

**MINUTES
CALLED MEETING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2024
3:30 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Called Meeting, Monday, January 22, 2024, at 3:30 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	Commissioner Steve Barnard Commissioner Leonard Burse Commissioner Timmy Lucas (via phone) Commissioner Jerry Pope
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	None
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager Scott Moye; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
PRESS	Danny Bartlett, WJH
INVOCATION	The invocation was given by Commissioner Burse
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Elmer Thrift

GUEST SPEAKER:

Roger Collins – Ware County Tax Commissioner

Tax Commissioner Roger Collins advised the Commission that the mobile home tax bills are at the printers getting ready to be mailed out; however, they are active online. The paper bills should be mailed out next Monday (January 29), there is a 45-day period to file an appeal. Due date for mobile home taxes is April 1st. Tax Commissioner Collins also noted that he is working on getting the public utilities billed. Collections may seem lower at this time because all of the utilities haven't been billed. The due date for those bills is March 22nd. Commissioner Burse asked how public utilities are located here. Tax Commissioner Collins did a quick estimate and said around 25-30. He said the biggest one is CSX which pays approximately \$2.5 million. He pointed out that the Board of Assessors does not determine the value of public utilities. That is done by the State of Georgia.

Penny Crumbley – Griffin Road, Waycross

Mrs. Crumbley asked what would be the obstacle to keep the Commission from extending the paving of Griffin Road to 1.2 miles. Commissioner Barnard responded that money is the obstacle. Mrs. Crumbley said she heard that the money is there. Commissioner Barnard explained that a lot of that money is already designated for other projects that have been (or this has only been) on the paving list five to ten years. Mrs. Crumbley then said that her road had come up and was voted for and asked how the process works, if they vote unanimously (*slightly inaudible*). Chairman Thrift stated that this road didn't just come up because he asked the same question when he came to a

Commission meeting about 20 years ago and asked for the road to be paved in front of then Chairman Jimmy Brown. He said this road has been on the paving list longer than any road he knows of. Commissioner Burse asked if any portion of the road is paved. Mrs. Crumbley told him it is paved only in front of two churches, but the pavement doesn't go as far as the cemetery of the second church. The Chairman added that there about 15 houses around the area where Mrs. Crumbley lives. Commissioner Burse asked when that portion was paved. Commissioner Barnard and Chairman Thrift both responded that it had been about 10 years. The Chairman added that it was paved when CSX closed two of the crossings. He said CSX gave the County money to pave the road. Commissioner Burse asked him if the money was to pave the entire length of the road. Chairman Thrift said "to pave that road down there as far as it went". He further stated that then Chairman Jimmy Brown put it before the Commission, and CSX agreed to pave the road if the County would agree for them to close those crossings. Commissioner Pope asked County Manager Moye if he knew anything about CSX paying Ware County to pave a road, but CM Moye said he did not. Commissioner Barnard stated he believed the reason the road was paved was because several Ware County went through a phase of paving roads in front of churches. He said these two churches fell in that category along with Haywood Baptist Church, Hephzibah Church Rd, Liberty Church, and other places like that. The County paved roads that were going to churches, and they stopped right at Mt Olive Church on Griffin Road. The Chairman asked if anyone remembered when the Fullards boycotted the crossing being closed on Needham Road. He said law enforcement had to be called and that "they" finally agreed to let the two crossings be closed if they would pave that road. So the money received by the County for the closed crossing was used to pave that portion of the road. None of the other Commissioner had heard of this. Chairman Thrift asked Mrs. Crumbley about it. She said she had heard about it. Commissioner Burse asked what length she was asking to be paved. She said "one mile and two-tenths". The Chairman said they would like to pave it down to "that" crossing. Commissioner Burse asked if there were a lot of homes located by the churches, and Commissioner Barnard asked about the homes in her area of the road. She counted up and said there 10 right around her.

Commissioner Barnard stated he has been on the Commission over seven years and no one has ever called him about having Griffin Road paved until the Chairman came on board. That's when he started hearing about paving Griffin Road. Mrs. Crumbley told him they had had wanted it, and after the Chairman moved out there they had someone they knew and that would work for them. Commissioner Barnard reiterated that he has never received one phone call about Griffin Road. Mrs. Crumbley told him if she had not shown up for the meeting, he was on her list to call. He told her that he has since talked to several residents out there and explained the circumstances. She said she didn't really understand one circumstance. She thought he had told her son that the road couldn't be paved because the Chairman owned property out there. Commissioner Barnard said he told him it is a hiccup in the process because the Chairman owns property on both sides of the road. It can be unethical for the Commission to pave the road with him owning so much of the property on either side. Someone could come back later and say the only reason that Griffin Road got paved was because the Chairman lived there. Mrs. Crumbley asked if there is a law that wouldn't allow the road to be paved. Commissioner Barnard said there is no law, but sometimes you have to look at the ethics involved. She then wanted to know if the Commission would punish her and the other residents because he owns so much land there. Commissioner Barnard told her no. She said she owns land on both sides as does her son. The Chairman then interjected that a traffic light was put at the intersection near Commissioner Barnard's property. Commissioner Barnard pointed out that is a State-owned highway, and the State of Georgia opted to put in that traffic light and paid for it. Mrs. Crumbley said that maybe the State of Ware County would pay for her road. Commissioner Barnard reminded the Chairman that he owns property on the corner of that same intersection, so he

enjoys the traffic light as well. Mrs. Crumbley pointed out that the Chairman owns property all over the County. Commissioner Barnard said he just doesn't want the Commission to be stung by the accusations of paving the roads that go through properties owned by the Chairman. Mrs. Crumbley said hopefully no one would make accusations over 1.2 miles. Commissioner Barnard pointed out that it costs about \$1 million per mile to pave roads. Commissioner Burse thanked Mrs. Crumbley for her concerns and comments. He pointed out that Ware County is the largest county in the state by total area and has several hundred miles of dirt roads. The funds are limited, and there are others whose roads are in bad shape who have been steadily appealing to the Commission. He then posed a question to Assistant County Attorney Herzog asking, if a road on the paving schedule and a member of the Commission owns property on that road, should paving commence? Assistant County Attorney Herzog said the first question is what has been the historic policy of Ware County. She said most counties rather than be reactive to citizen complaints, have staff study the road list, find out how much money is at our disposal, what funding sources are available, (CDBG – which does have ethical requirements, SPLOST, etc.). When a citizen makes a complaint about a road that can added to the list of roads to study which means they need to find out how many citizens live or drive on that road, how does this road compare to others in the county as far as immediate need, and then put the road on the list by priority. She pointed out that availability of funds varies from year to year, so some years will see more roads paved than other years. Historically speaking, since County Manager Moye has come on board, Ware County has paved a large number of roads. She said to answer Commissioner Burse's question, the Commission needs to know what funding source they are looking at before they can truly answer his question regarding any specific road. That is because there are different rules regarding each funding source. Local funding source follows local Commission policy. CDBG, state, and federal funding follow their own requirements. Commissioner Burse pointed out some of the funding sources require that Commissioners disclose if they own property in the project area. However, it may not prevent the project from going forward, but that Commissioner may not be allowed to vote on that particular project. She said for each road the Commission will have to look at the funding source and where it is on the priority road list. Commissioner Burse said he does understand what Commissioner Barnard said about the ethical concerns.

AGENDA ITEMS

A. Discussion & Possible Action Concerning Air Evac Facility Lease Agreement

Airport Manager Frank Bartanowitz explained to the Commission that the Air Evac Lifeteam wants to come back and lease the same building they had leased before. The Air Evac helicopter will stay at the hospital 24/7. It will only go to the building during inclement weather. The original lease amount was \$250 per month. That amount will be increased to \$350 per month.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Pope made a motion to approve the Air Evac Facility Lease Agreement.
Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

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

B. Proposed Ordinance Amendment: Chapter 6 – Alcoholic Beverages Article IX – Days and Hours of Sales; Establishment’s Area of Sale

The proposed ordinance amendment pertains to the days and hours of sales for alcohol on Sundays. The change will allow package alcohol sales off premises between 12:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. (for convenience stores and package stores) and consumption on premises (all business types) between 12:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to accept the proposed ordinance amendment for Chapter 6 as written. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Director Shubert advised the Commission that the changes are the strikethroughs and the additions in red in Article 9, Section 6. (This page is included behind minutes.) It will mirror the City of Waycross.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Steve Barnard-no; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

C. Resolution 2024-03: Approve Victims of Crime Act Assistance (VOCA) Grant Application

This resolution approves a Victim of Crimes Act grant application in the amount of \$129,185.00 to the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council of Georgia (PAC) for federal funding from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) for federal fiscal year 2024. This grant funds two staff members. There is no local match required.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-03 Approve Victim of Crimes Act Assistance. Commissioner Barnard seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Commissioner Pope stated he would like to clarify that the District Attorney’s office is who applies for this grant not the County Commission and that the money would belong to the DA’s office. County Manager Moye stated that is correct and that the Commission just has to approve the submission of the grant.

Commissioner Barnard asked why the grant had decreased. County Manager stated there has been a decrease in fines, that began with COVID and has continued to go down.

Roll Call Vote:

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

D. Downtown Waycross Development Authority SPLOST Funding Request

County Manager Moye told the Commission that a request had been received from DWDA to get a cash advance on the 2022 SPLOST. The first part of the funding goes to the overpass. The Commission had approved to give \$250,000 to the DWDA over the six-year period. The DWDA is asking to get some of the funds now. He said there is enough money in General Funds to front the project. Once the SPLOST money starts coming in for DWDA, the General Funds can be replaced.

Commissioner Pope asked DWDA Director Laura Dixon to explain to the Commission what the requested funding would be used for. Ms. Dixon explained that the funds would be used to update the old REA building which is used as a venue. Universities and other businesses have been reaching out and requesting to use the venue for conferences. Many of these are interested in Waycross because of the lower cost of associated with a smaller town. However, due to lack of equipment and technology, DWDA has been unable to accommodate these potential vendors, therefore missing out on several hosting opportunities. Commissioner Pope asked where the equipment would be stored when not being used for a vendor conference. Ms. Dixon stated that it would be kept in a locked room that only DWDA staff could access.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Pope made a motion to approve the SPLOST funding request from DWDA. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked County Manager Moye where the funds would come from since it couldn't come from SPLOST. County Manager Moye explained it would come from General Funds. Once the SPLOST money starts coming in, General Funds would be repaid.

Roll Call Vote:

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

E. Dirt Road Paving Project List

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion to move this item to the end of the agenda list.

Commissioner Pope made a motion to move Item E to the end of the agenda to be discussed after the Executive Session. Commissioner Barnard seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

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

F. Discussion of Georgia Department of Driver Services Relocation

Commissioner Barnard asked for this item to be on the agenda. He said Georgia Department of Driver Services has been in contact with him about putting a new building at another location in

Ware County. They are requesting that the County provide the land (around 6-7 acres), and they will invest approximately \$2.5 million in a new building. He found 7.5 acres across from Ware County High School. Per County Engineer Brandon Wallace, there are approximately 12 acres available at that site. They are asking now so that they can submit their paperwork to their Appropriations Chairman Representative Corbett who will have to introduce legislation to get the money set aside for the DDS building. Commissioner Pope said when the State Troopers came to a meeting a few months ago, it came to light that the County does not own the State Patrol building, the State of Georgia owns it. If DDS moves out and builds its own facility, the State Troopers would gain full use of the State Patrol building. The location on Victory Drive (a four lane highway) is a perfect location, and the recreation department will never use it. He supports Commissioner Barnard idea of relocating the DDS to this site. Commissioner Barnard said if the Waycross location ever decides to offer CDL licensing, there is enough property for driver testing.

Chairman Thrift asked County Engineer Wallace asked if there is sufficient land on that site for CDL testing. He said he would support it, but he wants to make sure there is enough space. Mr. Wallace said there is about 12 acres there. Commissioner Barnard said DDS just built a new facility in Oconee on a 6.5-acre site that offers CDL testing, but if the County wants to offer 12 acres that is fine with him. County Engineer Wallace verified that 5 acres was the requirement. Commissioner Barnard said yes. He also pointed out that the County already owns that property so no money would be spent.

The Chairman asked if a vote should be taken at this meeting. County Manager Moyer advised that the Commission to explore the site and know the complete acreage. Commissioner Barnard said DDS just needs to know if Ware County is willing to give the land. Commissioner Barnard asked for a letter to be sent stating that the Commission is willing to provide sufficient land for a DDS building. Assistant County Attorney said once the specific parcel of land is picked, it can be put on the agenda for a vote.

G. Discussion of Recreation Department Programs at City of Waycross Parks

County Manager Moyer stated this topic has been discussed for years. The County has been operating the pool at Bailey Street Park. There were issues getting it up and running last summer. He received a call from Rusty Hall of YMCA wanting to know if Ware County would be operating the pool again this year. He needs to know so there is time to get certified lifeguards and security coverage.

Chairman Thrift asked if the pool could be given back to the City to run. CM Moyer said the property belongs to the City. Notes are clear regarding transferring of property and sharing of responsibilities. The Service Delivery Strategy only says Ware County will provide recreational services countywide, nothing specific to the pool which was built in the 1970s and requires expensive maintenance every year. Commissioner Barnard noted that the City of Waycross got a \$2.2 million federal grant for parks and recreation improvement. Commissioner Pope stated that the City has never spoken to the County about the grant since it has been agreed that the County would handle recreation. The City has not worked jointly with the County and hasn't been involved in sports. The County should spend time, money, and effort on Trembling Earth complex to serve everybody in sports. He asked Recreation Director Lance Adamson to come up and advise how much time is spent mowing the two city parks. Rec Director Adamson explained that both parks are mowed weekly and trash cans are moved for pick up weekly. After school and summer programs are run daily at Mary Street and Memorial Park. During the summer, staff goes daily to clean the bath houses at Bailey Street pool. The Commissioners asked Mr. Adamson if these programs could be run at Trembling Earth, and he said they probably could. He explained that a County van picks the children up from school and takes them to the park where they complete homework and practice life skills. Their parents pick

them up after work.

Commissioner Pope said that at one point the City was to deed Memorial Park, Bailey Street Park, and the Auditorium over to the County but nothing was ever followed through. Nothing was ever concrete. He said now that the City has the money for recreation, everything needs to be worked out. County Manager Moye said that one thing he questions is that the County pays the insurance and water bill for both of those City facilities. There is no written agreement that he can find.

Commissioner Barnard asked how this agreement can be terminated. County Manager Moye stated that the Commission would have to vote to terminate recreational services at the City parks and move them to Trembling Earth. The largest part would be the swimming pool. County Manager Moye said it's been mentioned that the City would take over. Commissioner Pope has heard that the City Manager is willing. County Manager Moye said there is no written agreement, so there is no explanation on termination regarding who would be responsible for services or funding.

Commissioner Burse spoke up and reminded the Commission that he is a former City Council member. He said in the original agreement under LOST, the County was to get an extra 2.5% to offset the cost of operation of the parks. Commissioner Pope acknowledged that was in the original agreement; however, it was never followed through.

Commissioner Burse said he has no problem if the City wants to take over the pool. But he feels it would not be a good idea for the County to just decide to quit operating the pool and abandon it. The kids would be the ones to suffer. He saw an article in the paper that the City wants to take over the pool. He also mentioned that if all of the programs were moved from the City parks to the Trembling Earth Complex that transportation could be an issue for some of the children.

Commissioner Pope said he would like for the Chairman to appoint a couple of the Commissioners to meet with the City Commissioners to hammer out an agreement regarding recreation. Commissioner Barnard suggested that Commissioners Burse and Pope meet with the City. Both were agreeable to that suggestion. Chairman Thrift asked the County Manager to get with the City Manager to set up a meeting.

Consider a Motion to Enter into an Executive Session to Discuss Litigation and Personnel

Commissioner Barnard made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion. The Commission entered into Executive Session at 4:42 p. m.

After coming back into the Commission chambers, Commissioner Burse made a motion to leave Executive Session. Commissioner Pope seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive Session was adjourned at 5:29 p. m.

E. Dirt Road Paving Project List

The Commission requested to have this item on the agenda to choose dirt road paving projects with funding from local funds moved to the bottom of the list.

The Chairman said there was a list of dirt roads to be considered and that the County Manager said there was some money available. There is a summary of the available balances. He said he summed up the list and moved them around. He wants Slash Pine, Banks Lane, Banks Road to property line, one mile of Wadley Road, McDonald Road to Clough Bay to end of pavement, Cornelius Road from end of pavement to end of pavement, Paschall Road, and add Griffin Road. He then asked for a

motion to bid the roads out. The Commission can look at bids. If there aren't enough funds available to pave all the roads on the list, then they can go back and trim it. He asked the Commissioners if that made sense. Commissioner Pope asked about getting a design first. Chairman Thrift said the County Engineer could design the roads then they could be bid out. Commissioner Barnard told him that amount would be over \$5 million. The Chairman said that was just an estimate and was

Burse asked how much available. Scott said \$3 million (ARPA), \$900,000 (Single County TSPLOST) but part of that is already allocated, \$4.5 million (Regional TSPLOST), \$2.6 million (2014 SPLOST). County Engineer Wallace said the majority of the Single County TPLOST funds have been allocated for two existing paving projects that were approved by the voters. He said the County has some paving projects that require matching funds, like LMIG that requires 10% local match, so he would have to refigure the numbers to give a better idea of the amount of unencumbered funds. Commissioner Burse asked if they need to consider the Single County TSPLOST as unavailable, and Mr. Wallace said that was correct.

Commissioner Barnard asked about the ARPA fund. County Manager Moye said the \$3 million is what is left. Commissioner Barnard expressed his concern of having to replace another large ticket item (AC). He feels that the County doesn't need to spend every penny it has. There needs to be operating money and funds held back for resurfacing roads.

Chairman Thrift addressed Commissioner Barnard, *"Steve why do we pay taxes if we don't? You might not need one, but other people need one. Damn it. Now I'm tired of that... You always... cause you live on a paved road down there. Other people live on a dirt road.... been on there 20, 30 years been voting for one cent sales tax trying to get a paved road. And they tired of it. You move 'em and they still on a dirt road. That feller sitting over there."*

Commissioner Barnard stated people made that choice when they moved to the dirt road. The Chairman told him *"...if you lived out there you'd want a paved one too. Because you're up there, you don't look at nothing else."* There were comments from the audience which the Chairman piggybacked on. At that time, fellow Commissioners and Assistant County Attorney Herzog called out to the Chairman to remind him that they were still in an open meeting. Assistant County Attorney Herzog asked if they were ready to take a vote or adjourn the meeting. The Chairman apologized but then said, *"Look here, we are up here to serve the people."* Commissioner Barnard responded with, *"We're not up here to spend every penny that the County's got on roads too. We've got other stuff happening."* Chairmen Thrift countered with, *"We're gonna spend some on some roads."*

Commissioner Burse started with *"Mr. Chairman, if I may..."* The Chairman called County Engineer Wallace to the front and told Commissioner Burse he would get to him next. He then asked Mr. Wallace how long it would take for him to figure the cost of the roads to get them ready to bid. Mr. Wallace said the estimates based on best guess. Because of changes in local market due to local contractor retiring, he's not sure going forward that the County will continue to get the lower prices, so he has been hesitant to cut estimates low. If the bids come in low, the County would be okay. If he uses low numbers in his estimate, and the bid is much higher then everyone questions his numbers. That is why he uses conservative numbers in his estimates. Chairman Thrift asked if he could get the roads ready to bid. He said he could. The Chairman asked how long it would take. He said it would depend on long the surveying would take. He said he had spoken with some surveyors today and hoped the results of that would be to speed up the process. The Chairman said he would like for the Commission to move to let Brandon get the roads ready for bid, so they could get a true

figure for the cost. Commissioner Burse said he could support that one hundred percent and felt they could find out how much is available in unencumbered funds. The Chairman reiterated that there is some money available to spend on roads, and it needs to be spent on fixing some roads. He said he has been in office three years and all he has heard about is getting paved roads. The Cornelius's and the blueberry farmers. They are the ones paying taxes.

Commissioner Burse said there are several that have been coming and asking for paved roads for a long time. He said the County needs to look at how many people live on a road and other criteria to determine where the road is placed on a priority list. He also mentioned that many of the roads seemed to be just for surface treatment. The Chairman agreed. County Engineer Wallace said it the surface treatment is more economical, and they try to make the money go as far as it can. Even with the economical options, the costs add up. Commissioner Burse said he also agrees with Commissioner Barnard that the Commission doesn't need to spend all of the money because they will need a "rainy day" or contingency fund. The discussion on roads has been going on for a long time, so it's time to put up or shut up. County Engineer Wallace added that a priority list telling staff the way to proceed would be helpful. Commissioner Barnard said there had been a priority list for about 15 years. The Chairman said nothing had been done with that list, and he didn't go by priority.

Commissioner Pope asked Mr. Wallace how long it would take him to get roads on tonight's list ready to bid. Mr. Wallace said he would have to take this list and get with the surveyor's that he has been speaking and get an idea from them because there are Right of Way issues on almost every one of these roads.

Commissioner Lucas said he would like to know how long the price estimate it would be good for. He just wants to make sure that it doesn't expire before the County is ready to move. The Chairman said that shouldn't happen.

Commissioner Pope asked the County Manager to clarify that the roads currently being discussed and funding sources will not affect the two or three programs that have already been unanimously voted in, adopted, and obligated funding for. He said those projects were set as a priority. County Manager Moye said those have not been bid yet. Commissioner Pope said his vote is to not disturb what the Commission has already voted to do. County Manager Moye said some of them have kept going around in circles and have been repeated numbers of times. Those lists have to be verified with the current list to keep all of the projects sorted out. Commissioner Pope asked if he could sort it out and give to the Commissioners so they could keep up with it. The Chairman asked Commissioner Pope to explain what he asked the County Manager. Commissioner Pope told him that the Commission has already adopted (voted on) two or three lists of roads to do. His question to Mr. Moye was would the roads that have already been voted on and prioritized be affected by this list. In other words, was the amount that given tonight supposed to fund what has already been approved. The Chairman said it would just mean the roads got paved sooner. County Engineer Wallace explained that Commissioner Pope's question is in reference to different roads, such as the dirt street paving project which is in Emerson Park, the roads behind Hog N Bones, and a couple of other dirt roads. The surveyors are already working on these projects. The money for those projects (Emerson Park and Dirt Street Paving) has not been subtracted from the balances that were presented to the Commission. The Chairman said there was grant money for those. Mr. Wallace explained it was beyond the CDBG project. Commissioner Pope added that it was the LMIG, CDBG, and local money. The Chairman said that wasn't what was said. Commissioner Pope explained that they voted on it. He said again that those projects were under a grant. Commissioner Pope told him that CDBG roads and LMIG roads and local roads were three different projects. Mr. Wallace explained that the

10% (ten percent) match has to come out of this money. Chairman Thrift asked if the local match would come out of the ARPA money. County Manager Moyer said that it could. The Commission asked for a recommendation. County Manager Moyer said he could pull the estimates and give a breakdown of each project and see how much money has been spent. Commissioner Burse said all he wants to know is how much money is available to do surface treatment on some of the roads on the priority list.

After back and forth discussion, it was determined that the fund balances given is not the unencumbered funds balance. The Commission wants to know what amount is left after the previously obligated projects are subtracted from the total funds. Once the Commission knows what is available, they will know which roads can be paved or have surface treatment.

Commissioner Barnard asked about Cornelius Road and having it expedited. County Engineer Wallace advised checking the Right of Way first. He said Mr. Littlefield told him that road needs to be built up because it is so low in places. As far as he can tell, there is a 30-foot Right of Way and a 20-foot road. Commissioner Barnard asked about reaching out to the landowners for enough property to make a 45-foot road. Chairman Thrift said there doesn't have to be ditches because the farmers will run over it and farm up to the edge, so the road just needs to be built up higher. Mr. Wallace asked if he had noticed the road washing out. The Chairman had and advised putting a pipe in it and letting it go. He then said to bid it out and see what it bids for. He said the only way to know the true cost is to design the roads and put them out to bid and get the contractor's price. He said some just guess and have never built a road. Mr. Wallace said that is where a priority list would be helpful. If Cornelius Road is the first one the Commission wants done, that is where he will start.

Chairman Thrift gave him the list of roads, in no particular order: Banks Lane, Banks Road, Cornelius Road, Slash Pine Road, Wadley Road, Paschall Road, McDonald Road, and Griffin Road. He then told him to bid all of them. Commissioner Burse asked if this was for surface treatment. The Chairman said this was for surface treatment only, and don't buy any Right of Way. County Engineer asked what was to be done if there is only a prescriptive easement on a road. The Chairman told him "*surface treatment it*". Commissioner Pope said he thought the Commission had decided not to pave anything that the County didn't own or have rights to. County Manager Moyer said that is a Commission decision. The Chairman said it could still be done and then asked couldn't the County pave a prescriptive easement. County Manager Moyer said the County Attorneys have advised that legally the County should own the Right of Way before paving. The Chairman then asked who would deed it over because the landowners who gave the prescriptive easements back in the 1920s are long gone. County Manager Moyer said that the County can send letters to the Prescriptive Easement owners and ask if they will donate the ROW in return for having the road paved. He said you may have some that will only donate the amount of the easement. He then said but if the Commission want to pave prescriptive easements, the staff follows the Commission's lead. Commissioner Pope said according to the County Attorney, the County must have the Right of Way. The Chairman asked which road has prescriptive easement. County Engineer Wallace said Cornelius Road is at the top of the list, it has only has a 30-foot ROW, which appears to be a prescriptive easement. The general consensus was that all of the roads on this list seem to have a 30-foot prescriptive easement. The Chairman wanted to know what it would take to get it changed over. County Manager Moyer explained it would have to be surveyed and deeded to the County for legal ownership. The prescriptive easements legally belong to the private land owner. Chairman Thrift told Engineer Wallace to have the surveys done.

County Manager Report: None

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Lucas said he wanted to mention two things. He is still requesting a second firetruck and wants to continue the conversation about the GSP Post. He just wants to keep that on the forefront of everyone’s mind.


ADJOURN

Commissioner Pope made a motion to adjourn the Called Meeting. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Called Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p. m.

Date for minutes proposed to be approved: March 11, 2024.


Elmer Thrift, Chairman

ATTEST:


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

3-13-2024
Date

[SEAL]

