

MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING
MARION COUNTY, GEORGIA
VIA TELECONFERENCE DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS
Dial-in: 1-978-990-5000 Access code 211694
April 14, 2020 – 5:00 PM

PRESENT: Commission staff who participated on the call were Chairman George Neal, Commissioner Steve Young, Commissioner Jody Grimsley, Commissioner Matthew Gunnels, Commissioner Norman Royal, County Attorney Wayne Jernigan, County Manager Justin Strickland and County Clerk Sylvia Russell.

Other key contacts who participated in discussions were Roger Murray (Bond Counsel), Bryan Huskey (Stifel), Houston Black (ClearWater), Rick Ailiff (ClearWater).

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Neal called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM. Wayne Jernigan gave the invocation.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Commissioner Young made a motion to approve the minutes from the *March 10, 2020, Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners.* Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

Discussion:

a. ClearWater Contract

County Manager Strickland outlined two proposals from ClearWater that include some remediation of dirt roads, one with current staff and one with two additional employees. Commissioner Grimsley suggested the Commission open the contract for bids and that we don't make a decision until the Commission can personally meet with ClearWater. He proposed a monthly renewal or a 90-day contract extension. Commissioner Young stated he believes ClearWater knows the seriousness of road issues due to public concerns expressed at the March 10, 2020 meeting and he feels the County can get where we need to be with ClearWater. He suggested renewing for one year. Commissioner Gunnels stated water services are good, roads services need improvements. He does not want to make a decision without a face-to-face meeting with ClearWater. Commissioner Royal stated he has ridden with ClearWater Project manager Shane Cox and observed the road conditions. He also pointed out ClearWater has done several good things, like getting the County a grant for re-striping several roads. He proposed a 1-year contract extension.

ClearWater President Rick Ailiff stated he understands shortcomings and wants to do what it takes to make the relationship work. He stated ClearWater needs clear expectations and would like to have a work session to establish them.

Commissioner Grimsley made a motion to renew the ClearWater contract for 90 days to allow time to meet and evaluate. Commissioner Grimsley said we need to set up the meeting in the next two weeks, have regular updates to communicate status during the 90-day period. Commissioner Young seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Alcohol Licensing:

i. Distilled Spirits for Mixed Drinks

County Clerk Russell outlined a previous approval by the Board of Commissioner in May 2016 to allow distilled spirits to be served as mixed drinks. The ordinance has not been finalized because permit fees are not defined. The Commission advised the Clerk to research what other counties/entities are charging and propose a fee schedule for consideration.

ii. Special Event Alcohol Permits

County Clerk Russell outlined a previous approval by the Board of Commissioner in August 2018 to offer a Special Event Alcohol Permit for the sale of malt beverages, wine, and distilled spirits for mixed drinks. The ordinance has not been finalized because permit fees are not defined and the language does not address sale of packaged distilled spirits as request by local distilleries. The Commission advised the Clerk to research what other counties/entities are charging and propose a fee schedule for consideration. The Commission did not want to consider allowing the sale of packaged distilled spirits.

iii. Mandatory Training for Alcohol Licensees

County Clerk Russell outlined an ordinance approved by the Board of Commissioners in May 2016 to require completion of a Responsible Alcohol Sales and Services (RASS) workshop by all new and existing alcohol licensees. The ordinance has not been implemented because enforcement is not defined. The Commission advised the Clerk to propose a plan for enforcement for their consideration.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Commissioner Gunnels made a motion to approve a proclamation to designate April as “Donate Life Month” per request of LifeLink of Georgia. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Commissioner Royal made a motion to approve a resolution to place a referendum for Alcohol Sales on Sunday on the ballot in the 2020 General Election to be held in November 3, 2020. Commissioners Gunnels seconded the motion. Commissioner Young opposed the motion. Commissioner Grimsley voted to approve the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 3 to 1.
- c. Commissioner Royal made a motion to approve of Marion County Board of Education Bond Refinance. Commissioner Gunnels seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
- d. The Board considered a request to award a contract to Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc. for:
 - i. \$25,500.00 for private placement, OR
 - ii. 1% of par value of bonds for underwriting fees (estimated \$38,796.48)for the purpose of serving as underwriting agent, or private placement agent for refunding of water fund revenue bonds.

The Commission agreed to use Stifel for this same process in 2016; however, the market dropped and the Board did not pursue the bid process.

Chairman Neal mentioned concern about paying Stifel and additional \$25,500. Commissioner Gunnels expressed the same concern and asked if the County Manager could handle placing the bid out for refunding. County Manager Strickland stated he will do whatever the Board asks, but he does not have expertise or experience in this field. Bond Counsel Roger Murray was on the line and he stated counties can do their own Request for Proposals but it is not typical. He added that if bonds are sold publicly, the Commission must use an investment banker. Commissioner Royal agreed with Commissioner Gunnels and said he believes the Commission should discuss further. Commissioner Young asked if the County pays nothing if the deal doesn't close and Counsel Murray responded affirmative. Commissioner Young stated time is of the essence and he wants to see the Commission take action quickly in the current favorable market because interest rates are low.

Commissioner Gunnels made a motion to table this request for 30 days to allow for more research by all commissioners and administrative staff. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

- e. Commissioner Gunnels made a motion to approve a resolution approving the Waiver of Certain Penalties and Interest by The Marion County Tax Commissioner. Commissioner Young seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS:

- a. Public Works & Water Department Report – ClearWater Solutions

ClearWater Project Manager Shane Cox outlined highlights of the report and pointed out the team has resumed work on Moody Road as of the prior week. Bryant Poole, an engineer for GMC (parent company of ClearWater) who is retired from the Georgia Department of Transportation, came and gave Shane advice on how to improve the road.

b. County Manager’s Report – Justin Strickland

County Manager Strickland reviewed his report and thanked the Commission, constitutional officers, and County of a staff for keeping us operating and safe during the COVID-19 crisis. He also pointed out that work began on 4/1/2020 to pave JP Hudson Road. All deeds for right of way have been acquired. County Manager Strickland also pointed out the importance work session in the near future to discuss SPLOST III.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Gunnels made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 PM. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman George Neal, Jr.

Vice-Chairman Steve Young

Commissioner Norman Royal

Commissioner Jody Grimsley

Commissioner Matt Gunnels

Attest:

Sylvia Russell, County Clerk