



FLOYD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

July 12, 2022

County Administration Building

Caucus — Suite 204 4:00 pm
Regular Meeting — Suite 206 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Commissioners Wright Bagby, Allison Watters, Rhonda Wallace, Larry Maxey, and Scotty Hancock; County Manager Jamie McCord, County Clerk Erin Elrod, County Attorney Virginia Harman, Assistant County Clerk Hollis Barton, Spencer Brewer, and Olivia Morley

CAUCUS

1. **Training presentation by Virginia Harman**
2. **Executive Session to discuss the acquisition of property, litigation, and personnel.**

Chair Bagby called the caucus meeting to order. Ms. Harman updated the commission on the training she has provided to Floyd County employees in regards to first amendment auditors. Chair Bagby continued with the review of the agenda. Vice Chair Watters recapped her trip to the Best Friends Conference on Animal Welfare. Commissioner Hancock updated the Commission on the latest numbers from DFCS. Chair Bagby continued the review of the agenda. After reviewing the agenda, Commissioner Hancock asked Vice Chair Watters to update the Commission on the latest LOST discussion.

Commissioner Wallace made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss property, litigation, and personnel, seconded by Vice Chair Watters. The motion carried 5-0.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** — Chair Bagby called the meeting to order.
- II. **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG** — Commissioner Maxey led the Commission in the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** — Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve the agenda with item #6 from New Business deferred to a later meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Watters. The motion carried 5-0.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. **Darlene Kelley, 1453 Foster Mill Road:** Addressed the Commission regarding Blacks Bluff Road.

- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** — The minutes were approved as submitted by common consent.

1. Adopt minutes of Caucus, Regular Meeting, and Executive Session of June 28, 2022.

VI. SPECIAL RECOGNITION

VII. PROCLAMATION

1. **Parks and Recreation Month** — Parks and Recreation Director Todd Wofford was unable to attend the meeting, however Mrs. Elrod stated for National Parks and Recreation Month, we wanted to take the time to recognize the Parks and Recreation staff and what they do throughout the community to bring a better quality of life to both youth and adults and appreciates the recognition for them.

VIII. FIRST READING

(SECOND READING WILL BE HELD JULY 26, 2022 AT 6PM) — Brittany Griffin read the items onto the record for the Board of Commissioners.

1. File SUP22-07-01 requesting a Special Use Permit to operate a custom service restaurant, zoned Neighborhood Office Commercial (NOC) for the property at 3424 Maple Road, Lindale, GA; Floyd County Tax Parcel J16X352.
2. File Z22-07-02 requesting rezoning from Agricultural Residential (AR) to Light Industrial (LI) for property at 3686 Turkey Mountain Road, Rome, GA; Floyd County Tax Parcel M10W047. The staff recommends approval on the condition that the applicant obtains development plan approval from Building, Engineering, etc.

IX. SECOND READING/PUBLIC HEARING

X. PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Bagby explained the procedure of the public hearing: each person recognized shall come to the podium and state their name and home address. There is no less than ten minutes provided for all speaking in favor, and no less than ten minutes provided by those speaking in opposition.

1. **FY22 Millage Rate for County M&O, Fire, and Solid Waste** — Chair Bagby opened the Public Hearing.

Speaking in Opposition:

Doug Barker, 23 Bent Oak Trail, Rome: “First of all, I appreciate what you all do, I want to talk about millage and how combined effect of millage and the increase in assessment value is affecting me. My assessed value went up approximately twenty, and I know that the issue on the calendar is millage, but there’s a cumulative effect; my assessed value went up approximately twenty-five percent (25%) due to the inflation in the housing market, and we all know that these prices are above them; so on top of this inflation, the Commission wants to increase my millage rate, if my memory is correct,

and I didn't pull out my last year's records, but I think I've got it pretty good, my property tax, total, went up \$600 from 2021, so the net effect from inflation is far more than the newspaper article that was published that says, 'this millage increase is going to be an increase of \$53 on a \$200,000 home' which is what the Commission listed in the newspaper on this announcement, so my increase, if this millage increase goes through, and my property tax value assessment is what I got in my notice, that's an increase of \$653 in a year; I request a rollback of the millage rate to offset the inflation, I read the State's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, I understand you guys are going through those particular steps announcing Public Hearings, \$653 increase in a year is a lot, it's just a lot, I don't know that I can afford any more, so I'm asking for a rollback in the millage rate to offset the inflation; I also have a question and a comment about the street light assessment, should I hold that or ask that now?"

Vice Chair Watters: "We haven't opened the Street Light Public Hearing yet."

Mr. Barker: "Do any of you have any questions of me?"

Commissioner Hancock: "No we totally understand where you're coming from."

Chair Bagby: "We understand completely what you're saying."

Mr. Barker: "Why are we doing this increase?"

Vice Chair Watters: "We have not said we're doing an increase."

Commissioner Hancock: "Right."

Chair Bagby: "We have not said that at all."

Mr. Barker: "Well I read in the newspaper, you've got a ring here going on."

Chair Bagby: "What the ad says is what the State requires us to say, what we do is we take the, people like you, from the Public Hearings we have, and then we will discuss and decide what we're going to do with the millage rate after the third Public Hearing."

Vice Chair Watters: "And I believe the ad said the rate would either stay the same or roll back."

Mr. Barker: "Just a second. Let me find it please. I may be wrong; I'm allowed to be wrong. See if I can find this quickly. Alright, I've got the advertisement. 'The Floyd County Board of Commissioners have tentatively accepted – tentatively adopted a 2022 millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 5.82%, all concerned citizens are invited to the Public Hearing' it goes on and on – says 'this tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 9.678 mills, an increase of 5.32 mills.'"

Chair Bagby: “That’s because the State Law requires us to state it that way. We have not taken any action on it and we will not until after the three (3) Public Hearings, and then we will discuss and decide what we’re going to do on it, if we’re going to roll back and to what percentage.”

Mr. Baker: “I’m not the smartest guy in this room, but why is it worded this way? An increase of 5.32 mills, I mean the word increase –“

Mr. McCord: “Let me see if I can tackle this one, if your assessment had stayed the same, and we leave the millage rate the same, your taxes don’t go up. If your assessment went down, and we leave the millage rate the same, your taxes don’t go up. It’s an individual situation, yours is different, mine is different, hers is different. It all depends on your homestead, it depends on your freeze, do you live in the City or the County, and, I don’t know it may be \$600 just on your County, but I’m assuming in Northwoods you receive a County Schools as well.”

Mr. Barker: “I did combine those, I did. But, still, it comes out of my wallet.”

Mr. McCord: “But we don’t have any control over County Schools.”

Mr. Barker: “But the point is the same.”

Mr. McCord: “It is.”

Mr. Barker: “The dollar figures may be different, but the increase, and see I don’t understand what you’re saying, this says an increase, a tax, the proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of 200,000 is approx. \$53, more is implied, so how is that not an increase?”

Mr. McCord: “It is an increase, the digest is positive, there have been years where the digest is negative, but that’s where the 5% increase is coming from. We have an approximately 8.7% increase in the total tax digest, that’s real property, personal property, and that’s what’s pushing it. If you leave it the same, the taxes we collect are higher than what we collected the previous year; everybody’s individual situation is different.”

Mr. Barker: “So far I’m tracking with you.”

Mr. McCord: “So that’s why it says, the State requires us, if you don’t do the full rollback and go 100% to zero net increase, you have to advertise it the way you read it; what that advertising gives us the opportunity to do is have these three (3) Public Hearings, have these debates, have these discussions, and then decide. We can go to the full rollback, and there is no tax increase.”

Mr. Barker: “Is that your intention? Well, you’re the Manager, what is your intention on millage rates?”

Vice Chair Watters: “We’re going to have three (3) meetings, we’re going to have three (3) Public Hearings, and we appreciate your feedback, and we appreciate the feedback of other citizens; we’re listening right now, and then after those three public hearings we’ll be making our decision.”

Mr. Barker: “Would the increase of, the suspected increase of the tax digest because of the higher assessments due to this inflated property tax situation, the County should have significant money.”

Chair Bagby: “We hear what you’re saying, we can’t give you an answer now. We’re going to have the three (3) Public Hearings like we’re required to, we’re going to listen to everybody and then we’re going to take the information we get – we’re in the same situation you are, we have tax bills just like you do.”

Mr. Barker: “Yes sir I understand that, and I do appreciate y’all’s work, it’s just I don’t, I still haven’t gotten over what y’all are saying about, because this says, as adopted a millage, 2022 millage rate, which will require an increase in property taxes by 5.82%, sounds like an increase to me.”

Chair Bagby: “That’s the State Law requires us to do it.”

Mr. Barker: “I can’t understand two people.”

Commissioner Hancock: “We argue with our State Legislators every year about changing the wording and that law, that’s how we have to put it. The law requires us to state it that way. I totally, we totally understand where you’re coming from. We feel your frustrations, believe me.”

Mr. McCord: “We feel the same way you do.”

Vice Chair Watters: “But no decision has been made.”

Mr. Barker: “Lawyers are good with words, it says increase.”

Ms. Harman: “There is an actual State requirement that it be advertised this way, and then the Commission will make its decision, like they said, after the Public Hearings, actually after the third public hearing which I guess will be at the next regularly scheduled meeting. But, it would take a change to the State law to change the wording of that advertisement, and that is just unfortunate.”

Mr. Barker: “I’m requesting a rollback on the millage rate.”

Chair Bagby: “We understand that.”

Mr. Barker: “Thank you.”

Seeing no one further to speak in opposition, nor anyone in favor, Chair Bagby closed the Public Hearing.

2. FY22 Street Light Assessment — Chair Bagby opened the Public Hearing.

Speaking in Opposition:

Doug Barker, 23 Bent Oak Trail, Rome: “On this one, I am somewhat, I’m less prepared on this one than I am on the other, so I do appreciate your time. There were more efficient street light bulbs replaced throughout the County, first of all, how much is the increased assessment?”

Mr. McCord: “I am looking for that, honestly, I think it’s sixty-three (63) cents, I don’t have it in front of me.

Mr. Barker: “Sixty-three (63) cents per?”

Mr. McCord: “Per linear footage of your property, now if you do not have street lighting in your neighborhood, you do not pay.”

Mr. Barker: “I do have street lights.”

Mr. McCord: “So you’ll pay based on the deed frontage on your street, and if you’re a corner lot there’s an Ordinance that protects that a little bit too. This is a pass-through directly from Georgia Power, Georgia Power bills us, we bill the resident.”

Mr. Barker: “So the increased efficient street lights didn’t help?”

Mr. McCord: “They did, but you have to pay for the equipment. They basically, our bill stayed the same, and we got the more efficient equipment to pay for the equipment, I know that doesn’t sound like a benefit when you’re paying basically the same right, or slightly more now, energy costs have clearly gone up. The savings have really come in the replacement of the bulbs, these have about a ten-year warranty, they don’t go out as frequently, and the maintenance is almost zero, so we have about 4,000 County-wide.”

Mr. Barker: “Alright, thank you.”

Norma Reboredo, 104 Westmore Road, Rome: “Concerning about the street lights, is that under transportation tax?”

Mr. McCord: “No, it’s on your tax bill, and you get it one time annually, paid in November. Again, it’s based on if you have them or not, and then if you do, you pay that rate times your deed footage, not linear footage, but deed footage on your plat, one time per year. And it’s basically a pass through for the power bill.”

Ms. Reboredo: “Okay, thanks.”

Chair Bagby: “Okay, if there are no other people who’d like to speak, we’ll close the Public Hearings. We will have two more Public Hearings, one is at 8:00 on the morning of the twenty-sixth, the third will be at our regular meeting on the night of the twenty-sixth and then we will take action at that time.”

Commissioner Hancock was excused after the Public Hearings.

XI. RESOLUTIONS

XII. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

XIII. COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

1. Administrative Services Committee – Commissioners Watters & Bagby

a. Next Meeting, Thursday, July 28, 2022, 9:00am

2. Public Safety Committee – Commissioners Hancock & Wallace

a. Next Meeting, Thursday, July 21, 2022, 9:00am

3. Public Utilities & Transportation Committee – Commissioner Maxey & Hancock

a. Next Meeting, Wednesday, July 20, 2022, 9:00am

4. Elected Officials Committee – Commissioner Wallace & Maxey

a. Next Meeting, Friday, August 5, 2022, 2:30pm

5. Special Committee Reports

a. Fire Overview Committee — Commissioners Bagby & Hancock

i. Next Meeting, Tuesday, August 9, 2022, 10:30am

b. Joint Services Committee — Commissioners Watters & Maxey

i. Next Meeting, Tuesday, August 2, 2022, 8:30am

c. Rome-Floyd Planning Commission — Commissioners Maxey & Watters

i. Next Meeting, Thursday, August 4, 2022, 2:30pm

d. Joint Development Oversight Committee — Commissioners Bagby & Watters

- i. Next Meeting, Tuesday, August 2, 2022, 10:00am
- e. **Joint Solid Waste Commission — Commissioner Watters & Maxey**
 - i. Next Meeting, Tuesday, July 26, 2022, 8:30am
- f. **Transportation Policy Committee — Commissioner Maxey**
 - i. Next Meeting, Wednesday, July 20, 2022, 10:00am
- g. **Airport Commission — Commissioners Hancock & Wallace**
 - i. Next meeting, Tuesday, July 19, 2022, 4:00pm
- h. **SPLOST Project Overview Committee — Commissioners Wallace & Hancock**
 - i. Next meeting, TBD
- i. **RFPR Advisory Committee — Commissioner Wallace**
 - i. Next Meeting, Tuesday, July 19, 2022, 12:00pm
- j. **Floyd County Library Board — Commissioner Watters**
 - i. Next Meeting, Thursday, August 18, 2022, 4:00pm

XIV. MANAGER’S REPORT — No report.

XV. ATTORNEY’S REPORT — No report.

XVI. CONSENT AGENDA — Chair Bagby asked Mrs. Elrod if the Consent Agenda was in order, Mrs. Elrod reported that it was. Commissioner Maxey made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wallace. The motion carried 4-0.

- 1. Consider request from Parks & Recreation to approve the addition of (1) 2004 Ford SRW Super Duty 250 to the Floyd County fleet. This vehicle will be used to stock concessions around the County. This request has been approved by the Public Utilities and Transportation Committee.

XVII. OLD BUSINESS

XVIII. NEW BUSINESS

- 1. **Consider request from Purchasing to approve the purchase of a 2023 Ford Passenger Transit from Prater Ford in the amount of \$45,355.00 for Floyd County P.A.W.S. This was budgeted at \$35,000.00; however, no other funds will be needed as P.A.W.S. will not be purchasing a replacement for truck #53 budgeted at \$62,000.00.** — Mr. McCord presented the request to the

Commission. Vice Chair Watters made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wallace. The motion carried 4-0.

2. **Consider approval request from Purchasing to proceed with additional work for the Parker Center Renovation by Multi-Craft Construction in the amount of \$32,550.00. This project was budgeted at \$75,000.00 in the 2017 SPLOST and will need a budget revision of an additional \$29,440.00 approved as well.** — Mr. McCord presented the request to the commission. Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Maxey. The motion carried 4-0.
3. **Consider request form Purchasing to approve additional work for the Etowah Driving Range Building Renovation by Multi-Craft Construction Services in the amount of \$12,500.00.** — Mr. McCord presented the request to the Commission. Vice Chair Watters made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wallace. The motion carried 4-0.
4. **Consider request from the Water Department to approve a professional services contract with Peoples & Quigley Consulting Engineers for review of well drillers cost proposal and to provide general recommendations, not to exceed \$5,000.00.** — Mr. McCord presented the request to the Commission. Commissioner Maxey made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wallace. The motion carried 4-0.
5. **Consider request from Purchasing to install a synthetic putting green at Etowah Driving Range at 50% of the total installation cost (\$10,125). The remaining 50% will be shared by managing partner, Golf Fore Less. The total cost of installation is \$20,250.** — Mr. McCord presented the request to the Commission. Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice chair Watters. The motion carried 4-0.
6. **Consider a request for a lease agreement between Floyd County and IMF Entertainment, LLC for use of property and horse barn at 231 Bass Ferry Road for a music festival.** — Deferred to next meeting.

XIX. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Bagby stated the Commission did enter into Executive Session to discuss litigation, property, and personnel. No action was taken.

XX. ADJOURN — The meeting was adjourned by common consent.