson stated there was always room for improvement. Commissioner Johnson covered the most important issues to focus on with the ISO rating. Chairman Helton stated Chief Thomas would be the man responsible. The Board stated they would look forward to the updates.

Last item on the agenda was Item #8, Millage Rate for 2019. Recommendation from the Fannin County Board of Education for a Special Called Meeting last Friday, they voted and recommended to the Fannin

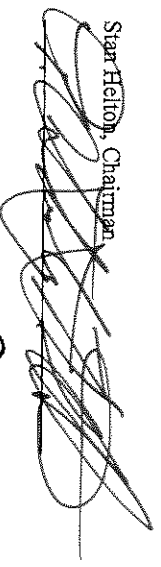
Board of Commissioners to set their millage rate at a rate of 10.593. This is a decrease from last year at a rate of 11.230. In addition to Fannin School Board, we have advertised in the county organ to move our current millage rate from 4.176 down to 3.938. This is an actual decrease of .875 with a 5.7% decrease from the Board of Education and the County for the citizens in the County. Chairman Helton asked the Board if there were any thoughts on this. Commissioner Patterson asked if there would be any negative effects of this at all. Chairman Helton stated he was the first person to ask this. Commissioner Johnson stated, to answer the question, the county was worth more this year than last year. Commissioner Johnson said he didn't think there would be any negative effect and everyone loves to pay less taxes. Chairman Helton elaborated on not raising taxes for the public and looking at ways to cut cost where ever they could even if it was looking at budgets. Chairman Helton stated this would be done as a Resolution and a Letter to be sent on to Ms. Shirley Sosebee to send to the State. Chairman Helton asked for a motion to accept the County Millage Rate at 3.938 and the Board of Education at 10.593 for a Total Millage Rate of 14.531. Motion made First by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made Second by Chairman Helton. Motion passed unanimously.

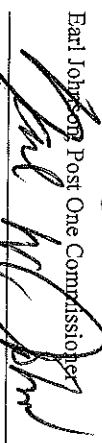
EXECUTIVE SESSION

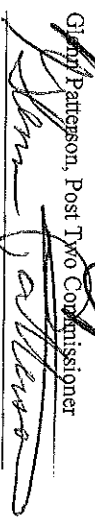
No Executive Session needed.

CLOSING

Motion to adjourn made at 6:29 p.m. first by Commissioner Patterson. Motion made second by Chairman Helton. Motion passed unanimously.


Star Helton, Chairman


Earl Johnson, Post One Commissioner


Glenny Patterson, Post Two Commissioner


Sherri Walker, County Clerk

Attest:

Sherri Walker, County Clerk