**Jasper County Board of Commissioners**

**May 18, 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, Gerald Stunkel, Vice-Chairman, Carl Pennamon, Don Jernigan, and Doug Luke.

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

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Invocation:** District 2- Chairman Bruce Henry

**Agenda Approval:** Commissioner Jernigan motioned to add Clean-up Jasper to the agenda. Commissioner Luke seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Luke motioned to approve the agenda with the change. Commissioner Stunkel seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

**Commissioner’s Items:**

Commissioner Luke**-** Commissioner Luke asked the County Manager about an update on an incident that happened the previous week.

Commissioner Jernigan- Commissioner Jernigan asked about the phone system. He also ask for an update on littering problems.

Commissioner Henry**-** Chairman Henry reminded everyone that early voting begin today. He announced that we have people in the audience for the first time in a while.

Regular Agenda:

**Item 1: FY 2021 Employee Health Insurance Program:**

Mr. Kelly Fox stood before the board to present quotes for the employee insurance. The copays are decreasing. He stated that we have a larger number of employees participating this year. The monthly expense to the county is increasing from $63,746 to $68,260. He suggested that we change the max out of pocket. The max is $6,500. The employee is responsible for the first $1,500 and the county pays out the remainder. Last year we budgeted $36,137.98 and we paid out $16,800.18 for HRA expenses. The current total expense including basic life is $810,236.14. Mr. Fox stated that we have a balance in our Loss Fund of $143,774. He recommended that we remain with ABA. All voluntary benefits remain the same. He stated that we could offer Medicare option for current and future employees who may qualify for it. The plans would cost less to the county and provides better coverage to them. It lowers the risk for the county.

**Item 2: Clean-up Jasper County:**

Commissioner Jernigan stated that with everything being shut down and with us having to shut down the landfill everyone is wanting to get the landfill back open to get rid of items.

Commissioner Jernigan suggested that the landfill open with the free tipping fees until the end of June which would be six weeks.

Chairman Henry questioned if there is proper staffing in place. Mr. Benton stated that it will cost overtime.

Commissioner Luke suggested that we wait until June to do the free dumping.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to conduct Clean up Jasper in the month of June with the same stipulation as there were in April. Commissioner Stunkel seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

**Item 3: County Extension Service Funding – FY 2021 Budget:**

Chairman Henry stated that we were denied a funding for the Ag Agent position. Now UGA is asking us to pay for our 4-H agent which was supposed to be paid through an endowment which never came through.

Mr. Bobby Smith (UGA) explained that any position that was open was frozen. Commissioner Jernigan questioned if we could share an agent with another county. Mr. Smith stated that we could be that would be between the individual counties and the districts.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to authorize the county manager to work with University System of GA to work with surrounding counties to fund the AG Agent position. Commissioner Stunkel seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Mr. Smith stated that the endowment that was supposed to help fund the Extension Agent position 10 years ago was never fulfilled. Since the endowment never came through UGA is asking the county to pay 1/3 of the Extension Agent salary. Commissioner Stunkel stated that we need to do whatever it takes to keep this position filled.

**Item 3: FY 2021 Budget Planning**:

County Manager explained the options that were presented.

Potential Budget Versions

$11,184,435 Current FY 2020 Budget Amounts

$10,758,160 Current FY 2020 Budget Cut 3.8%

$11,036,126 Projected FY 2020 Final Total Expenditures

Potential Millage Rates

14.533 Rollback

14.033 Rollback minus .5 mils

13.912 Current rate minus 1.5 mils

13.533 Rollback minus 1.0 mil

13.412 Current rate minus 2.0 mils

There were several departments in the room that presented their case to have their budgets increases.

**Tax Commissioner**- Ms. Angela Walsh stated that she try to work with the bare minimum. The state negotiates some of the vendors which are out of her control. She stated that her office almost pays for itself with the commissions. She stated that her office is overwhelmed with the workload. Commissioner Pennamon asked if she see her collections going down. Ms. Walsh stated that the only thing that she had to compare current times to is the economy in 2009. She stated that at that time the collection rate actually increased. She stated that her office has not slowed down.

**Magistrate Court**- Magistrate Judge Tim Lam stood before the board to discuss his budget. He stated that there was not enough funds in the budget to cover the cost of mandatory training such as travel and meals. He stated that if trainings are held online it would help out with the cost. He stated that Judge Hardwick salary as part-time Magistrate say $498 but it should be $498 times twelve. He stated that they don’t have much in their budget for their supplies. He mentioned that he was told that some funds were in the Clerk of Court budget since the Superior Clerk serves as their clerk as well. He stated that he was later told by the Clerk of Courts Ms. Gasses that this is not the case. He stated that Judge Hardwick’s Magistrate salary is set by statue but as Administrative Assistant she has not had a pay increase for the last two year. He stated that he feels she should have a raise commensurate with what others in that role has received in similar populated counties.

**Sheriff Department & Jail**- Sheriff Donnie Pope stood before the board to present his request. He stated that there is an opportunity to become part of the Atlanta Drug Enforcement Agency Task Force. This agency concentrates on drug trafficking. He is requesting funding for that position as well a vehicle for that person. Sheriff Pope stated that they were using software (Leads Online) that has allowed them to help solve some crimes on a trial basis. They would not have been able to solve the crime traditionally without this software. It is a subscription.

**Fire/EMS Department**- Chief Chris Finch stood before the board to explain his request. He stated that one of his biggest issues to face is lack of personal. He stated that our wages are the lowest in the area. He stated that it is hard to find and retain people at our current pay rates. He stated that most people that leave, leave for higher pay. He stated that people can drive a short distance and double their salary. He stated that they have increased their revenue. He stated their department basically take care of themselves.

**County Extension**- Ms. Kasey Hall stood before the board to request an increase in their budget for funding for the Extension Agent position. She stated that she is still waiting to hear from the Board of Education.

**Planning & Zoning**- Mr. Shane Sealy stood before the board to present his requests for a budget increase. He stated that he has a surplus of $29,000 so far. He stated that his office has not seen a slow down as of right now. He stated that he has a temporary person serving in the administrative role. He is asking for an increased budget to add a full-time administrative position.

**Jasper Memorial**- Ms. Jan Gaston stood before the board to present her request. Ms. Gaston stated that they were having a hard time getting people transported from their facility due to lack of medical transport. MedPro is guaranteed payment for any uninsured patients at the Medicare rate. She is also asking for a slight increase in the subsidy for the Emergency Room Physicians. They have incurred an 11% increase. She stated that their emergency room volume has decreased 50%. She introduced Dr. Laura Moore, ER Doctor, spoke to the board giving them more information about why patients have to be transferred from Jasper Memorial.

**Library –** Stacy Brown presented to the board about their request for an increase. She would like for the county to fund them what they were funded last year without any increases. She stated that they are seeing a decrease in fines and dues.

**Chamber of Commerce**- Mandi Tanner and Pam Mayer stood before the board to present their request. Ms. Mayer stated that they have not had an increase in their budge in 5 years. They are now only asking for $5,600. She stated that she forwarded an email the County Manager and Commissioner Pennamon at some point that stated that it is time to start paying for our membership for the March to the Sea Heritage trail. The second increase request is to provide a parking map to tourist. She stated that it is time to print the tourism brochure again. She stated that it cost $4,000 to purchase 10,000. Ms. Tanner stated that they do not receive hotel motel taxes.

**County Attorney Items:** Requested a short Executive Session

**County Manager Items**: None

**Citizens Comments:** Commissioner Stunkel read a statement from the Facebook Live where the resident asked about

**Executive Session:**

Commissioner Luke motioned to go into the Executive Session at 8:16 p.m. Commissioner Stunkel seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pennamon made motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:37 p.m. Commissioner Stunkel seconded; passed unanimously.

Commissioner Luke made motion to adopt Resolution 05-18-5 and authorize the Chairman to sign, Commissioner Stunkel seconded, passed unanimously.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Pennamon motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8.39 p.m. Commissioner Luke seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

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Bruce Henry, Chairman

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Sharon Robinson, Clerk