

Jasper County Board of Commissioners
December 20, 2021
Called Meeting Minutes
6:00 P.M.

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

Commissioners Present: Bruce Henry, Chairman, Gerald Stunkel, Vice-Chairman, Don Jernigan, Sheila Jones and Steven Ledford.

Staff Present: Sharon Robinson, County Clerk, Dennis Pate, Finance Director, Mike Benton, County Manager, and David Ozburn, County Attorney.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Invocation: Commissioner Gerald Stunkel

Agenda Approval: Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda: None

Public Hearing:

Presentations/Delegations- None

Citizens Comments:

Gail Harrell (Monticello)- Ms. Harrell stood before the board to wish them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. She stated that she is looking forward to continuing her work with the commissioners once she takes office on January 4th.

County Commissioner's Items:

Commissioner Ledford- Commissioner Ledford stated that he received a call about litter again. He asked Sheriff Pope if he knew when they would start back with the litter pick-up with the inmates.

Sheriff Pope stated that they have picked up some roads recently with a small crew. He stated that the issue seems to be that it is reoccurring. As soon as they pick up a few weeks later it looks like it hasn't been done. He stated that if they are notified they can pick it up sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Stunkel- Commissioner Stunkel stated that Rivian is coming to Georgia in Stanton Springs. He hopes to have some details about what the tax pilot will look like for the next 25-30 years

Commissioner Jernigan-Commissioner Jernigan stated that we are 2 years behind on Chip seal.

Commissioner Jones- None

Chairman Henry- Chairman Henry wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Regular Agenda:

Item 1: Moratorium on Accepting Subdivision Preliminary Plats: Chairman Henry stated that there was a Planning and Zoning Meeting last week and there were questions about plats that had been presented. He stated that there were questions about what needs to be updated, the difference between conventional subdivisions and conservation subdivisions, and several other things that needs to be reviewed. He stated that he is asking for a

moratorium against any new subdivision plats until we have had a chance to have a Work Session and go over some of the ordinances that are required, development standards, and the yield plan.

Commissioner Jernigan ask how long did he think it would take. Chairman Henry stated that 90 days should be more than enough time.

Commissioner Stunkel motioned to enact a 90 day moratorium on accepting new subdivision plats. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Item 2: Redistricting Map Approval: Chairman Henry stated that we are now up to version four on the redistricting map. On version four the changes are primarily base off the original version one and we made a few additional changes between districts 1, 2, and 4. We have to get this passed by the board. The school board is willing to accept the decision of the Board of Commissioners. The map will go to the reinforcement office to be certified, it will come back to us, after that it will go to the legislators in January.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to adopt version four of the redistricting map. Commissioner Stunkel seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Item 3: Homestead Valuation Freeze: Lynn Bentley passed out the proposed legislation with highlight of the optional items for the county. She stated the base year would be 2023. The referendum would be in November of 2022. She stated that she would rather not do a 3% raise every year. The other thing is to decide how much land the board would like to include in the freeze. She stated that she put 12 acres. Five acres or less would include subdivisions. Conservation requires 12 acres. Conservation is land owners a big discount on their land value. This will give them a big exemption on their home value as well. The people who are under 12 but over 5 acres will not get a homestead value on their home value. She stated that the only thing that is left is for the board to decide what they would like to do. She stated that if the board wanted to do a complete freeze with a contiguous 12 acres of land the information can be submitted to Susan for legislation. The other thing is there will have to be a second one of these for the school. The county will have to do another one for the hospital mill rate as well. She stated that Susan Holmes was clear that in order for this to be added for legislation, she have to have the information by February 1st.

Chairman Henry asked if 3% is a ceiling.

Ms. Bentley stated that the way they worded it is that it is based on the Consumer Price Index “Shall adjust the base year assessed value annually by the lesser of 3% or the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index from all urban consumers as reported by the United States Department of Labor Bureau and Labor Statistics.”

She said that you can state it however you want.

Commissioner Jernigan stated that they reason we are considering this is because we are experiencing a big boom. He said that the boom is going to stop at some point. He ask how long would it take to reverse this if we needed to.

Ms. Bentley discussed the difference in the types of changes.
Inflationary- Neighborhood goes up 10% due to the market
Real- Screen porch is added

Inflationary changes are what is used to compute the rollback rate. Sixty-three percent of our residential structures have homestead.

Commissioner Stunkel stated that we are looking at doing the freeze at the wrong time.

Item 4: Employee Retirement Plan Review: Mr. David Bell (Regional Client Manager) stood before the board to address them. He discussed Defined Benefits Plans. Defined benefits Plan (Pension Plan) a benefit that is defined by terms of a plan. There is a deferred compensation plan which all employees are able to participate in as soon as they are hired. The pension plan comes with a 3% contribution from each employee which begins on the January 1st following 2 years of service. There is a four year vesting schedule. The benefit received is a multiplier of less than 1% time years of service.

Commissioner Jernigan asked if participants could contribute more than 3%.

Mr. Bell stated that it is a set amount. The county covers right at 6%. Mr. Bell discussed some plans that are offered in surrounding counties (Monroe, Jones, Butts, Walton, and Upson Counties).

Mr. Bell stated that in order to fully fund an effective 401A 457 plan there really needs to be at least 12% contribution. That can be some from the employer and some from the employee. Some counties are 14%-16% with the combination of contribution. He stated that ACCG will administer any plan that the Board decides to put in place.

Mr. Bell went over the proposed Benefit Plan. He stated that doing future services only doubles the price of your plan. There is an additional cost for additional cost studies.

Sheriff Pope thank the board for taking the time to discuss this matter. He stated that he thinks the 401A would give more incentive to be loyal and stay in Jasper County.

Lynn Bentley asked about the insurance options. She asked if other counties offer options where you can stay on the insurance if you retire at 60.

Mr. Bell stated that some counties offer that but it is not his area. Increasing the vesting schedule by a couple years will not move the needle much on the cost of the claim.

Commissioner Stunkel ask the Deputies that were in the audience what were their thoughts and wants.

The deputies in the audience spoke about their thoughts about the retirement plan.

Chairman Henry asked if the 3% pre-tax.

Mr. Bell stated that there is a mandatory 3% mandatory contribution. The interest that is earned is taxable. The 457 plan is pretax.

Sheriff Pope stated that he would suggest making any new plan retroactive to give retention value.

Commissioner Stunkel asked what is the small fee associated with the proposal.

Mr. Bell stated that it cost less than \$500 per cost study.

Commissioner Stunkel stated that he thinks we need to look at a couple different options and see what they would do and what they would cost max benefit in options for these guys.

Commissioner Jernigan stated that if it's on \$500 it's not a lot of money to spend to try to come up with the best option for all employees.

Mr. Bell clarified that the cost studies are associated with the defined benefit plan as opposed to the 401a & 457.

Chairman Henry asked if with the 401a and 457 we just plug in the numbers we want to use with those plans.

Mr. Bell stated that the cost would be based on what you decided in terms of matching contributions and base contributions by the county. Defined benefit plan is more of an actuarial figure based on what kind of plan you want to design.

Item 5: Schedule Work Sessions and Called Meetings as Needed: Chairman Henry suggested that we do not have any more called meetings or work sessions until after the New Year.

County Attorney Items: None

County Manager Update:

Executive Session:

Commissioner Stunkel motioned to go into Executive Session for litigation and discussion for employment at 7:53 p.m. Commissioner Ledford seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Stunkel motioned to exit Executive Session at 8:33 p.m. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Stunkel motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Bruce Henry, Chairman

Sharon Robinson, Clerk