

**MINUTES
CALLED MEETING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023
4:00 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Called Meeting, Monday, January 23, 2023, at 4:43 p.m. in the Ware County Commission Chambers, 305 Oak Street, Suite 201 Waycross, Georgia 31501 with Chairman Elmer Thrift presiding.

CALL TO ORDER	Chairman Elmer Thrift
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT	Commissioners Leonard Burse, Jerry Pope, and Steve Barnard
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	Commissioner Timothy Lucas
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager Scott Moye; County Attorney Jennifer Herzog
PRESS	None
INVOCATION	The invocation was waived from Work Session
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was waived from the Work Session

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Commissioner Burse to approve the agenda as presented with Commissioner Pope seconding the motion.

There was no discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

GUEST SPEAKER: TOMMY PEAGLER, RAYONIER

Chairman Thrift stated that he asked the guest speaker to do some research regarding income from the timber industry in Ware County and present his findings to the Commission. His reasoning is that maybe some of that income could be used on the local roads. According to Mr. Peagler, Ware County is one of the top five (5) timber producing counties in the state of Georgia which happens to be the top timber producing state in the nation. Of the \$20 million that is harvested annually, \$13 million is paid to the landowners, and \$7 million is split between the logging companies, wood haulers, and timber dealers. He stated the millage rate for harvested timber is three percent (3%) which comes to roughly

\$400,000 collected in taxes. He doesn't know how the money is spent, but he felt this income could be used on the County roads.

Commissioner Pope stated that according to the 2020 figures, Ware County received \$181,000 in timber tax proceeds which go into the general fund. (Timber taxes are split between the Ware County Board of Commissioners and Ware County Board of Education. The County has sales tax money (LOST) and transportation tax money (TSPLOST) to spend on roads. Pulling timber tax money out of general funds to pave roads in outlying areas could be perceived as showing favoritism to a particular industry. There is more sales tax money coming that will pay for more roads to be paved.

Mr. Peagler agreed with the Commission that it isn't feasible to pave long dirt roads that only run through tracts of timber, However, he stated that some of the heavily traveled roads, especially ones that connect other paved roads, should be considered for paving or at least heavily maintained. He also commended the road department for diligently taking care of issues with logging roads. The Commissioners and Chairman Thrift thanked Mr. Peagler for sharing this information.

AGENDA ITEMS

A. 2023 GDOT LMIG LIST

County Manager Moye told the Commission that this is a list compiled by the Engineering and Public Works Departments for resurfacing. The resurfacing list had to be separated from the regular paving list due to the State requiring design specs for roads under LMIG. The resurfacing cost will be paid by using LMIG funds and the required 10% match of local money. The February 13th meeting is when the road paving list will be discussed. The cost of paving will be paid with local money (SPLOST, TSPLOST). The resurfacing list must be submitted by the end of the month.

Commissioner Burse asked if this requires a 10% match. CM Moye responded that there is a required 10% match because Ware is in the Regional TSPLOST. More money can be added, but 10 is the minimum. Commissioner Burse asked if the amount of \$1.36 million already included the 10% match. CM Moye said the grant amount received from the State is just over \$1 million, around \$1,028,000. The difference between the \$1,360,000 and \$1,028,000 would be the local match which totals more than the required 10% match. Chairman Thrift asked Mr. Moye if Ware County is able to fund that. He stated that the money is available. The Chairman then asked the Commissioners if they were okay with this list and funding. Commissioner Barnard and Chairman Thrift asked County Engineer Brandon Wallace to come forward and explain. Mr. Wallace said they are trying to use LMIG funds primarily for resurfacing and use the local funds for the dirt road paving projects. He explained this would speed up the turnover of the project and help meet the DOT deadlines for using the funding.

Commissioner Barnard then commented that during the ride along earlier in the month they noticed a lot of bad areas on North River Road. He wanted to know if there is enough funding to for the repairs needed there. Mr. Wallace responded that the way he interpreted the discussions on that ride along was to include some patch work and an adjacent roadway. When the contractor is finished at the adjacent roadway site, they can take care of the patches before moving to the next work site. The North River Road repair would be looked

at as part of the Dixie Union Road. Commissioner Barnard then asked if Gene Smith Bennett Road needed resurfacing. Mr. Wallace said that is the road that goes up to Haywood Church, and they would try to catch that while they were close by at Dixie Union Road to get a little more economy of scale there.

When the Chairman Thrift asked if there were any more questions, Commissioner Pope stated the outlet from Herrin's Pond on Central Avenue has been washed out due to beavers. There has been some temporary filling in under the road. He asked Public Works Director Michael Brooks to explain what has been discussed about repairs and that the road will not be torn up. Mr. Brooks said they have looked into a process called slip lining of the concrete culverts that are under the road. This process involves placing a liner inside the existing pipe up under the highway and sealing the ends of the pipes, so there will be no leaks. To avoid tearing up the highway, the culverts would be mud jacked and sealed off and the void under the highway would be filled in. No cuts would be made in the asphalt, and traffic wouldn't have to be stopped. Commissioner Pope stated this would address the beaver problem at the same time. Mr. Brooks stated that it would as they have researched Clemson University's program study of a device that will keep the water flowing and prevent the beavers from stopping it up as frequently. Commissioner Pope stated DOT uses the beaver devices as well and that the County shop could build them for this project.

Commissioner Burse asked what was used to fill in the slip liner. Mr. Brooks explained that the liner is pushed in and heated or blue lighted until it hardens which seals off the pipe. He reiterated that the lining goes in inside out. It is pushed through from one side to the other and inverts itself as it goes through. Commissioner Burse then asked about heat being applied. Mr. Brooks said the best to describe that process is to compare to a dentist's blue light that is used to harden a tooth filling. Commissioner Pope added that the interior surface will be smooth once it cures. Commissioner Burse wanted to verify that this process would circumvent having to go in and tear up the road but would accomplish the same end result. Mr. Brooks stated yes and the highway could remain open even if it's only one lane. Commissioner Burse asked about the expense. Commissioner Pope said depending on how you want to measure it, with this method the road doesn't have to be torn up and no box culvert has to be formed. CM Moye stated that this road was just resurfaced about two years ago. Mr. Brooks responded that it already has a pretty big void under the road. Commissioner Pope said there is a lot of traffic there. They have looked at the figures, and this procedure appears to be the best value to the county. He added that a synthetic grout is injected around the pipes which stabilizes the load.

Chairman Thrift asked if a culvert is under the road. Mr. Brooks said there are two lines of 48" RCP (reinforced concrete pipe) to which the Chairman responded that it would be better to slip line it. Mr. Brooks said that Ware County hasn't done one, but DOT is doing several and this spot will be a good place try out this process. CM Moye stated that Pierce County has done several that turned out really well. Mr. Brooks stated that DOT has several contracts going, and that we could piggyback on one of those which would be a quick turnaround.

The Chairman then asked for a motion. Commissioner Barnard made a motion to accept the 2023 LMIG Proposed Project List. Commissioner Pope seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was any discussion and then asked the County Manager if any more roads could be added to the list. CM Moye answered that more local money could be added. The County has to match 10% of the LMIG funds, but can always add more for overlay and resurfacing because they can't be mixed with road paving. Commissioner Pope added that it has to be DOT specs and CM Moye said that was correct. Chairman Thrift stated he felt that Washington Avenue really needs repaving. Commissioner Barnard asked if he was referring to the County portion or the City portion. The Chairman was unsure. CM Moye asked the Chairman if he was referring to East or West. He said West back towards the shops. Mr. Brooks explained that the Swamp Road Side is where the County portion starts. He agreed that the City needs to pave its portion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

CM Moye reminded the Commission that the road paving list will be presented at the February meeting.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Commissioner Barnard asked the CM if the County Attorney could draft a speed ordinance for the Sandhill Farm Subdivision. There are no speed limit signs posted, and there have been several complaints of people flying up and down Sandhill Church Road and Nabers Drive. CM Moye agreed that there is nothing posted out there, and something probably needs to be done.

Commissioner Burse asked County Engineer Brandon Wallace to give a two-minute recap on the Jamestown project. Mr. Wallace said things have been moving right along. He hasn't had a chance to see if there was much wash out from the significant rainfall over the weekend. Prior to that most of the demucking process has been completed. The borrow pit material has been satisfactory. There have been good results with the piles. Commissioner Barnard asked what would happen to the material removed during the demucking process. Mr. Wallace said he wasn't sure. It is being stockpiled over to the side, and he feels it would be good for rebuilding the shoulders of the roads because it would help the grass grow.

Commissioner Barnard asked if he had a chance to talk with Mr. Long about the northern part of ABC Avenue. Mr. Wallace stated he has mentioned that to Mr. Long, but he had some issues over the weekend and has just been released from the hospital. He will talk with him again about the northern portion and getting across the creek.

Chairman Thrift asked Mr. Wallace about getting the poles moved on Smith Road. He wanted to know if the phone company is the holdup on this matter. Mr. Wallace said that he has been told the power has moved over, but the old poles can't be demoed because of the phone and cable still being on them. He thinks AT&T may be the problem. He will check with Brett who has told him that the AT&T representatives will be in town this week, and he hopes they will be on board with moving the phone lines and getting the poles taken down. Chairman Thrift said he is afraid someone will hit these poles, especially the one which is right on the edge of the road. Mr. Wallace said there are reflective barrels around that pole to make it more visible so that drivers can avoid it.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Chairman Thrift asked Mr. Moye for an update on the Albany Avenue Overpass Bridge Project. He said he attended a preliminary meeting with the city. He said the County Attorney will have a Memo of Understanding written up to outline all of the expectations for both sides. He hopes that will be ready for the first meeting in February to be held on the 13th.

ADJOURN

Chairman Thrift asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Burse to adjourn the Called Meeting with Commissioner Pope seconding the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked for all in favor of adjourning the meeting. All Commissioners responded aye, and the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Date proposed to be approved: June 14, 2021


Elmer Thrift, Chairman

ATTEST:


Scott M. Moye, County Manager

02-15-2023
Date

[SEAL]