

Board of Commissioners Wilkinson County

MEMBERS OF BOARD:
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COMMISSION MEETING
August 17, 2021
5:00 PM

The Wilkinson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session at 5:00 P.M on August 17, 2021 in Commission Chambers. The following Commissioners were present: Chairman Michael Gotell, Commissioner Glenn Kester, Commissioner James Hagins and Commissioner John Williams. Commissioner Pete Williams was absent from the meeting.

The following staff was present: County Manager Dennis Stroud, Tracy Strange Director of Finance, Lindsey Benefield Senior Account Tech 1, and County Attorney DuBose Porter.

Broadcasted Live via Facebook. A call-in phone number had also been installed for public attendance. (978) 990-5000 code 180826,

Invocation

Chairman Gotell asked Commissioner James Hagins to lead the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Gotell asked Commissioner Glenn Kester to lead the pledge.

Agenda

Chairman Gotell entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Motion made by Commissioner James Hagins and seconded by Commissioner John Williams to approve the agenda. Commissioner Kester voted yes, Commissioner Hagins voted yes, Commissioner John Williams voted yes and Chairman Gotell voted yes. Motion carried there were none opposed.

Minutes

Chairman Gotell entertained a motion to approve the Regular Session Minutes and the Executive Session Minutes of the August 3, 2021 meeting. Motion made by Commissioner John Williams and seconded by Commissioner James Hagins to approve the minutes of the Regular Session and Executive Session minutes. Commissioner Kester voted yes, Commissioner Hagins voted yes, Commissioner John Williams voted yes and Chairman Gotell voted yes. Motion carried there were none opposed.

Visitors' Present

Beverly Clark, Donna Asbell, Karen Lee Kester, and Brandon Smith.

Recognition of Visitors / Presentations

- a. EMA Director Emma Bacon presented an award to Tristin Herren for his courage and bravery while saving two minors on a side by side that was on fire on August 5th, 2021.
- b. Miss Regina Brantley was not present during the meeting.
- c. Beverly Clark for a follow-up on the progress at the Irwinton Trash Dump Recycle Center. Chairman Michael Gotell wanted to insure Beverly Clark that she can call the County Manager Mr. Dennis Stroud if she would like if she did not want to wait until the next meeting to follow up with questions in regards to the Trash Dump Recycle Center or any questions. Beverly Clark asked "Will signs be placed on the containers at the dump?". Beverly Clark stated that if there were signs it would help her. Beverly also asked "Will the fence boards be replaced or repaired or painted or removed?". Chairman Michael Gotell stated that they are getting repaired. Beverly Clark also asked "Do we Recycle and if we do does the money just go into the county's General Fund or who does it benefit and I was just going to mention there is some counties that ear mark those funds for their fire safety and they have a sign out there that says Recycled Funds go for Fire Safety in our county. That might encourage our citizens to recycle more I don't know but it might." Beverly Clark also addressed her concerns about the park trash behind the Senior Citizens Center and how it is overflowing. Beverly Clark was curious about the schedule for pick-up for the trash behind the Citizen Center area. Beverly Clark also mentioned that there is a larger dumpster that she believes the Senior Center and the Health Department both share. Beverly Clark stated that they go and pick up overflow at times and place it back into the trash containers, she stated that she did not want to put trash that they pick up in the big dumpster if they are not supposed to be doing so, stated that she has not seen a sign stating that they cannot use that larger container and that she did not want to break a law. Chairman Michael Gotell Stated that the area she is referring to is all County and to go ahead and use the larger dumpster she was asking if she could use in addition to the container that is just for the Senior Citizens Center.

Chairman Michael Gotell also stated that if she has any ideas or anything that you think that could make things better around here to make sure she communicates that to him. Beverly Clark asked if we recycle? Chairman Michael Gotell stated he is not sure how to answer that. Commissioner John Williams stated that he believes we do recycle. Beverly Clark stated that some of those funds that are received from recycling could be put towards the Fire Fighter Funding if possible. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that they were recently discussing how to find some more pennies for our firefighters. Chairman Michael Gotell asked if the County Manager Dennis Stroud can reach out to our Road Superintendent Charlie Palm who is over the recycling centers to get a clarification on where we stand on recycling as well as the signage. Chairman John Williams also stated to Beverly Clark to feel free to call upon help to those individuals in the little houses that it is their job and responsibility is to help citizens.

- d. Donna Asbell for update on flame parts / delivery install, courthouse grounds, and courthouse signs. Donna Asbell asked where we were as far as the install of the flame. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that FedEx is scheduled to deliver the part needed for install by the end of business day today. County Manager stated that Mr. Snider will be the first person to know as soon as the FedEx delivery is in his hands. Donna Asbell stated that another concern that she had since about April are the grounds around the courthouse and how she does not believe they have been improved. Mrs. Asbell stated that the grass needs trimming, mentioned that there are dead shrubs, mentioned that there are also signs that don't work. Mrs. Asbell asked where are we in regards to the Courthouse looking better. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that he would have to disagree with Mrs. Asbell stating that he has seen the grass cut and improvements there, stated that the budget workshops are just finishing up, Chairman mentioned that we will stay on top of it.
- e. Brandon Smith for American Rescue Act, budget, public impact. Brandon Smith started by asking how much the county has gotten in regards to the American Rescue Act. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that those amounts are out. County Manager stated that the amount is 869 thousand totals that we have currently received should be a total of 1.7 Million, stated that it comes in two increments. Chairman Michael Gotell stated how there have been a budget workshop as well as the Online Town Hall meeting the first Monday of the month and town hall meetings in person as well to talk to people about it. Chairman Michael Gotell also stated that we are trying to accumulate a list in regards of how to spend those funds for the county. Brandon Smith mentioned that some of the individual people that he knew were not able to make those Town Hall meetings so he stated that's why he wanted to get this subject placed on the agenda to discuss in further detail. Brandon Smith asked if we have an idea of what amounts are going to which specific items. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that they are still compiling a list at this stage. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that there are some additional Town Hall meetings to come in the future to get additional input from the citizens of the county and that is why it is in its current stage of action for the budget. Brandon Smith asked if there were any concrete ideas. Brandon Smith stated that his main concerns were A. How Much? and B What are we doing with it? Chairman Michael Gotell did state that things do need to be COVID related for the use of the funds. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that it is

public knowledge in regards to how much money comes to the cities and the counties and ever since that first half came in to the county, he has been trying to get more input from citizens. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that what we have to do first is accumulate the list once you've got the list then you have to figure out how to prioritize that list within the guidelines of how to spend that money. Chairman Michael Gotell stated since we received the money 6 weeks ago we have conducted online workshops, town hall meetings and trying to gather information and we still are trying to gather information. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that they had a budget workshop today and the first thing that was asked was when is the next rescue plan meeting. County Manager Dennis Stroud stated that nothing is solidified the board is still discussing it but mentioned he would be happy to sit down with Mr. Brandon Smith to go over everything.

Unfinished Business

- a. Update on Flame of Freedom County Manager Dennis Stroud. County Manager stated that he will reach out to Mr. Snider.
- b. Discuss Possible telework program. County Manager stated that the board will see something coming to them real soon in regards to telework as we continue to look at the numbers rising.
- c. Joint Board Retreat is on hold.

Commissioner's District Report

1. Nothing to report
2. Nothing to report
- 3.
4. Commissioner John Williams stated that he received notice form USDA department of Agriculture. EMC located in Omaha was awarded 21 million dollars for Broadband. Commissioner John Williams mentioned how it is important for our citizens to have access to high speed internet. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that he and the County Manager Dennis Stroud had met with Kinetic. Chairman Gotell stated that County Manager has been a big part of getting this process going. Commissioner John Williams stated that we have received our accessors numbers and that we have lost 7.2 % of our population stated that all of rural Georgia is losing population and to make sure to fight for rural Georgia. Chairman Gotell entertained a motion to pass this resolution. Motion made by Commissioner John Williams and seconded by Commissioner Glenn Kester to approve a motion to pass this resolution. Commissioner Kester voted yes, Commissioner Hagins voted yes, Commissioner John Williams voted yes and Chairman Gotell voted yes. Motion carried there were none opposed.

Chairman's Report:

- a. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that he would like to give a update for the

recreation department asked Mr. John Carswell to speak. Mr. John Carswell stated that there is a recreation department meeting tomorrow August 18, 2021 at 5:30 PM. Mr. John Carswell stated that he had some questions that he hopes to get answered from that meeting to come back to the County Manager with some numbers and then address the changes that are happening. Mr. John Carswell also requested that either the County Manager or Chairman be present at that meeting.

County Managers Report:

- a. County Manager Dennis Stroud stated that he is extremely proud to see that we have come so far with the board prioritizing the 5-year plan.
- b. County Manager Dennis Stroud stated that the Elections Superintendent has scheduled interviews on the 23rd and have looked at the applicants to pick the best from the candidates.
- c. County Manager Dennis Stroud stated that the project across the street 105 Bacon street is about 85-90 % completed.
- d. County Manager Dennis Stroud stated that contractors came out to speak to us in regards to the Courthouse roof however no one has submitted documents yet.
- e. County Manager Dennis Stroud stated that he spoke with Dykes in regards to the roads they stated that they would give him a estimate sometime between today or tomorrow to give a start date for re-surfacing our roads.
- f. County Manager Dennis Stroud stated that we will continue to solicit ideas for ARP and for the next workshop that will be the main idea is doing our ARP.

Comments from the Public:

- a. Beverly Clark asked if there is a regular schedule for pick up of the trash containers. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that the County Manager Dennis Stroud is going to coordinate that. Beverly Clark stated that the community needs to help take care of it's community by using the trash containers near the Senior Center area.
- b. John Carswell stated that part of the issue that is going on with the trash getting over filled is that prior to his surgery he was going out and picking up. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that they will assign detail towards it and it will be taken care of.
- c. TC Bloodworth asked if Dykes is also doing the grass cutting on 441. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that last year Dykes was on top of getting the grass cut in a quick manner and is not sure what is going on currently, he stated that it could possibly be because of re-surfacing. Chairman Michael Gotell stated that most likely it's because of re-surfacing that is going on.

Executive Session

Motion made by Commissioner Glenn Kester to enter into executive session to discuss personnel matters and pending litigation. Motion seconded by Commissioner John Williams. Commissioner Glenn Kester voted yes, Commissioner James Hagins voted yes, Chairman Michael Gotell voted yes, Commissioner John Williams. voted yes. Motion carries there were none opposed.

Motion to exit Executive Session made by Commissioner Glenn Kester. Seconded by Commissioner John Williams. Commissioner Kester voted yes, Commissioner Hagins voted yes, Chairman Gotell voted yes, and Commissioner John Williams. voted yes. Motion carries there were none opposed.

No Action Taken

Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner John Williams and seconded by Commissioner Glenn Kester to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Kester voted yes, Commissioner Hagins voted yes, Chairman Gotell voted yes, and Commissioner John Williams voted yes. Motion carried there were none opposed.

Notice to Visitors

The Board of Commissioners welcomes you to our meeting. We ask that you do not talk during the meeting to allow us to hear all discussion between Commissioners. If you would like to be placed on the agenda, please contact the Board of Commissioners Office at 946-2236 no later than the Thursday prior to meeting.