

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING**  
**MARION COUNTY, GEORGIA**  
**VIA VIDEO and TELECONFERENCE DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS**  
**November 10, 2020 – 5:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Those present on the video call (ZOOM meeting ID 975 5485 1413) were Chairman George Neal, Commissioner Matt Gunnels, Commissioner Jody Grimsley, Commissioner Norman Royal, Commissioner Steve Young, County Attorney Wayne Jernigan County Manager Justin Strickland, County Clerk Sylvia Russell and Deputy County Clerk Martyna Currington-Jenkins.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Neal called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. County Attorney Wayne Jernigan gave the invocation.

**APPROVE MINUTES:**

Commissioner Gunnels made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 13, 2020, Regular Meeting and the October 27, 2020, Called Meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Chief Ranger Justin Brown presented the Fiscal Year 2020 Georgia Forestry Annual Report for Marion County. In addition to providing an activity overview, Chief Ranger Brown pointed out that the Chattahoochee Marion Unit was named the North Zone Unit of the Year for FY19. Unit personnel were honored in the Georgia State Senate and the Georgia House of Representatives with a resolution that was read on the floor of each. Governor Kemp was on hand to honor the recipients as well.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Juanita Lewis - 175 Plum Lane: Ms. Lewis did not join the ZOOM meeting. Chairman Neal spoke on her behalf. Ms. Lewis requests permission to rename Plum Lane in honor of her father, Charles Crawford, Sr. She also requested that the road be paved. Chairman Neal advised her the County can improve the road, but paving the road is not likely. The Commission discussed the impact to other residents on the road. There is one other resident who Chairman Neal believes would support the name change. County Manager Strickland pointed out that a Road Renaming Policy is currently being reviewed by the County Attorney and it includes a process for checking with all residents on a road. Commissioner Grimsley made a motion to approve changing the road name to honor Charles Crawford, Sr., as long as there are no objections from other residents. Commissioner Gunnels seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Commissioner Grimsley made a motion to approve the 2021 Holiday Schedule for Marion County offices. Commissioner Gunnels seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Date	Holiday
Friday, January 1	New Year's Day
Monday, January 20	Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Date	Holiday
Monday, May 31	Memorial Day
Monday, July 5	Independence Day (observed)
Monday, September 6	Labor Day
Thursday, November 11	Veterans Day
Thursday, November 25 Friday, November 26	Thanksgiving Day Additional Thanksgiving Holiday
Friday, December 24 Monday, December 27	Christmas Eve Additional Christmas Day Holiday
Friday, December 31	New Year's Day

- b. Commissioner Grimsley made a motion to approve the 2021 Marion County Board of Commissioners meeting schedule. Commissioner Royal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

January 12th	July 13th
February 9th	August 10th
March 9th	September 14th
April 13th	October 12th
May 11th	November 9th
June 8th	December 14th

\*\* 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM \*\*

**DISCUSSION:**

- a. **Fiscal Year 2021 Budget** – County Manager Strickland reviewed a draft 2021 budget and highlighted the following points:

- Department heads worked with him to find **approximately \$16,242 in savings.**
- **\$40,000 in savings for the General Fund will come from the Sheriff's vehicle purchase moving to SPLOST VI.**
- There are **mandated increases in constitutional officer salaries next year of around \$6,000 each.** That's an increase in salaries of \$24,000 plus budgeting for 2.5% performance increases for every employee (besides the constitutional officers).

County Manager Strickland asked the Commission to call him with questions and recommendations in the next few weeks as he works to prepare a final proposed budget for review in public hearings and by the Commission.

b. **2021 LMIG Project Selection** – County Manager Strickland reviewed a list of proposed resurfacing projects:

- Doyle Rd (Fouche to Hwy 26)
- Tower Point Rd (Southern Section)
- Johnny Miller Rd
- Fort Perry Rd (Two Years)
- Buffalo Rd (patched during 2020 LMIG)
- Flem Smith Rd
- Fouche Rd (Two Years)
- Herman Bell Rd
- Eddie Martin Rd
- Poll Mill Rd.

Commissioner Young agrees with the first three roads on the proposed list being made priority. Commissioner Grimsley would like the opportunity to travel all roads on the list to be able to make a fair decision. Commissioner Gunnels believes Buffalo Road is the worst road on the list; however, he would like the other districts to have priority since his district has had significant road improvements this year. Commissioner Royal agrees with the priority as listed but he is willing to discuss setting different priorities based on the other commissioners' feedback. The LMIG project application is due in February 2021. Chairman Neal set a goal for confirming the priority list at the December 2020 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

- c. **Dirt Road Remediation and Maintenance** – Chairman Neal pointed out that substantial work has been completed on dirt roads this year. He has received compliments on the condition of Burginville Road and how well it is holding up. He recommended the Commission review costs so far this year and decide on moving forward with previously planned priorities. County Manager Strickland stated the budget was \$300,000 for remediation this year. He believes we have spent more than he thought we should with hauling dirt to County Line Road and he asked Clearwater to scale that back, even if it means it will take a little longer to do it ourselves. Commissioner Grimsley said he is concerned that we spent over \$118,000 on County Line Road and it has taken much longer than the initial estimate of about three weeks. He would like for the Commission to review and set budgets for the other roads scheduled for this year (Edgar Jones and Harbuck Roads). Commissioner Royal asked County Manager Strickland what he thought we would have saved if we hauled dirt ourselves. County Manager Strickland stated that hauling costs were \$45,000 using vendors. He recommended we let Clearwater continue regular maintenance and work on remediation as they go forward, using the Road Department personnel, but not rushing to finish the remediation. Commissioner Royal agreed the Commission needs to set a budget for each road going forward. Commissioner Gunnels reiterated that the Commission was told by Clearwater's former project manager that County Line Road remediation would take a couple of weeks. The Commission received bids from outside vendors in the range of \$120,000 to perform the work and we chose to use our staff and pay vendors, while neglecting maintenance of other roads. If he had known we would spend this much money doing it ourselves, he would have voted to use vendors to do all of the work. Commissioner Young agreed the Commission should review and set a budget for Edgar Jones and Harbuck Pond Roads. He recalled the estimates from vendors were over \$400,000 and that was using our dirt and materials. He stated he understood equipment being down was more to blame for the maintenance falling behind. He does not want us to halt any work on drainage issues on the next two priority roads while this is worked out.

Chairman Neal asked if we have received any feedback about County Line Road. County Manager Strickland stated he received very good feedback from one resident while he was assessing the road. Commissioner Gunnels said he has also received positive feedback. He agreed with proceeding with pipe/drainage work on the priority roads. Commissioner Grimsley agreed as well and reiterated we need to get equipment functional so maintenance can continue.

## **REPORTS:**

- a. **Public Works & Water Department Report** – ClearWater Solutions Project Manager Daniel Enfinger asked if the County has ever considered reclaiming dirt from the right of way on county roads. He recommended that process be considered. He agreed that having two motor graders down did affect maintenance. He suggested that the Commission observe the condition and age of the motor graders to understand they are at a point where they will be buying salvage parts to repair them. Chairman Neal reported that the previous Roads Superintendent did recover dirt/sand as able when citizens pointed out a buildup, although it was not a routine process. Mr. Enfinger pointed out the grader at the pit is likely to need a new engine at this point. Chairman Neal asked County Manager Strickland to get quotes on repairing or replacing it. Commissioner Royal noted he feels it is important for Mr. Enfinger to be in the meetings when the Commission discusses how to proceed with dirt road remediation.

Mr. Enfinger reviewed the Public Works & Water Department monthly report and noted that maintenance was increased significantly in October because equipment was functioning. A significant decrease in water loss percentage from 66% to 38% was realized in October because they began manually managing the shut down/restart of wells. Also, they repaired meters for a couple of commercial customers. Mr. Enfinger presented two requests: 1) Add a thumb to the existing mini excavator at a cost of \$3,800. This will allow the team to be able to maintain the check dams instead of replacing them and will be very cost effective. 2) Authorize his crew to reclaim sand/clay from shoulders of the 180 miles of dirt roads rather than hauling fill from county pits. This will save money on hauling fees, fuel, and wear and tear on trucks.

- b. **County Manager's Report** – County Manager Justin Strickland highlighted a couple of items from his monthly report:

### Airport

- a. Fuel Tanks should arrive this month
- b. Should have Land-Lease Agreements for two private hangars for December meeting
- c. Road Department installed power pole to save \$550.00

### Off System Grant – Re-striping and New Signage for Selected Paved Roads

- a. Started on Bill Merrit Road Monday (11/09/20)

### 2021 Budget

- a. Will have to have two hearings before approved
- b. Deadline for approval is 12/31/20

### New Ambulance

- a. Received 25% reimbursement from Hospital Authority - \$48,094.55

Expect the following to be presented during the December Regular Meeting:

- a. Broadband Ordinance
- b. Renaming or Roads/County Assets a Resolution/Policy
- c. Comprehensive Plan Draft

Volunteer Fire Departments

- a. Oakland VFD has been instructed to cease responding to calls until back in state compliance.
- b. State of Georgia has decided to let Brown Springs VFD make up training hours

Thanksgiving

- a. Closing County offices on November 25th at 12:00 PM

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Royal made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 PM. Commissioner Gunnels seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

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Chairman George Neal, Jr.

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Sylvia Russell, County Clerk