

Jasper County Board of Commissioners

January 6, 2025

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; Rob Alexander; 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 Pounds

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

Consent Agenda: Commissioner Gray motioned to approve the following Minutes:

- **Work Session Minutes- November 25, 2024**
- **Regular Meeting Minutes- December 2, 2024**

Commissioner Ledford seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gray motioned to approve Check #'s 72766-72985. Commissioner Pounds seconded, motion passed unanimously.

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

Public Hearings with Business Action

Public Hearing 1: Preliminary Plat 24-001, Lake Pines Subdivision off Landers Lane: Planning and Zoning Director Doug Attaway presented a request for a Conservation Subdivision with a total of nine lots on 62.19 acres that is currently zoned RES. Mr. Attaway said the property has road frontage on Hwy 212 W, Landers Lane, and Landers Way and is currently zoned RES with the density of one primary dwelling unit per five acres. He said the Planning and Zoning Board approved the preliminary plat with minor changes that have already been made and are represented on the current plat provided to the commissioners. He said the changes included identified greenspace and open space to meet the current ordinances, placing mail kiosks at the right of way, and a lot table for the lot lines. He said it was passed by the Planning and Zoning Board with a 5/0 vote on November 21, 2024.

Citizens Comments:

Robert Jordan: Spoke on behalf of the property owner. Commissioner Ledford asked if anyone knew how the homeowners would be affected by the section of road that would be abandoned. Mr. Jordan said it is his understanding that they are all on board with the project and even attended a meeting to support the project. He said he did not speak to them personally but that was his understanding. He said it is also his understanding that because of the relocation of a section of Landers Lane, the owner will have to appear before the board to request the county abandon that section across lot seven. Commissioner Gray asked if that should have been done when they approved the plat. Mr. Jordan said it currently services the home there and the new road would need to be ready before the county could abandon the old road. Commissioner Ledford said once the commissioners approve the plat then they start the abandonment process. He said the verbiage can read that once completed

that section of the road would be abandoned but they need to make sure it gets done. Mr. Jordan said he thinks the abandonment would happen simultaneously with the approval of the final plat because that is when the county would have to accept the new right of way.

Keith Benton: Mr. Benton said they knew about the subdivision, but the question was asked if the residents had been contacted about how they felt about the traffic. Mr. Benton said they had not been contacted by anybody to ask how they felt. He said he could almost tell them his neighbors had not been contacted either. Mr. Benton said if they are going to use the entrance off that interferes with everybody.

Business Item 1: Preliminary Plat 24-001, Lake Pines Subdivision off Landers Lane:

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the preliminary plat 24-001 for the Lake Pines subdivision off Landers Lane. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing 2: Land Division Plat off Hwy 212 W: Planning and Zoning Director Doug Attaway presented a request to subdivide 22.07 acres off Hwy 212 W. He said the applicant has exceeded the administrative limits allowed within the past 24 months for dividing land under the minor plat ordinance. Mr. Attaway said on December 21, 2024, the Planning and Zoning Board voted 4-0 to recommend the land division.

Citizens Comments: None

Business Item 2: Land Division Plat off Hwy 212 W:

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the Land Division Plat off Hwy 212 W. Commissioner Alexander seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing 3: Ordinance Amendment to Part II, Code of Ordinances which includes Chapter 119, Section 119-383. -Walls, fences, and planting. Removing R-1, R-2, RL, RL-1, and RL-3 zoning and replacing with RES zoning: Planning and Zoning Director Doug Attaway presented a request for a code ordinance amendment to Chapter 119, Section 119-383. -Walls, fences, and planting to remove R-1, R-2, RL, RL-1 and RL-3 zoning and replacing it with RES. Mr. Attaway said that the board has been making changes and this request is to get those changes updated. He said the Planning and Zoning board voted 5-0 to recommend the ordinance amendment.

Citizens Comments: None

Business Item 3: Ordinance Amendment to Part II, Code of Ordinances which includes Chapter 119, Section 119-383. -Walls, fences, and planting. Removing R-1, R-2, RL, RL-1, and RL-3 zoning and replacing with RES zoning:

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the request for a code ordinance amendment to Chapter 119, Section 119-383. -Walls, fences, and planting to remove R-1, R-2, RL, RL-1 and RL-3 zoning and replacing it with RES. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing 4: Ordinance Amendment to Part II, Code of Ordinances which includes Chapter 119, Section 119-391.- Required Buffer Areas. Removing RR, R-1, R-2, and V-P zoning and replacing with RES zoning: Planning and Zoning Director Doug Attaway presented a request for an ordinance amendment to Chapter 119, Section 119-391.-Required Buffer Areas, removing RR, R-1, R-2, and V-P zoning and replacing it with RES zoning. Mr. Attaway said this is updating the ordinances to match what the board has already passed at previous meetings.

Citizens Comments: None

Business Item 4: Ordinance Amendment to Part II, Code of Ordinances which includes Chapter 119, Section 119-391.- Required Buffer Areas. Removing RR, R-1, R-2, and V-P zoning and replacing with RES zoning:

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the requested ordinance amendment to Chapter 119, Section 119-391.-Required Buffer Areas removing RR, R-1, R-2, and V-P zoning and replacing with RES zoning.

Chairman Henry said he wants to clarify that there may be other places they find issues and he asked that Mr. Attaway bring those to the board as they are working through the codes. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Presentations/Delegations

Recognition of Barbara Jo Cook's Service to Jasper County: County Manager Mike Benton presented a resolution request to honor and recognize Barbara Jo Cook. Chairman Henry said Mrs. Cook is resigning from her post on the Southern Crescent Board, but she worked hard for the students and put a lot of effort into making it a success.

Commissioner Ledford motioned for Chairman Henry to sign the Resolution Recognition of Barbara Jo Cook's Service to Jasper County and Southern Crescent Technical College. Commissioner Pounds second, motion passed unanimously.

Prior Citizens Comments Follow-up:

Chairman Henry said they normally just make note of citizen comments but have decided to start prior comments and follow up on items as needed following monthly meetings.

Mike Benton stated they would start with comments from Mrs. Martha Hayes about repairs to her road and Mrs. Kathy Benson about repairs to Lakeshore Drive. Mr. Benton said he and Commissioner Ledford met Mrs. Hayes at her home and looked at the work that needed to be done and then he met with Public Works Director Michael Walsh. Mr. Walsh said Mrs. Hayes had flooding down her driveway, so they installed a new cross-over pipe and unclogged the pipe below that one. He said they put in a new ditch and placed new gravel. He said the rain has caused some delays but they have completed approximately 80% of the work needed. Mr. Walsh then addresses Mrs. Benson's concerns about the pothole patching machine. He said it's a good machine and will be a great asset, but he wanted to explain how it works. He said it was going to take time for the operator to get everything about the machine figured out but some of the holes that he did not repair were full of water and even after they blew the water out they filled back up. Mr. Walsh said to repair the hole correctly they need to wait until it dries out. He said the operator did miss a hole or two and they realized that after going back out. Mr. Walsh said some he couldn't patch at that time and others he is having to do a layer at a time because they are long. He explained that it was emulsion and rock. He said it's fast and works great when it is set up, but the emulsion is the same consistency as paint. He said they can't just fill a deep hole and leave it because it will run. Mr. Walsh, they must do it in stages as it dries. He said there is a learning process and the operator is going for additional training in Walton County. They are all learning but they will see the improvements. He said if they see something call him or the Public Works department and let them know. He said they can get it worked out. He said the operator in Walton County has been doing it for years and will be able to teach our operator a lot. He said there is a lot to it, but he wants to tip his hat to the operator because he takes very good care of the machine. Mrs. Benson said the recent patch job was much better and she could tell a big difference.

Mr. Benton said he wanted to address the request at the previous meeting for assistance from the City of Monticello to help with road repairs in the Oak Ridge Subdivision. He said the Commissioners tabled it, but he knows the City of Monticello has made the repairs.

Chairman Henry said they act when citizens bring issues to their attention and will address those items with follow-up as necessary.

Citizens Comments:

Cathy Benson: Mrs. Benson said she would like to know what code enforcement is and what they do. She said she has turned in four different abandoned properties several times. She said she sent pictures and addresses and to her knowledge, nothing has been done about any of the properties and she would like to know why. She said one of the properties burnt down several weeks ago. Mrs. Benson asked if that was the plan to just let them go long enough that they would just burn down. She asked where the accountability is. She said on the street behind her there are three abandoned properties, overgrown and falling in. She said he has turned them in three times with pictures and nothing has been done. Mrs. Benson said she would like to thank Public Works for the work done. She said there is a hole at the end of the road that is uneven but needs to be repaired. Mrs. Benson said that Macon St has been talked about several times. She said it is so bad the vehicles including the school bus must drive through part of the ditch to get down the road. She said the Alcovy Water and Sewage Authority had some leftover asphalt from a previous job, so they filled in the worst part of the road and the area of the ditch that had been used by drivers to miss the damaged areas. She said she wanted to thank them for that, but she thinks the county should reimburse them because it was county negligence.

Sherry Benton: Ms. Benton passed pictures to the board showing what her front yard looks like. She stated that Jason Pope started his company in 2017. He shouldn't have because it goes against the home business ordinance. She stated that the county manager had been down the road. She stated that she had an email from Doug Attaway saying that he was giving Mr. Pope 90 days to move his stuff. She encouraged the board to enforce the rules or don't have them. It's frustrating when some people have to abide by the rules and not others. She feels like there is a lot of nepotism going on. For the new subdivision, she would not want to buy a new house with a trucking company in her front yard. He vibrates the hills every morning when he cranks up, diesel fuel smells all in the air, and most of all he violates most of the home office ordinance. She encouraged the board to make Jason Pope abide by the rules. She said she don't know if Doug Attaway renewed his business license for 2025, if he did he shouldn't have. She stated that Jason Pope is growing and the county seems to not be doing anything about it.

Jason Bunn: Mr. Bunn stood to congratulate Commissioner Alexander and the rest of the board. He stated that he is not here to fuss tonight. He told the board it's not always easy to make the decision that they have to make. They can't always make everyone happy. He encouraged the board to continue being open. He stated he is extremely excited about the citizen follow-up section of the agenda. He stated that he is looking forward to Jasper County having a great 2025

Mary Patrick: Mrs. Patrick said that accountability should be the word for 2025. She said there should be logs placed in the vehicles for Animal Control, Code Enforcement, and the Building Inspector. She said it protects them and the county if there is controversy. There would be a record of where and when they went out and keep track of vehicle mileage. She said it was done in the past and for some reason, the county stopped. Mrs. Patrick said if a citizen complaint is filed the log will serve as proof. She said it is a simple easy solution. Mrs. Patrick then said just as a reminder maybe for the county manager the Board of Assessors office is a separate office by law. She said only the Board of Assessors can hire employees for that office, not the county manager. She said that if there are any personnel to be involved in that office then the Board of Assessors should hire the personnel. She said that she thinks each one of the commissioners knows what she is talking about and she thinks the county Manager overstepped his boundaries on some issues. Mrs. Patrick said the last thing she wanted to speak about was the Library Board appointment. She said she has always supported the library, but she thinks one question they need to ask is "Do you agree that the library board should not be sponsoring drag queen readings or having drag queens involved in any library programs?" She said it is happening in other counties near and around us and she doesn't think it is something we need in Jasper County. She said they need to ask to make sure everyone is on the same page with the morals the county has had for a long time. She ended by stating she wants to encourage the commissioner to have accountability for every department.

Bill Nash: Mr. Nash welcomed Commissioner Rob Alexander. Mr. Nash said Scenic Byways have come up to the Planning and Zoning Boards from time to time. He said when the P&Z board has asked about the Scenic Byways they have been told there isn't any regulation regarding Scenic Byways in our ordinances. He said the path to establishing those regulations is noted in the Scenic Byways manual. He said it calls for the appointment

of a commission to recommend planning and zoning requirements. He said some of the board members would be appointed by the BOC and some by other entities such as the Chamber of Commerce and the cities. He said the commissioner would meet to make recommendations to the county and cities to safeguard the county's Scenic Byways. Mr. Nash said the commission is a recommendation board only. He said the Planning and Zoning board is recommending the commissioner take the first steps and when they discuss the issue he would be happy to share any other understandings he has about Scenic Byways.

Patrick Will: Mr. Will said he would like to recognize Julius Funderburke who recently passed away. He said Mr. Funderburke was a local hero who was a decorated Veteran and long-time member of the American Legion. Mr. Patrick ended by saying God Bless Mr. Funderburke's family.

County Commissioner Items & Updates:

Commissioner Pounds: None

Chairman Henry: Welcomed newly elected Commissioner Rob Alexander.

Commissioner Alexander: None

Commissioner Gray: Wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Ledford: Requested an executive session after the meeting.

Regular Agenda

Business Items:

Business Items 5: Appointment of Chairman:

Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Commissioner Bruce Henry as Chairman. Commissioner Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 6: Appointment of Vice-Chairman:

Commissioner Gray motioned to appoint Commissioner Ledford as Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Alexander seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 7: Appointment of County Attorney: Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Nelson Law Group as County Attorney. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 8. Appointment of County Clerk:

Commissioner Pounds motioned to appoint Sheila Jefferson as the County Clerk. Commissioner Ledford seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 9. 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update RFP Planning: Suzanne Ward presented a request to update the Mitigation Plan as required by the State of Georgia and FEMA. Mrs. Ward said that Jasper County currently has a plan that expires February 24, 2026. She said the plan is required to be updated every five years and the last update was done in 2020 and was submitted late which put the county's eligibility for some grants in jeopardy. They are trying to make sure to get a head start on it. She said the commissioners were provided a copy of the plan that they are hoping to approve. She said they are hoping to get it approved so they can put it out to bid and have it advertised from January 14th to January 25, 2025. She said they have a pre-bid meeting for anyone intending to bid. Mrs. Ward said that the meeting is scheduled for February the 11, 2025. Mrs. Ward said that all bids must be submitted to the Board of Commissioners office by 10 a.m. on February 28, 2025. She said She, Ed Westbrook, and Cain Bentley will review the bids and present recommendations to the Commissioners at the March 3, 2025 meeting. She said they plan to have a completed plan to submit to FEMA for approval by October 2025. Mrs. Ward said the goal is to ensure Jasper County has enough time to get it approved and keep the funding

provided. She said a grant was given for Mitigation for \$23,049.25 leaving the cost to the county at \$ 957.25. She said the plan has to be approved and in place before May 2, 2026. She said they received permission from Banks County to use their plan and modified it to fit Jasper County. She said that several other counties have used the same format and been approved. Mrs. Ward said the importance of the document is that it does save the county money. She said the radio tower at the 911 Center was paid for with funding provided by this plan as well as part of the tornado sirens. Chairman Henry asked if there have been any changes from the previous plan approved in 2020 as far as the bidding paperwork. Mr. Westbrook said the bidding work is a little more detailed, but they did not write the plan in 2020. He said they chose this one because it has been used by several other countries. Commissioner Gray asked why the plan had to be bid out and if there was that much change every five years. Mr. Westbrook said yes FEMA changed the format and the requirement on the plan.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve EMA to bid out services to update the Jasper County Mitigation Plan to be funded by the FEMA reimbursement grant. Commissioner Alexander seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 10: Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement: Cain Bentley presented a request to renew the Georgia Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement. Officer Bentley said the agreement requires renewal every four years. He said it is not a new document just a renewal. He said almost every county in the state has this document. Officer Bentley said it helps to aid citizens and the entire county in times of need. He said it is uniform for the entire state they just put Jasper County at the top. He said it is already used a lot for things like generators or special equipment that Jasper County may not own. We can contact other counties to provide services with equipment. He said this agreement also provides for reimbursement if we provide service for other counties.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the renewal of the Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 11: 2025 Alcohol License Renewals: Mr. Attaway presented a request to approve alcohol license renewal applications 2025-A-011 for pouring license for distilled spirits, beer, and wine Bear Creek Marina Restaurant and 2025-A-010 for a retail license for beer and wine Bear Creek Marina. Mr. Attaway said that the applications were submitted before the deadline but after he had submitted the newspaper advertisement.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve applications 2025-A-11 and 2025-A-010 for Alcohol License renewal. Commissioner Alexander seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 12: Jasper County Library Board Appointments – Azalea Regional Library: Ashley Johnson comes before the Board of Commissioners seeking appointment to the Library Board of Trustees. Mrs. Johnson said she is new to Jasper County but not new to serving on the Library Board. Mrs. Johnson said she served several years on the library board for Social Circle. She said Executive Director Stacy Brown asked her to serve and she agreed to apply. Commissioner Ledford said Mary Patrick asked a question during citizen comments regarding Drag Queen participation in Library events. Mrs. Johnson said she had asked the Executive Director the same and Mrs. Brown said they had never and did not intend to have Drag Queens read at our Libraries. Chairman Henry asked if she agreed with that decision. Mrs. Johnson said personally she does, but she would be representing Jasper County and she would now assume the County also agrees.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Ashley Johnson to the Library Board. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 13: Jasper County Department of Behavioral Health & Disabilities Region 2 Advisory Council Appointment: Tamiaka Carter came before the Board of Commissioners seeking appointment to the Jasper County Department of Behavioral Health & Disabilities Region 2 Advisory Council. Ms. Carter said that she has been working in Behavior and Mental health for over thirty years including at the detention center. She said she is correctly a case manager for mental health at Grady. Ms. Carter said she would love to serve on the board to help fill some of the gaps with mental health, and developmental disabilities services as well as the

local drug crisis in our county. She said there is a mental health group that meets once a week on Wednesdays. She said that there are resources we need here so we know where our citizens can go to get help for teens and adults who are a suicide risk. She said that it is her goal if appointed to find out what it costs the Sheriff's office if an inmate has a psychiatric emergency and where they take them. She said she would look into if there is someone who needs psychiatric problems while at the jail and how it should be handled and try to get resources for the Sheriff's Deputies for CIT and Mental Health first aid. Ms. Carter said she is willing to work to help the hospital as well if needed. She said that she is excited and looks forward to bridging the gap in the mental health field.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Tamiaka Carter to the Jasper County Department of Behavioral Health & Disabilities Region 2 Advisory Council. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 14: Tax Levy Resolution for School System General Obligation Bonds: School Attorney James Garner presented for the Jasper County Charter School System. Mr. Garner said the bonds they are seeking to issue are for 18.385 million dollars to construct various improvements to the existing schools as well as fund other asset acquisitions. He said the bonds were approved in March 2024 through a voter referendum. He said citizens voted to continue the special sales tax and authorize bonds up to twenty-three million dollars. Mr. Garner said the school board has determined they will not need the full amount. He said that there is a constitutional requirement in Georgia that anytime the governmental entity issues general obligation bonds they must provide for the levy of the tax sufficient to pay the debt service. He said under Georgia law school systems are not tax levy authorities. He said they can only make the recommendation just like they do for the M&O millage every year and then it goes to the county for approval of the recommended millage rate. He said the intent is that there will be no bond millage rate levied to pay the debt service because it will be covered by the SPLOST proceeds or other funds within the general fund available to the superintendent to make those payments. He said they do not anticipate that this millage rate will ever need to be utilized but if that was to change the Board of Education would have to at that time make the recommendation to the Board of Commissioners and hold Public Hearings to increase the millage rate.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to approve the Tax Levy Resolution for School System General Obligation Bonds Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 15: Create Scenic Byway Commission: Planning and Zoning Director Doug Attaway presented a resolution created and passed by the Planning and Zoning Board for him to recommend that the Board of Commissioners create a Scenic Byway Commission. He said the county did have a Scenic Byway Commission at one time and there was a layout in the Scenic Byway Corridor Management plan as to the members that would be on the Commission. He said it states there would be a Scenic Byways Property owner appointed by the Jasper County Commission who is a property owner along the scenic Bayway. He said the Commission would be made up of the required members a Scenic Byways Property owner, a member from each participating Community Planning and Zoning Board, a member from the Historic Preservation Commission, a member from the Jasper County/Monticello Chamber of Commerce, and a member from the Economic Development Authority. He said it goes on to add representatives invited to attend from outside the county from areas such as Social Circle, Newton County, and Mansfield. Mr. Attaway said the Scenic Byways Commission would be a recommendation commission to the Board of Commissioners to bring forth changes to the ordinances as needed to represent the Scenic Byway as outlined by GDOT. Commissioner Ledford said one concern he has with it is that it states under the responsibilities of the Jasper County Scenic Byways Commission overseeing staffing and maintenance of Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway Trailhead Center for visitors which must be open 40 hours a week. Mr. Attaway said he believes that requirement falls on the shoulder of the Jasper Monticello Chamber of Commerce and they are open 40 hours a week. Commissioner Ledford asks who funds it. Mr. Attaway said the citizens of Jasper County. Commissioner Ledford said correct. Commissioner Alexander said if he remembered correctly the Scenic Byway Commission was started so the Jasper Monticello Chamber of Commerce could receive a grant. Mr. Attaway stated that was correct. Chairman Henry said they are just a recommendation board with no power everything they recommend must be approved by the Board of Commissioners. He said after receiving a printout of all the boards at the last meeting he personally feels Jasper County is top-heavy on boards and needs the ones

in place but doesn't think they need to continue adding without a definite need. He said anything the Planning and Zoning Boards thinks the Board of Commissioners needs to look at as far as maintaining the Scenic Byways they can submit that to the Commissioner to look at. Commissioner Gray said that is the reason they have spent so much time working on the comprehensive plan and this would be a joint board which doesn't seem to work.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to deny the request to create a Scenic Byway Commission. Commissioner Gray seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 16: Jasper County Employees Defined Benefit Plan Amendment and Resolution: County Manager Mike Benton presented a request from ACCG for a Defined Benefit Plan Amendment and Resolution. Mr. Benton said that ACCG is requesting a formal resolution to adopt the changes approved by the Board of Commissioners at the December 2, 2024 meeting.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to adopt and amend the ACCG Defined Benefits Plan as described in document amendment agreement number 2. Commissioner Pounds seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gray said he saw some posts on Facebook about the Commissioner getting a pay raise and he just wanted to clarify that it was not an increase in pay but a change to their retirement plan. Commissioner Henry said that it is only for the Commissioner who is still serving as of January 1, 2027. Mr. Benton said they would have to have seven years to be eligible for retirement. Mr. Benton said there will be a February Resolution to formally adopt the one-time payment that was discussed to buy down the additional liability. He said that there will be a separate motion in February.

Business Items 17: Jasper County Public Facilities Authority Board Appointment: The Jasper County Public Facilities Authority Board requires a County Commissioner to serve and the board. Commissioner Ledford asked if this was just a six-month term. County Clerk Sheila Jefferson said it was.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Chairman Bruce Henry to the Jasper County Public Facilities Authority Board for the remaining term. Commissioner Gray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 18. Jasper County Health Department Board Appointment: The Jasper County Health Department Board requires a County Commissioner to serve on the board. Chairman Henry asked how long the term would be. Ms. Jefferson said this appointment is for as long as they are serving as a commissioner or until the board appoints a new member.

Commissioner Ledford motioned to appoint Commissioner Sheila Pounds to the Jasper County Health Department Board. Commissioner Alexander seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Business Items 19: HB 581 – Property and Sales Tax Reform: Commissioner Ledford motioned to table until the February meeting, and Commissioner Pounds seconded.

Chairman Henry said they had a discussion and will be scheduling a work session with the only item being HB 581 because it's a lot to digest. Mr. Benton said there is a lot of information. Commissioner Ledford also said he feels HB 581 should be the only item scheduled for the work session and they need to have the County Attorney or someone from his group who has a clear understanding of the Bill to be present. Commissioner Gray suggested scheduling a work session for January 13, 2025, at 6 p.m. to discuss Hb 581. Mr. Benton said the earlier the better because there is a pending deadline. Chairman Henry said there are a lot of moving parts involved not just what the county decides but the two cities and the Board of Education as well. Chairman Henry asked Tax Assessor Lynn Bentley to attend the work session and said they need to invite both cities to attend. Commissioner Ledford said it doesn't look very appealing once you look into it. Chairman Henry said there is a lot of information and he recommends that everyone read it and read it again. County Attorney Adam Nelson said this bill will hit everyone differently and there is a lot to take in. He said essentially what the attempt was to do was move property tax to sales tax but is not a very clean transition and it is being forced upon us with a decision needing to be made in a very short time. He said he does believe all municipalities

should be involved because their action could impact your actions as well. The motion to table passed unanimously.

Business Items 20. Schedule Work Sessions and Called Meetings as Needed: Work session for January 13, 2025, at 6 p.m. to discuss HB 581.

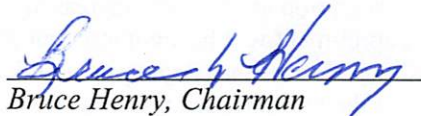
County Attorney Items: Mr. Nelson thanked the Board of Commissioners for confidence in their firm and he will continue to try and earn their business. He congratulated newly elected Commissioner Rob Alexander.

County Manager Update: County Manager Mike Benton gave an update on the building permits for the year. He also gave an update on the 2024 official audit. Mr. Benton gave an update on the applications received for the Assistant Recreation Director position. He also gave an update on ongoing projects.

Executive Session: Commissioner motioned to begin the executive session at 7:23 Commissioner Ledford seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gray motioned to exit the Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gray motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Commissioner Pounds seconded the motion, passed unanimously.


Bruce Henry, Chairman


Sheila Jefferson, Clerk