

Jasper County Board of Commissioners
December 2, 2024
Regular Meeting Minutes
6:00 P.M.

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

Commissioners Present: Bruce Henry, Chairman; Steven Ledford, Vice Chair; Don Jernigan; Sheila Pounds and Asher Gray

Staff: Mike Benton, County Manager, Sheila Jefferson, Clerk- Administrative Services Director, Larissa Ruark, Chief Accounting Officer, Doug Attaway- Planning and Zoning Director

Pledge of Allegiance:

Invocation: Commissioner Ledford

Agenda Approval: Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda: Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve the following minutes:

- **Work Session Minutes- October 21, 2024**
- **Work Session Minutes- October 28, 2024**
- **Regular Meeting Minutes- November 4, 2024**

Commissioner Ledford seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gray motioned to approve **Check #72526-72765** Commissioner Ledford seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearings with Business Action

Commissioner Ledford motioned to begin the public hearing at 6:02 p.m. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing 1: Ordinance Amendment to Part II, Code of Ordinances which includes Chapter 119-245.- Same non-residential districts. Reducing the minimum lot size in C-2 zoning from 1.2 Acres to 1 Acre.:

In Favor:

Jason Abercrombie: Spoke in favor as the business owner. He said they have been struggling with trying to get their dealership up and running for several months and it seems like no one has their stuff together. He said the county has been taxing the property as C-2 for at least thirty years. He said now he is being told it is zoned AG. He said this situation has almost put them out of business because they are trying to move their business from Griffin to Mansfield. He said he is asking them to give the small guys a chance because it seems you have to have a big name around here to get anything done.

Opposed:

Bill Nash: Mr. Nash said as a member of the Planning and Zoning board he voted against it. He said after all the effort to try to increase residential lots to reduce density this seems like it would be going in the wrong direction. He said the county set up the Variance Board for issues such as this. He said that is the

appropriate venue and would not create any problems for everyone else in the county because of trying to help one person. He said he doesn't want to create a new low standard. He said the county has been careful about driveway distances and that challenge is going to become more complex creating problems for drivers while the DOT tries to reconcile what the county will allow. He said he is against it and he hopes the commissioners vote against it as well.

Business Item 1: Ordinance Amendment to Part II, Code of Ordinances which includes Chapter 119-245.- Same non-residential districts. Reducing the minimum lot size in C-2 zoning from 1.2 Acres to 1 Acre: Chairman Henry asked the County Attorney Adam Nelson if they could approve the ordinance amendment and still leave the lot size the same. He said that was the intention because it has been taxed as C-2. He asked if it would need to go before the variance boards. Mr. Nelson said that even though it looks like the property has been used as commercial for quite some time there have been periods of inactivity and any non-conforming business would have caused a loss of the grandfathered use. He said allowing the change without changing the lot size requirement could cause a conflict in the code. He said they would need to change the lot size requirements. Mr. Nelson stated that typically variances are used for particular characteristics of a property, not lot sizes. He said that it could be done but it shouldn't be.

Chairman Henry asked what options they would have if they did not change the acreage for C-2 zoning. Mr. Nelson said this is a common issue for counties to find mis-zoned parcels of land. He said it just happened that Jasper County has a lot size requirement that makes it difficult to rezone the lot. He said there are other code change options they could make but the way the code is written they would have to start over and it would take months to get it taken care of.

Commissioner Gray asked Planning and Zoning Director Doug Attaway why the zoning is set at 1.2 acres. Mr. Attaway said he asked David Mercer about the minimum lot requirements for Commercial and Mr. Mercer said 1 acre. Mr. Attaway said for some reason unknown to him in 2009 it was coded for 1.2 acres. Mr. Attaway said he also wanted to point out that according to the ordinance minimum lot size standards are non-appealable.

Commissioner Ledford asked if changing the ordinance would make it possible for someone to change a residential lot to Commercial. Mr. Attaway said they would have to go through the rezoning process which would include two public hearings. Commissioner Ledford said he is trying to look at what would be best for the county. He said everyone looks at it as if it's just for a car lot but the decision will affect the entire county as a whole.

Commissioner Gray said he feels they should treat it as grandfathered in. He said everyone he has spoken to agrees it is commercial. Chairman Henry said that would mean taking different steps. Commissioner Ledford said he is wondering why it was changed to 1.2. He said the 1.2 acres of land is hard to buy and two acres is too large of a requirement for C-2. He said the .2 isn't going to stop much but he thinks one acre minimum requirement would be okay.

Mary Patrick raised her hand to speak and Chairman Henry allowed saying the public hearing was still open. Mrs. Patrick asked if it would be possible to change the land use map for that one lot. She said everything next to it is commercial and that would solve the problem. Mr. Nelson said that Mrs. Patrick has a good point but they have to be careful how they operate from a legal standpoint. He said the Commissioners have spent the past year talking about lot sizes in residential areas but he doesn't remember a discussion about commercial lot size. He said when they set the lot size everybody has to play by the rules at the time they go in place. Mr. Nelson said that means if they change the lot size to one acre for commercial and approve it anyone who wanted could then have a one-acre commercial lot. He said there are legally some rights impacted by people in-between the changes. He said the rules follow what is on record at the time you apply to develop property. He said there is nothing to stop them from reducing the lot size today and then increasing it at a later date. Mr. Nelson said that is the only way he can see for them to correct what seems to him as a clerical error that was made. He said he would not engage in doing this often because then it leads you to decide when you are going to follow the rules and when you are not. He said there are going to be times the board would need to make decisions such as these. Chairman Henry said that if

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someone questions why they made this decision then they could just refer them to the minutes showing that it was a clerical error. Mr. Nelson said they could but they could also lower the lot size to one acre and moratorium any additional rezoning in that fifth zoning district. He said that would give them time to research why the zoning was changed to 1.2 acres. He said that would allow them to change it back if they did find a requirement for the change or abide by the 1 acre if they don't find any reason for the 1.2 and lift the moratorium. Commissioner Ledford said he feels they should drop it all down to 1 acre or increase it all because the 1.2 doesn't make sense. He said all the commercial zoning is the same and he thinks they need to look at and change all of them. He said he thinks they need to go through all the ordinances.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to change C-2 from 1.2 acres to 1 acre. Commissioner Jernigan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Henry asked if the property Mr. Abercrombie is requesting to have rezoned is still AG currently. Mr. Attaway said it is and his request was tabled but should be added to the January 6th meeting. Commissioner Gray asked if they could amend the agenda and add the rezoning request to the current agenda. Mr. Nelson said the last time the board had considered the rezoning of the property was in September and that they are right at 90 days. He said if they changed the zoning at this point someone could successfully challenge their decision. He said he would re-advertise if it was up to him. Chairman Henry said it has been less than 90 days, he said it has been closer to 85 days. Mr. Nelson said he would not pass the 90-day mark without re-advertising. He said there is no law stating it but in a recent case in another county, 90 days was too long. He said if the property owner wants to take the risk then that is up to him. Chairman Henry said it was about 85 days. Mr. Nelson said they would need a motion from the board to move forward and take from the table the rezoning application.

Commissioner Gray motioned to add the Rezoning application. 2024 REZ 002. Request to re-zone .92 acres from AG to C-2 from the September 9, meeting that was tabled making it item # 2 on the agenda for December 2, 2024. Commissioner Ledford seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Presentations/Delegations: None

Citizens Comments:

Victor Columbus: Spoke against Industrial Solar Farms. Mr. Columbus said that the Board of Commissioners had already unanimously voted against the issue and now there have been two town halls about it. He said the implication that the Board of Commissioners are reconsidering their decision is profound. He said Jasper County would be going from a lovely rural county to an industrial complex supplying power to places unknown. He said the proposed area for the Industrial Solar Farm is 2.5 times larger than the entire City of Monticello. He said that it would be the same as 2197 football fields. He said they did not discuss the location of a battery bank and other associated equipment. He said in a statement they said the transmission lines in place were adequate to carry the load. He said that statement is true but he finds it difficult to believe that those lines are not already being used which would mean an increase in the size and capacity of those transmission lines. Mr. Columbus said that could affect homeowners whose property the lines would cross from one side of the county to the other. He said he assumes that this is all about the money. He said they first presented that additional tax revenues of four million dollars would be paid to the county every year but according to representatives from EDP, the taxes would be paid on a depreciation schedule that they will not disclose. He said the representative simply stated it would be too hard for you to understand. He said assuming they use a modified cost recovery system the decline would occur in a year or two and spiral downward from there. Mr. Columbus said at the last town hall meeting it was disclosed that there would be tax incentives but no one will disclose the amounts of the concessions. He said to couple that with EDP utilization of a process known as asset rotation. He said after the accelerated depreciation is taken EDP sells all or significant portions of the Industrial Solar Farm to another LLC and the depreciation begins all over again. Mr. Columbus asked where the real benefit was to the county. He said tax revenues will decline significantly over a short period. He said the benefit would be for one land owner, Georgia Power, and EDP Renewal.

David Sheppard: Mr. Sheppard said that he wanted to share his appreciation for the board and especially Commissioner Jernigan. He said every time he has ever called or emailed Commissioner Jernigan he has always gotten a response no matter the issue. He said he and Commissioner Jernigan have gone through a lot of things together and Commissioner Jernigan helped get Goolsby Rd paved. He said recently Commissioner Jernigan helped get the pothole patching machine. He said he appreciated him and wanted to wish Commissioner Jernigan good health and a happy retirement.

Martha Hayes: Spoke on the request from the City of Monticello for assistance for help with repairs for a city road. She said with the way the roads are through the county she can't believe the Commissioners would even consider the request. She said she has been trying to get her road repaired since February 2024, so her driveway doesn't wash away. She said she has spoken to County Manager Mike Benton and Commissioner Ledford in person and through email. She said she was told Public Works director Michael Walsh was contacted and there was a plan to get the road graded after the rainy season. She said she did not hear from anyone about her section of County Line Rd until July 2024. She said she had a meeting with Michael Walsh in July and he said he knew what needed to be done but did not know when it could be done. She said she pays about \$4800.00 in taxes and doesn't get anything from the county except trash pickup and she pays for that.

Cathy Benson: Spoke about the Pothole Patching Machine and the conditions of her road. She said one hole was patched while others were missed. She said all that has ever been done on her road was patching holes and she has been there twenty-six years. She said she would like to know where her tax money is going.

Mary Patrick: She said she and Commissioner Jernigan have had their issues, but he has always called or emailed her back if she ever sent him anything and she appreciates that. She then spoke about the industrial solar farm. She said the BOC has been misled by EDP. She said the county will not get 4.7 million dollars a year and most likely will not even get 4.7 million the first year. Mrs. Patrick said the BOC was not told about tax abatements and incentives that are absolutely going to be given. She said EPD stated at the town hall meeting that they had to have them and they haven't settled on the tax package yet. She said even though they have told the Commissioners there would be no tax incentive there will be and EDP would not be involved without them. Mrs. Patrick said the tax incentive would cut out a large portion of the revenue and depreciation would further deplete it. She said she is wondering how much revenue the BOC thinks they are going to get. She said the liability of the entire project is in question if the Trump administration cut out all tax incentives for clean energy as promised. She said she doesn't want the Commissioners to go back on their promise to keep Jasper County Rural because of over-stated tax revenue promises. She asked the county attorney why she couldn't see what he charged us for. She said everything he sent her in an open records request was blacked out. Mrs. Patrick said she wants to know how much he has billed the county for the short-term rental work he has done. She said it's not private information and the citizens of the county should know how much they are paying for services.

Cindy Price: Spoke in favor of the BOC assisting the City of Monticello with road repairs in the Oak Ridge subdivision. She said that the people in that subdivision pay their taxes and those taxes are paid to the county. Mrs. Price said the majority of their taxes go to the county. She said the residents in Oak Ridge have spoken to the county and the city to get the road repaired. Mrs. Price said that at some point someone has to acknowledge that they are residents of both the city and the county and they need to come together. She said she is asking the county to help the city fix the road. She said she understands there are a lot of roads that need to be repaired but she is fighting for her neighborhood.

Donnie Pope: Sheriff Donnie Pope spoke to thank Commissioner Jernigan for all he has done for the County. He said Commissioner Jernigan worked to leave the county better than he found it. Sheriff Pope said public service can be a thankless job and he wants to let Commissioner Jernigan know he appreciates all he has done and wishes him all the best. Sheriff Pope then spoke on the county retirement saying that he appreciates all the time they have spent on the issue. He said no matter what plan they choose he is asking them to please leave the employee contribution at three percent. He said increasing the amount to five percent would essentially cut the amount of take-home pay for employees. He said the preferred plan

for employees would be 1B. He said employees have always contributed financially and the commissioners should also consider the sacrifice and work put in by the employees. He said county employees are a team and the commissioners need to take care of that team.

Jason Abercrombie: Thanked Commissioner Jernigan for his service. He said they had some issues but Commissioner Jernigan helped them get it worked out and he just really appreciated him.

County Commissioner Items & Updates:

Commissioner Pounds: None

Chairman Henry: He said he wanted to thank Commissioner Jernigan for his service. He said they have not always agreed but they have always been able to be civil towards one another.

Commissioner Jernigan: He said he has enjoyed his time as a County Commissioner. He said he rather continue to serve as a Commissioner as he enjoys helping people. He said his wife feels differently and is good with having him home and the phone not ringing as much. He said he started serving the government in 1968 and he enjoys it. He said he is available until December 31st. He stated that the patching machine is a good piece of equipment and we have a good operator but like with anything new that someone has never done before there is a learning curve for everyone. He said if he had some support and understanding then he believes the employee will do very well operating the truck. He said that maybe he needs some additional training from the company. He said you just can't start a new job you have never done before without making some mistakes.

Commissioner Gray: Commissioner Gray said that he has also had issues with the pothole patching machine. He said he is looking at the scheduling aspect. He asked what the issue with the timeline was and said he was just wondering if the operator had other obligations that might cause a delay.

Mr. Benton stated that operating the pothole machine is his primary job.

Commissioner Gray said that he has heard complaints from several citizens and they will be monitoring it closely going forward.

Mr. Benton said the particular road they are discussing is beyond what the pothole machine should be used for. He said it needs hot asphalt.

Commissioner Gray said it's a short stretch. Commissioner Gray then told the County Attorney Adam Nelson that he had an issue with his redaction of the bill. He said that he understands Attorney-client privilege but it is also public.

Mr. Nelson said that when they respond to an open records request on billing by a resident they provide redacted information due to attorney-client privilege. He said any commissioner can request a copy of the billing and it would have full information. Mr. Nelson said the Commissioners as the client can then share that information with whoever they wish but he can not disclose it to the public himself. He said that is a standard process for government clients. He said he cannot break confidentiality but the commissioners can do what they like with the information. Mr. Nelson said in response to Mrs. Patrick's point he can give the commissioners an itemized bill for a particular service but he doesn't have a choice on the open records request made by the public. He said he does want to be transparent but he has to follow procedure.

Commissioner Ledford: None

Regular Agenda **Business Items:**

Business Item 2: Request to re-zone .92 acres from AG to C-2: Planning and Zoning Director Doug Attaway presented an application request to rezone property located at 22016 Hwy 11 N from GA to C2 that had been tabled at the September 2024 meeting. He said he believes the P&Z Board voted to approve the rezoning request in August 2024 3 to 2. Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the rezoning request from AG to C2 for the .92-acre lot located at 22016 Hwy 11 N. Commissioner Jernigan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 3: Renewal of 2025 Alcohol Licenses:

Tyson's Country Store, Application number 2025-A-001 located at 22044 Hwy 11 North., Monticello, GA 31064. Name of applicant: Lisa Whitaker Wilkerson – Retail sales of beer and wine – Renewal
Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve – Retail sales of beer and wine – Renewal for Tyson's County Store. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Frank's Restaurant, Application number 2025-A-002 located at 11818 Hwy 212 West Covington, GA 30014. Name of applicant: Vivian Castellana Fuller – Pouring license for distilled spirits, beer, and wine. – Renewal. Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the pouring license for distilled spirits, beer, and wine. – Renewal for Frank's Restaurant Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Lakeview Marina, Application number 2025-A-003 located at 8726 Jackson Lake Road Monticello, GA 31064. Name of applicant: Shabanali Jabbarcheloei – Retail sales of beer and wine – Renewal. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve – Retail sales of beer and wine – Renewal for Lake Marina. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Lakeview Restaurant, Application number 2025-A-004 located at 8726 B Jackson Lake Road Monticello, GA 31064. Name of applicant: Shabanali Jabbarcheloei – Pouring license for distilled spirits, beer, and wine. – Renewal. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve the pouring license for distilled spirits, beer, and wine. – Renewal for Lakeview Restaurant Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Convenience Stores, Inc. dba Larry's 4-Way, Application number 2025-A-005 located at 9160 Hwy 212 West Monticello, GA 31064. Name of applicant: Joann Hedrick – Retail sales of beer and wine. – Renewal. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve – Retail sales of beer and wine – Renewal for Convenience Stores, INC dba Larry's 4-Way. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Turtle Cove POA, Application number 2025-A-006 located at 222 Clubhouse Drive Monticello, GA 31064. Name of applicant: Phillip Myers – Pouring license for distilled spirits, beer, and wine. Renewal. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve the pouring license for distilled spirits, beer, and wine. – Renewal for Turtle Cove POA. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Shane One Stop, Application number 2025-A-009 located at 8541 GA Hwy 142 Shady Dale, GA 31085. Name of applicant: Gautamkumar P. Patel - Retail sales of beer and wine – Renewal. Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve – Retail sales of beer and wine and renewal for Shane One Stop. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 4: Environmental Health Fee Schedule Update and Approval: David Mercer presented a request for updated fee amounts for services provided by the Environmental Health Department. Mr. Mercer said the last time they updated fees was about eight years ago. He said the reason they are requesting the increase is because the cost to provide service has gone up. He provided packets with a breakdown of the cost. He said that the board of Health had approved the increase, a public hearing was held and it was advertised in the paper for a month. He said he is now just seeking the County Commissioners approval of the updated fees.

Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve the updated Environmental Health Fee Schedule. Commissioner Ledford seconded, Commissioner Ledford asked if the updated fees were just to bring them Jasper County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes December 2, 2024

up to the district average. Mr. Mercer said they are just trying to catch up to the district average because our fees were below and he is trying to be confirmed district-wide. The motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 5: Monticello City Council Financial Assistance Request for Road Repairs in Oak Ridge Subdivision: Chairman Henry said he received a letter from Doug Curry that was included in the packet. Commissioner Ledford asked what kind of resurfacing project they are doing. Mr. Benton said it is areas of failure on the road that need to be repaired. Mr. Tim Womack attended the meeting and was asked to represent the Monticello City Council. Mr. Womack said the city is requesting assistance for the road repair because their thought was the county collects the impact fees on the road and if all 42 lots are sold that is approximately \$58,000. He said they are not asking the county to repair just help with the cost.

Chairman Henry said impact fees cannot be used for repairs. Mr. Womack stated that he understood but that was the thought and they were just asking for help. He said that a lot of county money comes from citizens who live in the city also. Commissioner Ledford asked what kind of work needed to be done. Mr. Womack said the road is in awful condition. Chairman Henry said that a logging company is responsible for a lot of the damage to the road. Commissioner Ledford asked if the logging company had a bond. Mr. Womack said he has only been working with the city on this for a short time but it was his understanding that the original timber company had a bond but he isn't sure about any others.

Commissioner Ledford asked if the county had received a quote from the city on the repair cost. Mr. Benton said no they only received a letter requesting assistance. Commissioner Pounds asked if they got three estimates for the work. Mr. Womack said they got estimates but he could not say for sure how many and he would have to check on it. Commissioner Jernigan said that it sounds like the job is too big for the city road department. Mr. Womack said it is a huge job. He said he was not prepared to represent the city at this meeting, so he doesn't have some of the information the commissioners are requesting. Commissioner Jernigan said maybe it should be table until Mr. Doug Curry can attend the meeting as he wrote the letter requesting funding. He said he feels bad for the city residents but it's the city's responsibility to take care of the roads. He said he feels the city should have the funds. He said they stopped funding law enforcement when they did away with their police department, they no longer fund the library, and they don't help fund the recreation department so they should have some money. He said he didn't know what they did with the funds they were using for those items. Commissioner Jernigan said he understands that Mr. Womack was not on the council at that time but where is all that money?

Commissioner Gray said the county just applied for LMIG and suggested the city try doing the same thing. Mr. Benton said they are behind on their audits and they may not be eligible for LMIG grants. Commissioner Ledford said since everyone is beating Mr. Womack down they need to know he is the one making sure the audits are getting caught up. Commissioner Ledford said \$18,000.00 doesn't seem like major road damage and he would like to see the quotes. He said residents in the City of Shady Dale and the City of Monticello do pay county taxes but the City of Monticello gets a major portion of the LOST (Local Option Sales Tax) which is for this type of project. He said there should be funds from that. He said he has no problem helping the citizens in the county if there is a need but he doesn't feel \$18,000 is major road work. He said he understood there is damage but without seeing the quotes to see what the damage actually is. He said if there are truly ruts in the asphalt twelve inches deep \$18,000 is not going to cover the cost.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to table Monticello City Council Financial Assistance Request for Road Repairs in Oak Ridge Subdivision. Commissioner Jernigan seconded. Chairman Henry said he wanted to have further discussion. He said a few years ago the County and City of Monticello went through LOST negotiations. He said the County was trying to get more money from the City of Monticello but they held firm to what they were getting from that. He said if the County had gotten more money from the LOST there might be funds to help but the City of Monticello was holding tight. He said they should have that money for this project based on the LOST funds. Commissioner Gray said the City is incorporated for a reason. He said if they want the county to handle everything the City of Monticello needs to dissolve and let the county handle it. He said every time you turn around the city is coming to the BOC. He said he understands the citizens are in the county but he is talking about the city. He said cities create cities to run their own government. He said if they are having issues and are unable to pay \$18,000 to fix the road then

maybe the need to dissolve and the County can take over the city and be done with it or consolidate. Commissioner Gray said the City's approved budget of 12.1 million dollars and the county's approved budget is 14.7 million dollars with a lot more to fund. Motion to table passed 3 to 2 with Chairman Henry and Commissioner Gray opposed.

Business Item 6: Georgia First Responder PTSD Program – Insurance Coverage: Mr. Benton presented saying House Bill 451 requires Public Entities in Georgia to offer supplemental benefit programs for all first responders diagnosed with PTSD resulting from exposure to line-of-duty traumatic events. Mr. Benton said we have ninety-nine first responders eligible for the coverage. He said the coverage has to be in place by January 1, 2025. ACCG put together a quote because it is a statewide requirement. He said the annual premium is \$12,670 for the ninety-nine first responders. Chairman Henry asked who is considered first responders. Ms. Jefferson said all firefighters paid and volunteer, jailors, and deputies. She said it includes dispatchers but they do not fall under the BOC so they were not included in the quote. Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve Georgia First Responder PTSD Program – Insurance Coverage. Commissioner Pounds seconded, Motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 7: Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program Support: Chairman Henry said a few years ago the county put in money along with Central Georgia EMC to add fiber optic broadband on all of their lines. It was made available to approximately 75% of the county. He said the Federal Government is offering some additional funds and AT&T is requesting a letter of support. He said he contacted Central Georgia EMC and they are also requesting a letter of support to get the extra funds to finish the remaining areas of the county. He said he just needs authorization to sign the support letter stating that Jasper County is looking to get the funding to complete the project. Mr. Benton said they need the support letter this month. He said it was not for money from the county just a support letter for the grant. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to authorize Chairman Henry to sign the letter of support for the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 8: 2025 Board of Commissioner Meeting Dates Approval: Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the 2025 Board of Commissioner meeting dates with a change of the December 1st, 2025 meeting being moved to December 8th, 2025. Commissioner Pounds seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 9: 2025 County Holidays Approval: Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve 2025 County Holidays as presented. Commissioner Ledford seconded the motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 10: Human Resources and County Boards Report: County Human Resource Director Sheila Jefferson presented an update on newly hired employees, terminations, and resignations from September 2024 – November 2024. Ms. Jefferson said the county currently has 176 employees with 119 full-time and 57 part-time. She also gave an update on the county boards with openings for new members.

Business Item 11: 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan Amendment – Allow Roth Contributions: County Manager Mike Benton presented an update on the discussed amendment for the county employee voluntary retirement 457(b) plan to allow employee contributions to go to a ROTH. He said these are post-tax contributions. He said David Bell did get ACCG to put together an adoption amendment to allow the ROTH Contribution to be made along with the resolution to adopt the amendment. He said there is no cost to the county. Commissioner Ledford motioned to authorize Chairman Henry to sign the adoption agreement for the 457(b) Roth option. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Item 12: Employee Retirement Plan Improvement Options: Chairman Henry said they have studied the options and have narrowed them down to two choices. Commissioner Jernigan said the county employees need to be taken care of because they are the backbone of the county. He said county employees get very little praise and take a lot of abuse. He said the Commissioners need to take care of the county employees the best they can. Commissioner Jernigan motioned to approve retirement plan option 1B and leave the employee contribution at 3% with a one-time deposit of \$1,086,100 using the fund balance to

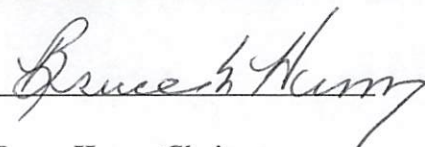
reduce the annual cost and interest. Commissioner Pounds seconded. Commissioner Ledford said they discussed using money from the fund balance to put a one-million-dollar deposit towards the plan to offset the additional cost. Mr. Benton gave a breakdown of the additional cost to the county for options 1A and 1B if the employee contribution remains 3%. He said 1A would cost the county an additional \$75,900 with a one-time deposit of \$1,166,900. Option 1B would be \$198,450 with a one-time deposit of \$1,086,100. He said the money is in the fund balance to cover the cost of either option. He said the money is there for the one-time deposit and will save the county in interest and reduce to annual contribution so it would be a good use of the funds. Commissioner Gray asked what the fund balance would be after the one-time payment. Mr. Benton said the estimated FY 2024 projected fund balance amount is around 7 million dollars leaving about 6 million after the one-time payment. Commissioner Jernigan asked what the yearly fund balance increase average is. Mr. Benton said it has been between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000. He said the county now has a positive yearly increase that will cover the additional cost. Chairman Henry asked if the one million deposit would need to be paid again in five years or if it was a one-time buydown. Mr. Benton said it is a one-time buy-down to reduce the annual payment and interest amount. Chairman Henry asked if they should consider paying additional payments in the future as the fund balance increases. Mr. Benton said they look at the retirement audit every year and that can be discussed at that time each year. The motion passed unanimously.

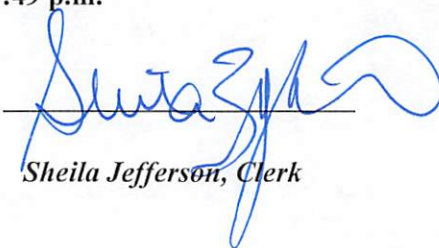
Business Item 13: Schedule Work Sessions and Called Meetings as Needed: Chairman Henry motioned not to schedule any called meetings or work sessions until after the beginning of the new year. Commissioner Ledford seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

County Attorney Items: None

County Manager Update: Mr. Benton said the commissioners need to be thinking about a work session for January 2025. He said they need to meet a deadline for making decisions on House Bill 581. He then gave an update on YTD and MTD build permits for both residential and commercial. Mr. Benton said that the FY 2024 is on target.

Executive Session: Executive session began at 7:49 p.m.


Bruce Henry, Chairman


Sheila Jefferson, Clerk