



Fannin County Board of Commissioners
Regular Scheduled Meeting & Public Hearing
November 10, 2020 5:15 p.m.
Jury Assembly Room – Third Floor

2nd^t Public Hearing

Chairman Helton opened Public Hearing at 5:15 p.m.

The floor was opened for any Public Comments pertaining to the amendments of the Lodging Ordinance. No party approached the podium to speak. Chairman Helton closed the Public Hearing at 5:16 p.m.

OPENING REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Helton called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

Present in Board Meeting were Chairman Helton, Post One Commissioner Earl Johnson, Post Two Commissioner Glenn Patterson, County Attorney Lynn D. Doss, and County Clerk Sherri L. Walker.

Invocation was led by Commissioner Patterson. Pledge was led by Commissioner Johnson.

Chairman Helton added Items 1B and 1C to the agenda. Item 1B being the vote of the Amended Hotel/Motel Ordinance and Item 1C being Keith Nicholson with the Building Inspection Department.

Commissioner Patterson stated he would like to make some comments before the Regular Meeting started. Commissioner Patterson stated he wanted to discuss the Whitepath Building and there were some time constraints on some of the projects. Commissioner Patterson asked to have that added. Chairman Helton stated he would add that as a last item as Item #4. Commissioner Patterson also stated he would like to have Hazard Pay added as an agenda item also. Chairman Helton stated he would add as item #5.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Helton asked for a motion first to approve the Minutes of the October 27, 2020 Public Hearing & Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting. Motion made first by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

First to approach the podium was Donna Thompson. Ms. Thompson addressed comments to the Board regarding the Whitepath building.

Second to approach the podium was Lane Bishop. Mr. Bishop addressed comments to the Board regarding the Senior Citizen building and the holding of political meetings.

Last to approach the podium was Brian Noise. Mr. Noise addressed comments to the Board regarding the problems with the number of occupancies with rental cabins in his neighborhood.

NEW BUSINESS

Item#1B on the agenda was the vote for the Hotel/Motel Ordinance. Chairman Helton made a motion first to approve the Amended Hotel/Motel Ordinance with revisions and rate increase reflecting 6% beginning on January 1, 2021. Motion made second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 1C on the agenda, Keith Nicholson with the Building Inspection Department. Mr. Nicholson addressed the Board regarding a situation with a fence off Lebanon Road close to Hwy. 2. Mr. Nicholson stated he had called the individual and asked him to move the fence. Mr. Nicholson stated this was on the county right of way. Mr. Nicholson stated he spoke with County Attorney Lynn Doss and she had sent the individual a letter. Ms. Doss stated as to this date, she has not received a response. Ms. Doss stated the Road Department would be able to clear the right of way in which they do on a daily basis. Commissioner Johnson commented on the danger and the liability of the fence being there. Commissioner Johnson stated the fence was too close to the road. Commissioner Johnson stated there was a precedent set with fences on Lebanon Road but this fence is a different type of fence. Chairman Helton asked Mr. Nicholson and Mr.

Ratcliff to get together and determine what would be a safe distance. After discussion, the Board agreed to follow up with the removal of the fence. Chairman Helton asked County Attorney Lynn Doss to send another letter to the individual regarding the fence. Chairman Helton asked Ms. Doss to copy the Board on the letter also.

Next on the agenda was Item #2, EMA Director Robert Graham. Mr. Graham approached the Board regarding the Pre-Contract for the Disaster Debris Monitoring. Mr. Graham stated the bids had been reviewed and compared. Mr. Graham recommended the lower of the three offers and he recommended Thompson Consulting Services. Chairman Helton asked for a motion to approve Thompson Consulting Services. Motion made first by Commissioner Johnson. Motion made second by Commissioner Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Graham took a moment to commend the Fannin County Road Department for all their hard work during the Zeta storm. Mr. Graham stated there was a lot of clean up; and they had completed over 40% of the clean-up.

Next on the agenda, Mr. Graham addressed the Board regarding the new ambulance which did not have proper lifts installed causing the ambulance to set up too high and in order to get the patient stretchers inside the ambulance they would need to get airbags or lifts. Mr. Graham stated there could be a possibility of injuries with the medics or patients. Mr. Graham stated the manufacturers were not aware of the problem. Mr. Graham stated the mechanic recommended the liquid springs verses the airbag. The cost of the liquid springs was quoted at \$1,300 compared to airbags at \$8,500. Mr. Graham recommended the liquid springs. Mr. Graham stated the liquid springs have less repair and create a better ride for the patient. Chairman Helton made a motion first to approve having the liquid springs installed on the ambulance at the price of \$11,300. Motion made second by Commissioner Johnson. Motion passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was Item #3, discussion regarding the 2021 Proposed Budget. Chairman Helton stated the Board would be determining what date to publish the budget in the County organ. Chairman Helton stated the vote would take place in the December 8th Board Meeting. Chairman Helton stated some of the surrounding counties were struggling with their budgets. Chairman Helton stated that we really would not know how the budget was until the beginning of next year. Chairman Helton stated the new administration could take a look at the budget and if decided, they could choose to amend the budget. Chairman Helton stated if the Board signed off on a budget that was high, it would be a disservice. Chairman Helton stated they had tried to watch out for taxpayers of the county and not had any layoffs or furloughs. Chairman Helton spoke regarding some of the insurance cost and risk management. Chairman Helton stated the proposed budget would be published in the News Observer and would be posted on the County website and bulletin board. Commissioner Johnson stated he didn't know anyone that was spending more money and he was just asking everyone to be conservative until this pandemic is over. Commissioner Johnson stated we need to stay conservative until we see where we are going to come out. Commissioner Johnson stated if anyone had an increase in their budget; he was for no increase. Commissioner Patterson stated he agreed; and he stated he would take it a little further and stated we knew there was people still hurting. Commissioner Patterson asked about a cost of living increase in the budget. Chairman Helton stated the only increase in the budget was the State Mandated increase for elected officials. Commissioner Johnson asked for clarification. Chairman Helton stated the State set the elected officials amount. Ms. Gazaway stated one of the elected officials had a 9% increase. Chairman Helton stated everything would be published; and the Public Hearing would be prior to the December 8th scheduled meeting.

Item #4 on the agenda, Commissioner Patterson made comments about the Whitepath building as to drilling and looking at any hazardous materials. Commissioner Patterson stated they were trying to get some information to see what they had and present to the Library Board and just to get some clarity. Commissioner Patterson presented two proposals from Contour to get everything started and see what was there. Commissioner Johnson asked what it was for exactly. Commissioner Patterson stated it was for hazardous material and soil samples, retaining walls and future editions. Commissioner Johnson asked why we were doing it now. Commissioner Johnson stated he never wanted the library in the building anyway and there wasn't enough money to build the library. Commissioner Johnson stated he had not heard anything about the library in months and he thought everyone knew there wasn't enough money. Commissioner Johnson stated what the grant was would not even cover the building cost. Commissioner Johnson stated there is not enough money to build to the standards of what the Library Board wanted. Commissioner Johnson stated the next Commissioner Board could borrow the money, if they decided to do that, but there was not enough money. Commissioner Johnson stated the money was for the Administration Building and if they can't spend it on the Admin Building; they can't spend it on anything else but an Administration Building. Commissioner Johnson stated, "No where in there does it say Library." Commissioner Patterson stated it was a standard step to see if it was up to the same standards for an Administration Building. Commissioner Johnson stated what if the other two Commissioners didn't even want that building. Commissioner Johnson stated he was not going to speak for anyone that sits on the Board. Commissioner Patterson stated the Library could just be put off. Commissioner Johnson stated he was not in favor of the library unless they were planning on borrowing the money and then he stated he was definitely not in favor of it. Chairman Helton stated that first of all, the SPLOST was about the

administration building to help with the parking. Chairman Helton stated the purchase was one of the best purchases the county could have done with what the voters mandated. Chairman Helton stated you could do the project in phases. Chairman Helton stated regarding real estate in the county, if you research, you would find it was a good purchase. Chairman Helton made it clear, he did not intend to make any other decisions about the building; that was for the new administration to do after the first of the year. Chairman Helton suggested Commissioner Patterson and the Newly Elected Chairman get together and make plans regarding the building. Chairman Helton stated it was completely legal for the two of them to meet regarding the Whitpath Building now before Mr. Hensley takes office. Commissioner Patterson stated he appreciated the discussion.

Item #5 on the agenda, Commissioner Patterson stated that it had been a couple of weeks since the discussion of hazard pay and since then we may have a bit more of information. Commissioner Patterson asked Ms. Doss to elaborate. Ms. Doss stated it was stated through ACCG, it was First Responders, Sheriff's Department, Firefighters, EMA & 911 that were eligible to received hazard pay. Ms. Doss stated you could pay the volunteers; but it would have to be decided how that would be broken down by the Board. Commissioner Patterson stated that everyday these people run toward COVID instead of running away from it; and he felt like they deserved it. Commissioner Patterson turned it back over to Chairman Helton and Commissioner Johnson. Chairman Helton stated the discussions he had; no one was happy with it and stated it wasn't enough. Chairman Helton stated no one was disputing the danger of it. Chairman Helton stated he was done with the Hazard Pay and stated he did not appreciate it being brought up. Commissioner Patterson stated it was necessary to do and wanted to show that we have their back. Commissioner Patterson stated they could push it to the first of the year. Commissioner Johnson stated he said when it was first brought up; it was going to be a can of worms that will never get back in the can. Commissioner Johnson stated he was not against it whatsoever. Commissioner Johnson asked how much money it would be. Commissioner Patterson stated it wasn't that much. Commissioner Patterson stated less than \$100 a month which would be \$500. Commissioner Johnson asked Ms. Doss if she felt comfortable with it and there was some question about other categories. Commissioner Johnson stated if she is comfortable then he was comfortable. Ms. Doss stated she did feel comfortable with it. Ms. Doss stated that no Department Heads could get it. Commissioner Johnson stated he just wanted to find out legally who was entitled. Commissioner Johnson stated he thought it was over and done with. Commissioner Johnson stated he was perfectly fine with hazard pay in the amount of \$500.00; and with what is legal to pay with no future ramifications for this Board. Commissioner Patterson asked Commissioner Johnson if he was going to make a motion to pay it. Commissioner Johnson asked Commissioner Patterson if he was fine with \$500. Commissioner Patterson stated he would like for it to be at least \$600 or \$700. Commissioner Johnson stated he was for the \$500 with who Ms. Doss stated was legal. Commissioner Patterson stated he second the motion and Commissioner Johnson stated he didn't make the motion. Chairman Helton stated he did not make a motion and he had not decided what he was going to do. Chairman Helton stated there was nothing to prevent giving the hazard pay money to everyone. Chairman Helton stated he honestly thought after the first of the year, they might be able to do more hazard pay. Chairman Helton told Commissioner Patterson to get together and decide what they wanted to do. Chairman Helton stated he did not want to make any decisions right now. Commissioner Johnson stated he didn't want to wench on any of his words and Ms. Doss had clarified who was entitled. Commissioner Johnson stated he was fine with the \$500 but Commissioner Patterson may not be. Commissioner Patterson asked Commissioner Johnson if he was going to vote on it. Commissioner Patterson stated he knew Chairman Helton would not vote. Chairman Helton stated he felt like it should be dealt with after the first of the year. Commissioner Johnson wanted to go back with the \$500 and didn't want time wasted on talking about the hazard pay. Commissioner Patterson asked if it would not be okay to give \$500 now and some after the first of the year. Commissioner Johnson stated he could if he wanted to. Chairman Helton stated one issue with this was he got the agenda on Thursday; and he had plenty of time to add an item. Commissioner Patterson stated he was through and he appreciated the time and he was not going to make any motions. Commissioner Patterson stated he appreciated them both voicing their concerns. Commissioner Johnson stated he had wasted enough time on the topic; and he was not going to drop it and he didn't mind making a motion. Commissioner Johnson stated he would go for \$500 on who Ms. Doss stated could legally get it. Ms. Doss stated she did not know how many employees that would be. Ms. Doss stated she did not know how the volunteers would get paid; maybe by per call. Commissioner Johnson asked Ms. Gazaway how much grant money we received. Ms. Gazaway stated \$1.3 million. Ms. Gazaway stated there would be about \$600,000 left after everything was paid with hazard pay. Chairman Helton stated it was around 100 people maybe. Chairman Helton asked Mr. Hensley what he wanted to do. Mr. Hensley stated if he wanted to wait until the first of the year; and then it would be on his head; that would be fine. Mr. Hensley stated this was nothing personal against Chairman Helton. Mr. Hensley stated he would relieve Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Patterson and they could deal with this after the first of the year. Chairman Helton stated he would like to table the topic until Mr. Hensley is here. Commissioner Patterson stated that was fine. Commissioner Johnson stated he would like to thank them both for wasting all his time. Commissioner Patterson stated he did not hear a motion from Commissioner Johnson. Commissioner Johnson stated he made it twice. Commissioner Patterson asked Chairman Helton if he heard it from Commissioner Johnson. Commissioner Johnson stated he wanted \$500 on who Ms. Doss stated was legally eligible to receive it. Commissioner Patterson stated that Commissioner Johnson did not make the motion. Commissioner Johnson stated he was now making the motion for the eligible employees to receive \$500. Commissioner Patterson asked

Chairman Helton if he was willing to accept that motion. Chairman Helton stated he was not and the only motion he wanted to make was to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Patterson made a motion to adjourn. Chairman Helton made motion second.

The Board had a motion on the floor to vote on hazard pay in the amount of \$500 to eligible employees; motion died for lack of commitment. Chairman Helton made a motion to vacate the motion. Commissioner Johnson made motion second to vacate. Motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session was needed at present time.

CLOSING

Chairman Helton made a Motion first to adjourn the meeting. Motion made second by Commissioner Johnson. Motion passed unanimously. Adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

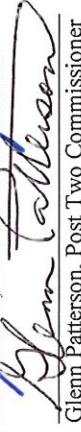
Motion made second by Commissioner



Stan Helton, Chairman



Earl Johnson, Post One Commissioner



Glenn Patterson, Post Two Commissioner

Attest:



Sherri L. Walker, County Clerk