

Twiggs County Board of Commissioners
Regular Scheduled Meeting
February 20, 2018
7:00 pm

Present: Chairman Ken Fowler, Commissioners Brent DuBois, Steve Birdsong, William Bond, and Lonnie Ford

Also, present: County Administrator Kelvin Lewis
County Attorney, Kerry Howell

Call to Order: Chairman Fowler called the meeting to order

Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Fowler led the Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Commissioner DuBois led in Prayer

Approval of the Agenda:

Commissioner DuBois made a motion to approve the Agenda as stated. Motion was second by Commissioner Ford. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Public Comments:

Chairman Fowler asked the audience if there were any comments to be made at this time. There were none from the audience.

Chairman Fowler asked Administrator Lewis to speak to the Board and the audience concerning the upcoming meeting to be held on the subject of an ambulance service for Twiggs County. Administrator Lewis thanked the audience for their attendance and involvement in the business of the county. Administrator Lewis advised there was a meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 22nd at 11:00 am. He advised this meeting will involve individuals needed to make a substantial impact on the move to establish an ambulance service for our county. He advised he will keep the public updated as this initiative progresses.

New Business:

Twiggs County Student Spelling Bee Winners

Administrator Lewis asked the two winners to come up and speak to the Board about what they had accomplished during their Spelling Bee competition. Each student spoke to the Board about their accomplishment in the competition. Shawn Mallory was recognized for winning the Geography Bee. The Board and the audience congratulated these students on their accomplishments. Administrator Lewis expressed the importance of striving to achieve their best and encouraged them to continue to challenge themselves.

Twiggs County Logo Contest Winners

Administrator Lewis gave a background as to why we felt a Logo was important for the recognition of the county. In the initial meeting the Board recommended we get input from the school students. Administrator Lewis worked with Principal Makaya to get this out to the school. He explained some of the highlights that set us apart from the rest of the state.

Alyssa Dawley and Phenix Rahn each received \$100.00. Administrator Lewis thanked each of them for their efforts and encouraged them to continue to express their ideas.

Flag Presentation on behalf of Representative Bubber Epps

Commissioner Birdsong presented two flags, a State of Georgia flag and a United States flag, to the county for display in the front of the courthouse. Representative Epps could not be at the meeting himself due to the House of Representatives being in session in Atlanta.

Fiscal 2019 Group Insurance Preview Presentation

Administrator Lewis introduced Michael Jackson from Glenn/Davis. Michael presented a proposal that included several different options for the employee. Some of these include some new offerings such as Long-Term Disability as well as Life Insurance.

Commissioner Bond stated that he had asked the Departments to compile any problems that they had had involving problems with the coverage they already had. Commissioner Bond referenced the HRA that the county previously had in place. This was discontinued when the County changed to United Healthcare in July 2017. Michael Jackson encouraged anyone who has any problems to bring them forward.

Code Red Early Warning System

Administrator Lewis presented a proposal from a company called Code Red. This will give the county access to a system of alerts when there is threatening weather not only locally but also on site where you are. The system will serve the citizens who choose to access this system. This system would cost the county around \$2900.00 for the remainder of this year to cover the entire county. Sheriff Mitchum advised there were also other components that can be added.

Commissioner DuBois expresses his concerns surrounding the feature of having to opt into the system. Code Red will be taking the initiative to notify and engage the citizens. Everyone will have the opportunity to sign on.

Commissioner Ford made a motion to accept the proposal from Code Red. Motion second by Commissioner DuBois. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Also mentioned was the certification from Jack Wood passing his Fire Instructor I class. This enables him to train in house.

On Line County Property Sales

Administrator Lewis updated the Board that he had been in contact with an on line vendor who we had worked with before to possibly list properties for sale by the County. There are quite a few and just putting signs up would not reach a greater audience. We would like to use that as a platform to list them. I need approval from the Board to go ahead and seek out this group and work with them to get the desired properties listed.

Attorney Howell advised there were three ways a county could sell properties in the State of Georgia.

1. Sealed Bid
2. Auction on Courthouse steps
3. Hire a Real Estate Agent who advertises.

He expressed he didn't know how an on-line auction fits in. Buddy Nesmith, Tax Commissioner stated his thoughts were the on-line would fit into the Real Estate Agent category. Attorney Howell expressed the need to do complete title work before any properties are put up for sale.

Administrator Lewis asked Attorney Howell the abilities we have to include the fees into the minimum price for the selected properties. Administrator Lewis asked what would be the best avenue to take. Attorney Howell stated he didn't have any problems with the on-line auction. He also stated there needs to be signage directing people where to go to view the properties. Administrator Lewis asked if we were going to list on-line and also put up signage. Administrator Lewis asked if the Board wants him to check on the price for signs. Administrator Lewis asked the Board for a motion and vote on the work the Board wants him to complete in reference to the on-line auction.

Commissioner Birdsong made a motion to go with the on-line auction and put up signs on each individual property listing the size of the property, who to contact and give a phone number and web site. Motion second by Commissioner DuBois. Motion passed by 5 yes votes. Administrator Lewis advised the Board he would give them an update at the March 6, 2018 meeting.

Convenience Center Update

Administrator Lewis gave the Board an update on the Convenience Centers. He stated the roll off truck should be in service by Friday of this week. Advance Disposal is giving us an opportunity to run an experimental run and see how this works out. We are also looking at the surveillance cameras at the Convenience Centers to identify violators and potentially prosecute these people. We have already been able to identify a violator in the Ridge Road area and also on the 129 site. We are committed to stopping these violators. Administrator Lewis asked the audience to report.

Commissioner Bond made a motion to put the guard rails on the elevated area used to dump at the height of a tail gate of a normal pickup truck. This could prevent a fall. Administrator Lewis advised this was already underway. Commissioner Bond made a motion that unless the Convenience Centers are attended by employees the gates be locked. Commissioner Birdsong clarified this was for Commissioner Bond's district only. Commissioner Bond replied yes. Commissioner Birdsong clarified his center stays open. Commissioner Ford second the motion for Commissioner Bond only. Motion carried by 4 yes votes. Chairman Fowler voted no.

There was public comment that this was not going to be convenient to the public. Let's try the roll back first.

Year End Compensation Review of All County Employees

Administrator Lewis advised the Board that Commissioner Bond had some concerns about that relative to the Board being aware of all employees or contractors being paid by the county that you as a Board get to look at these compensations. Commissioner Bond asked that we go back 2 years and look at their time and give him a list of when they were hired and who voted to hire them. Commissioner Ford advised the different departments hired their own people. Commissioner Bond clarified that he wanted a list of who the Board hired and how did the vote go. Commissioner Ford asked that he get a copy of this report also.

Clark & Smith Law Firm- The Opioid Crisis

Chairman Fowler turned the podium over to Clark and Smith Law Firm. They updated the Board on the crisis the counties are having dealing with the opioid epidemic and some history on how we arrived at where we are now. There are three primary distributors of opioids. They were charged with reporting unusual and excessive use. These companies have failed to do this. Therefore, the Blasingame Law Firm in Athens, have filed two lawsuits'. One for the counties and one for the Candler County Hospital. We are here to talk about the counties and how these lawsuits can affect the participating counties. The counties who have filed suit so far are Athens/Clarke County, Jeff Davis, Crisp, Hall and Candler Counties. The purpose of these lawsuits is to recoup the expenses they have incurred due to these instances. There will be ongoing damages. We are here to ask you to consider allowing us to include Twiggs County in these lawsuits. There are billions of dollars that have been set aside for these claims. Twiggs County would have a lawsuit and then that piece of litigation would be transferred to a Judge in Ohio and would preside over the entire litigation against big pharmaceuticals. Commissioner DuBois asked several questions concerning the legal fees involved for the county. Commissioner Bond asked what they consider costs for Twiggs County. Clark & Smith responded this would include numerous costs from the Sheriff's Department budget. Clark & Smith stated the biggest expense to the county would be manpower to gather information but could be a way for the counties to recoup some of their expense. The counties who sign up as a separate suit will have their funds come directly to the county. If the county waits until the state gets involved the money will go to the state.

Attorney Kerry Howell spoke on the credibility of the Clark & Smith Law Firm. Clark & Smith stated they front the expenses and there would be no up-front cost to the counties.

Commissioner DuBois asked the Board to discuss this issue more in executive session.

Resolution to change the 2nd meeting of the month to 6:00 pm.

Administrator Lewis presented a recommendation to change the meeting time to 6:00 pm for the 2nd monthly meeting. Commissioner Bond gave a brief background on the reason the time for the 2nd monthly meeting was set at 7:00 pm. He stated that if the meeting is set at 6:00 pm this does not give people time to attend.

Administrator Lewis advised some of the citizens had requested the time be changed. They would come here before going home.

Commissioner Birdsong made a motion to move the 2nd monthly meeting to 6:00 pm. It was recommended that this be done on a trail basis for 3 months. Commissioner DuBois second the motion on a trail basis for 3 months (March, April, May). Motion passed by vote of Yes – DuBois, Birdsong, Fowler, No – Ford, Bond. Motion passed

Budget Amendments to consolidate the Higgsville, Balls Church, Pearson and Dry Branch Fire Departments individual budgets into Fire/Rescue Budget

Administrator Lewis presented the Budget Amendments necessary to move the budgeted amounts for the Higgsville, Balls Church, Pearson and Dry Branch Fire Departments into the Fire/Rescue Department. This would coincide with consolidating the Higgsville, Balls Church, Pearson and Dry Branch Fire Departments into the Fire/Rescue Department as was voted on at the February 6, 2018 meeting.

Commissioner Ford made a motion to move budgeted amounts for Higgsville, Balls Church, Pearson and Dry Branch Fire Departments into the Fire/Rescue Department. Motion second by Chairman Fowler. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Budget Amendment Policy

Administrator Lewis presented a recommendation to the Board to establish a Budget Amendment Policy that would state any budget variance that is 10% or less of the budget for that department can be made without Board approval. Any amendment over 10% of the department annual budget will require Board approval.

Commissioner DuBois made a motion to establish a Budget Amendment Policy requiring Board approval only when a budget amendment exceeds 10% of a department budget. Motion second by Chairman Fowler. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Minutes:

Minutes from the February 6, 2018 meeting were submitted for approval. Commissioner DuBois made a motion to approve the minutes. Motion second by Chairman Fowler. Vote 4 yes (DuBois, Birdsong, Fowler, Ford) Abstain – (Bond) Motion passed.

Old Business:

DFACS Appointment (District 2)

Commissioner DuBois made a motion to appoint Meesha McKie to the DFACS Board for District 2. Motion second by Commissioner Birdsong. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Administrator Lewis advised the Cryptococcus testing came back negative. The Histoplasma is probably 5 weeks out before it will be back. I have communicated those results to the interested parties at DFACS. My plan is to reach out tomorrow to see if anybody responds.

Library Board Appointment

Commissioner Ford made a motion to appoint Mrs. Evelyn Taylor to the Library Board. Commissioner Bond second. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

X-Ray Machine Proposal

Administrator Lewis submitted to the Board that it is more prudent to secure the entire courthouse instead of just the courtroom only. We will be required to make accommodations for handicap ramps and close other points of entry except for a key entry for the Sheriff's office at the stairs leading to the courtrooms. The cost of putting a ramp up front can be handled by our Road Dept. Everyone will come through screening at the front door. We are still acquiring data on the actual cost of the equipment. I plan to present this at the March 6th meeting. These steps are recommended by the Sheriff, and the Superior Court Judges.

Executive Session

Commissioner Ford made a motion to go into Executive Session for personnel, legal and real estate. Motion second by Commissioner Bond. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Time out 9:23 pm.

Commissioner Birdsong made a motion to return to Regular Session. Motion second by Chairman Fowler. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Time in 10:22 pm.

Amendment to the MOU for First Solar

Administrator Lewis presented an outline of the changes needed to the MOU for First Solar. These are outlined below and have been reviewed by Attorney Howell.

- a. Closing date changes from 2019 to 2020
- b. Change in site size
- c. Year of payment in lieu of taxes
- d. Date rights assigned to Twiggs County Solar from First Solar
- e. Change the Bond from 190 million to 210 million

Attorney Howell has reviewed the changes and feels they are satisfactory and he recommends these be adopted.

Commissioner Ford made a motion to approve the proposed changes to the MOU for First Solar. Motion second by Commissioner DuBois. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Planning and Zoning

Administrator Lewis presented a fee structure for Plat Approval. The fee would be \$10.00 for a preliminary plat approval and \$25.00 for a final plat approval.

Commissioner Bond made a motion to approve the fee structure for Plat Approval of \$10.00 for a preliminary plat approval and \$25.00 for a final plat approval effective 2/20/2018. Motion second by Commissioner Ford. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Logo Approval

Commissioner Ford made a motion to accept the logo presented to the Board on 2/20/2018. Motion second by Commissioner Bond. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Get the combination to the safe changed

Commissioner Bond made a motion to have the combination changed on the safe and the only person with access will be Administrator Lewis. Motion second by Commissioner Birdsong. No vote taken.

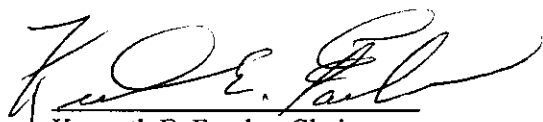
Public Comments:

None

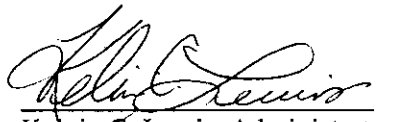
Adjourn:

Motion was made by Commissioner Bond to adjourn with second by Commissioner Ford. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

Minutes approved March 6th 2018



Kenneth E. Fowler
Kenneth E. Fowler, Chairman



Kelvin C. Lewis
Kelvin C. Lewis, Administrator