

Minutes  
Liberty County Board of commissioners  
Midmonth meeting  
July 16, 2020

1. The meeting was opened by Chairman Lovette with Commissioners Lovette, Thrift, Stevens, Gilliard and Frasier in attendance. Commissioner Walden joined by teleconference.
2. The County Administrator certified compliance with the Georgia Open Meetings Act.
3. The prayer was offered by Mr. Joseph Mosley followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. The Board adopted a proclamation in recognition of Gullah Geechee Nation appreciation week.
5. Departmental reports are presented:
  - A. Mr. Trent Long presented the monthly engineering report and highlighted projects currently being worked through his office including Interstate Paper Road project and ADA accessibility in recreation parks.
6. New Business:
  - A. County Attorney, Mr. Kelly Davis, addressed the Board concerning his findings associated with title and ownership of parcel 149-008 in Liberty County located in the Briar Bay area. Mr. Davis confirmed for the Board that there was no evidence of county ownership of the property and that it was most likely still owned by the paper company who had original title. Mr. Greg Bryant, representing several citizens of the Briar Bay area, presented a handout to the Board associated with his research concerning ownership of the parcel and lack of historical records in the Tax Assessor's office. Mr. Charlie Jones, a resident of the area, presented a brief history on the property. The Board inquired, since it had no ownership interest, as to whether or not it needed to resend its original motion associated with cleanup of the property made during the mid-June meeting. The County Attorney advised that this might be applicable in this case. A motion was made by Commissioner Stevens to resend earlier action taken authorizing cleanup and removal of material on the property, seconded by Commissioner Thrift, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.
  - B. County Attorney, Kelly Davis, provided the Board with separate resolutions associated with renewal of an emergency order requiring face coverings while in public for the unincorporated areas of Liberty County and a second requiring that face coverings be worn in County facilities. Mr. Davis advised that in the light of the new Governor's order concerning the mandatory wearing which he deemed unenforceable that adoption of such requirement may be problematic to enforce. Mr. Davis did note that in his opinion the Board, due to the public health emergency, the Board had the right to request and require that such coverings be mandatory in county owned facilities. Several Commissioners expressed support for masking Requirements County wide while others, believing that masking was important, expressed concern over the non-enforceable nature of such a requirement. A motion was made by Commissioner Gilliard to adopt the emergency order associated with the requirements of wearing face coverings in the unincorporated area with Commissioners Gilliard and Lovette voting in favor of the motion, Commissioners Stevens, Frasier, Thrift and Walden opposed. The Board then discussed an alternative emergency order requiring face coverings to be worn in public facilities owned by the county and allowing the Chairman to temporary restrict access to said facilities if necessary. A motion was made by Commissioner Frasier, seconded by Commissioner Stevens, to approve the order with all Commissioners in attendance voting in favor.
  - C. Leah Poole, Executive Director of the Liberty Convention and Visitors Bureau appeared before the Board to present the annual report. Ms. Poole answered questions related to businesses within the County and how they were faring during the Covid epidemic.
  - D. The Board considered renewal of a lease agreement with Liberty Independent Troop for property associated with the Stafford Park recreation area. A motion was made by Commissioner Walden to renew the lease agreement for one year, seconded by Commissioner Thrift, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.
  - E. The Board considered renewal of a lease agreement with Georgia State Properties Commission for land currently occupied by the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services. A motion was made by Commissioner Thrift to approve the lease, seconded by Commissioner Stevens, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.

F. The Board considered renewal of a contract for fire protection services to the unincorporated area with the City of Riceboro. A motion was made by Commissioner Stevens to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Thrift, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.

G. The Board considered appointment to the Liberty County Elections Board. A motion was made by Commissioner Stevens to appoint Sharon Terry, seconded by Commissioner Frasier, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.

H. Administrative report was presented:

(1) The Board was briefed on the need to make a decision whether or not to proceed with Fall sports programming at the liberty County Recreation Department. A motion was made by Commissioner Thrift to postpone the Fall programs until further notice, seconded by Commissioner Stevens, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.

(2) The Board considered appointments to the Liberty County Animal Control Board for the purposes of considering matters related to the dangerous dog act. A motion was made by Commissioner Stevens to appoint Dr. Rachel Peebles, Sandra Frye, Stephen Andrews, Mike Hodges, and Joseph Brown, seconded by Commissioner Thrift, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.

I. Commissioner Stevens advised the Board that he had been contacted by the City of Riceboro concerning possible maintenance of their fire equipment at the County shop. Commissioner Stevens noted that the city would be responsible for payment of costs associated with the maintenance. The Board asked the County Administrator to check ability of the shop to handle this maintenance.

J. The Board discussed the continuance of limitations concerning persons in actual attendance at board meetings during the pandemic. After some discussion the Board decided that given the increase of outbreaks in the County it should continue the practice and possibly re-examine access sometime in the August timeframe.

K. The board briefly discussed the need to move forward with replacement of the County maintenance shop. The Board authorized the County Administrator to begin discussions with an architect concerning planning and design of the facility.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gilliard to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Stevens, and approved by all Commissioners in attendance.

Signed:

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Donald L. Lovette, Chairman

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Marion Stevens, Sr., Vice Chairman

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Justin L. Frasier, Commissioner

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Connie Thrift, Commissioner

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Pat Bowen, Commissioner

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Gary Gilliard, Commissioner

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Eddie J. Walden, Commissioner

Attest:

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Joseph W. Brown, County Administrator

