

MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING
MARION COUNTY, GEORGIA
VIA VIDEO and TELECONFERENCE DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS
June 9, 2020 – 5:00 PM

PRESENT: Those present on the video call (ZOOM meeting ID 939 4184 2974) 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.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Neal called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM. Commissioner Young gave the invocation.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Commissioner Gunnels made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 12, 2020, Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Grimsley seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Neal called to order a Public Hearing at 5:07 PM to discuss a Rezone Application at 1933 Pineville Road for Commercial use on land that is zoned Agricultural. This rezone request is to allow Beltline Energy LLC to place a solar farm on property owned by the Henry Family Trust. The Planning & Zoning Committee recommended approval of the application. Citizens were given an opportunity to speak for or against the requested variance. Ron Hinze of 211 N. Broad St. in Buena Vista spoke in favor of the project while no one spoke in opposition.

Dan Stevenson of Beltline Energy noted that all energy produced by the solar farm will be consumed by local customers and the company will only move forward if their application is approved by Georgia Power. Chairman Neal asked if grounds will be regularly maintained. Mr. Stevenson assured him the area of approximately 31 acres will be surrounded by a chain-link fence and they will keep the grass cut and the property neat.

Chairman Neal concluded the public hearing and called the regular session back in order at 5:18 PM

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- a. **Carol Streeter, 778 Moody Rd.:** Ms. Streeter asked to be on the agenda regarding the Sheriff's Office changing Open Records request procedures and having no body camera video; however, she did not respond after being called upon three times to present her request.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **1933 Pineville Road Rezone:** Commissioner Young made a motion to approve a Rezone Application at 1933 Pineville Road from Agricultural to Commercial with the condition that Georgia Power accepts the Beltline Energy LLC solar farm project. Commissioner Gunnels seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

- b. **SPLOST VI:** Commissioner Grimsley made a motion to approve A Resolution Approving And Authorizing Execution By The Chairman Of An Intergovernmental Agreement Between The County And Certain Municipalities Of Marion County Concerning A County One Percent Special Purpose local Option Sales And Use Tax (SPLOST). Commissioner Young seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. County Attorney Jernigan noted he has reviewed both documents and is fine with the Commission approving.
- c. **Region 7 EMS County Appointment:** Commissioner Gunnels made a motion to appoint Tripp Riddle to the Region 7 EMS Council. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
- d. **Traylor Business Services, Inc., Contract Renewal:** Commissioner Young made a motion to approve the renewal contract for the Personal Property Verification Program with Traylor Business Services, Inc. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
- e. **Financial Rules and Regulations:** The Financial Rules and Regulations document for Marion County was tabled to allow for Legal review. Mr. Jernigan expects to review with Chairman Neal by the next regular meeting.
- f. **On-call Civil Engineering Services:** The Commission was asked to consider a contract with Hofstadter & Associates, Inc., for on-call civil engineering services. Commissioners Gunnels and Grimsley expressed concern about using an engineering firm for routine projects. They noted they were comfortable with having a firm on standby, but not necessarily using them for LMIG projects. Commissioner Young made a motion to approve to award a contract for on-call (“standby”) civil engineering services to Hofstadter & Associates, Inc., for one year. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION:

- a. **Senior Center HVAC System:** The Commission was asked to consider providing funds to help the City of Buena Vista replace the HVAC System at the Senior Center. Mayor Brown was present on the call and he noted he has received three quotes and the best option of \$24,000.00 for a full replacement of the current unit. He also explored mini-split units as an option and they are not feasible due to the perimeter offices/rooms that would not be adequately covered. He noted the majority of senior citizens who utilize the Senior Center are County residents from outside the Buena Vista city limits. He requested the Commission consider paying a third of the cost (\$8,000.00) from County funds with the City and the River Valley Regional Commission paying a third each. Mayor Brown is hopeful that a grant can be secured to cover 100% of costs; however, that is to be determined. County Manager Strickland noted this expense is not eligible for SPLOST funding because it is not a County-owned facility. He offered that there is \$25,000.00 budgeted for Courthouse repairs that could be redirected if the Commission desires. Commissioner Grimsley noted he is concerned there is not enough to cover the needed Courthouse repairs and he doesn't believe funds should be taken from that budget. Commissioner Young agreed the funds are not available for the Commission to offer and asked if the Hospital Authority may be willing to help since the center supports senior citizens. Mayor Brown agreed the center supports health and wellness for seniors and that may be a reasonable request to the Authority. Chairman Neal and Commissioner Young offered to reach out to the Hospital Authority to ask for support for this facility that helps vulnerable citizens.

- b. **Development Authority Upcoming Appointments:** The Commission reviewed upcoming Development Authority term expirations for Randy McCorkle - Treasurer (District 1), Ken Singleton (District 4), and Dr. George Porter (District 2) in anticipation of reappointments in July. Authority Chairmen Ron Hinze pointed out that all three have agreed to continue serving. He also noted there are two vacancies left by Steve White and Walker Williams and he will share his recommendations for those slots with County Manager Strickland.

REPORTS:

a. Public Works & Water Department Report – ClearWater Solutions

County Manager Strickland commented that he has seen noticeable changes in shop organization and cleanliness along with improved planning for road maintenance. He is also working with the interim ClearWater manager to accurately inventory all assets and their condition. Commissioner Young reminded ClearWater contacts about the agreement to spray the fence at the airport and they agreed to make it happen.

b. County Manager’s Report – Justin Strickland

County Manager Strickland reviewed his monthly update and noted the County offices are once again open to foot traffic as of June 1. Offices have installed plexiglass shields at counters as needed and there have been no issues thus far. County Manager Strickland and County Clerk Russell are working closely with auditors to complete the 2019 review and clean up processes so the process will be smoother next year. Also, cameras are being installed at the County dumpsters to help with monitoring and addressing abuse.

Commissioner Gunnels inquired about the status of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) road striping project. County Manager Strickland will follow up with GDOT to get an update.

Commissioner Grimsley pointed out it may be a good idea to focus on clipping road shoulders to get ahead on maintenance.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Grimsley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 PM. Commissioner Gunnels seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

Chairman George Neal, Jr.

Sylvia Russell, County Clerk