**Jasper County Board of Commissioners**

**April 20, 2020**

**Called Meeting Minutes**

**6:00 P.M.**

Comm. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Bruce Henry- Chairman, Carl Pennamon, Gerald Stunkel- Vice-Chairman, Don Jernigan, and Doug Luke.

Staff Present: Mike Benton, County Manager and County Attorney, David Ozburn.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Invocation:** District 5- Commissioner Doug Luke

**Agenda Approval:** Commissioner Henry motioned to approve the agenda with the addition of a discussion on the Guest Houses Code as business item #1. Commissioner Stunkel seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda:**

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Check Register:**

Public Hearing: None

**Commissioner’s Items:**

**Commissioner Luke-** None

**Commissioner Jernigan**- None

**Commissioner Henry-** Commissioner Henry stated that Gov. Kemp held a Press Conference and is allowing some businesses to open on Friday and Monday with some restrictions. Updates will be posted on our website and Facebook page. He stated that Jasper County will be following what the governor puts out.

**Commissioner Pennamon-** None

**Commissioner Stunkel-** None

Presentations/Delegations:

Regular Agenda:

**Item 1: Guest House Code of Ordinance:** Chairman Henry stated that we need to take a closer look at code that allows guest houses in the county. He stated that in order for a building to be considered a guest house it needs to be on the same driveway. He posed the question of do we have a public hearing before placing a moratorium on guest houses in the County. Attorney Ozburn stated that you do not have to have a Public Hearing. The process will be the same as any other ordinance change. As for the moratorium, it can be done as long as it is enforced across the board and there is a set amount of days for the moratorium. Commissioner Stunkel motioned to have P&Z draft ordinance that will pose appropriate rules to guest houses and restrict guest houses within so many yards of the main home. This motion also includes a moratorium for 90-days or until this is resolved. Commissioner Luke seconded the motion; passed unanimously.

**Item 2: FY 2021 Budget Discussion:** Chairman Henry stated that we are unsure but there may be a loss in Tax Revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic and anything that is done at this time will be pure speculation. Chairman Henry stated that if the board could come up with a budget number and present it to the County Manager and staff and ask them to present a budget based on those numbers.

Commissioner Luke stated that in the past the budget has been based on a 95% collection rate. He stated that he believes there will be a 30% drop in collections based on the current climate. He asked what would be the minimum cost to run the county for a month.

Commissioner Jernigan stated that he contacted the Georgia Department of Labor for unemployment statistics for the county. For the week ending 3.7.20 there were 4 claims in Jasper County. The following weeks went to 9, the next week 18, then 105, 339, by 4.11.20 it dropped to 297.

Commissioner Stunkel posed the question to Mike whether the two large employers in the county that closed is paying the employees or if the employees are receiving unemployment. Mr. Benton stated that that he does not know.

Commissioner Luke suggested ACCG as a resource for dealing with turbulent times. Mr. Benton stated that the Tax Commissioner is working on finding out how much of our taxes are paid through escrow accounts. Commissioner Pennamon posed the question of what services would be cut. Commissioner Luke stated that merit increases and pay increases would be frozen. He stated that there are steps that we could take to save without cutting services. Commissioner Stunkel stated that we should be trying to get locked into some of the lower prices right now. Commissioner Pennamon stated that he hopes not to be in the same predicament as in 2007-2009 and then in 2013 had to raise the millage rate. He stated that he feels we should be able to lower the millage rates some and use Fund Balance to offset the difference since that is what Fund Balance is for. Commissioner Stunkel stated that Public Works fuel bill should be down some. Commissioner Luke suggested getting a baseline of where we are to get numbers. We could look at the individual departments to see where cuts may be made if any. Commissioner Jernigan stated that we have to have the revenue before we complete the budget. Mr. Benton noted that sales tax revenue comes in at the end of the following month i.e. April’s sales tax revenue numbers will come in at the end of May. Commissioner Luke stated that if things don’t open in the next month it will hurt us bad. Commissioner Jernigan stated that there are some budgets that does not need to be cut. Commissioner Luke stated that we will not cut the budgets on the backs of the county employees. Commissioner Pennamon stated that he prefers to use as much Fund Balance as possible. Chairman Henry stated that he asked Mike to not pull together departmental budgets because the board could use last year’s budget info. He also stated that he would like to try to give the taxpayers a break on their property taxes. Commissioner Jernigan stated that we don’t want any cutbacks to hurt the homeowners and help “big” business.

Commissioner Stunkel questioned how we are doing with the new build permits during this time. Mr. Benton stated that P&Z Director stated that we are busy.

Commissioner Jernigan asked that the County Manager send an email to the board with what was discussed during this meeting.

**County Attorney Items:** Attorney Ozburn requested an executive session for potential real estate.

**County Manager Items**: None

**Citizens Comments:** Commissioner Stunkel read a statement from the Facebook Live where the resident asked about the landfill reopening. The commissioners came to the conclusion that the dump will reopen but a free month will be decided at a later date.

**Executive Session:**

Commissioner Luke motioned to go into Executive Session at 7:19 p.m. to discuss potential real estate acquisition. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stunkel; passed unanimously. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to exit the Executive session at 7:45 p.m. Commissioner Pennamon seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Pennamon motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

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Bruce Henry, Chairman

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Sharon Robinson, Clerk