

**MINUTES OF THE CRISP COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEETING HELD ON JULY 14, 2020**

OPENING CEREMONIES

Chairman Sam N. Farrow, Jr. called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in Room 305 of the Crisp County Government Center with Commissioners A. James Nance by telephone, Wallace Mathis, Larry Felton and J. R. Dowdy, III in attendance. Others present were County Administrator Clark Harrell, County Attorney Rick Lawson, Finance Director Sherrie Leverett and County Clerk Linda Finch. Rick Smarr gave the invocation and Administrator Harrell led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. Chairman Farrow welcomed all in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Felton to approve the June 9, 2020 regular meeting minutes and the July 29, 2020 called meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING - SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR VIASAT, INC.

Administrator Harrell advised that we have a public hearing for a Special Use Permit from Viasat, Inc. for a Telecommunications Satellite System in an RR (Rural Residential) zone district. The property is located on the west side of the rail line on Rockhouse Road between the rail line and US Hwy. 41 South. Chairman Farrow opened the public hearing. Connie Youngblood, Planning Director, reported that this will be the first in the county for the use "Telecommunications Tower less than 200' tall". She has spoken with Fire Chief Postell in reference to the intersection since there have been several accidents here, and he didn't see any problem. She advised that the largest piece will be the satellite dish, which is only 8' in height. Robert (Bud) Long stated that the project is to install a single satellite dish and two network cabinets no higher than 8' above grade and will fit within a 28' by 25' area. Viasat is an internet provider and this will increase the connectivity between Viasat satellites and the fiber network on the ground to give faster speeds. He advised that it is an unmanned facility and will not generate traffic, noise or any kind of waste. They are requesting three variances for the Special Use Permit: 1) a setback to allow an installation 30' from the roadway instead of the requirement of 50'; 2) the requirement of a vegetative screen around the proposed installation as to install a cedar fence for screening in lieu of the required chain link fence with opaque screening; and 3) to exempt the bond requirement as in their agreement with the property owner, they already have a 60 day timeframe to remove the equipment. He advised that it is slated to be built by next summer. Mrs. Youngblood went over the Special Use Review Checklist. Chairman Farrow asked if there were any comments from the public, there were none; he closed the public hearing. **Motion was made by Mr. Mathis to grant Viasat a Special Use Permit for a Telecommunications Satellite System in an RR (Rural Residential) zone district, with three variances – setback to allow an installation 30' instead of 50' from the roadway, to install a cedar fence for screening in lieu of required chain link fence with opaque screening, and exempt the Removal Bond, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

SHERIFF BILLY HANCOCK'S REPORT

Sheriff Hancock reported that the only things in his report he wanted to mention was they had a more than usual amount of people fingerprinted last month, and the vehicle cost analysis is down to .14 a mile. He brought a check for \$104,000 for US Marshall housing last month. He stated that there has been a spike in the COVID cases; the hospital has not gone up in patients as much as the spike increase, plus the cases are not as severe right now. They are encouraging people to wear masks and wash hands or use hand sanitizers. They have started meeting three times a week now on the EMA side. He advised that a project they have heard him talk about is a firing range to train our officers as they are required to train twice a year. There is a vast amount of property that the county owns behind the state patrol building and, with permission, they would like to consider making that an area for the firing range. He stated that very few residents will be impacted, and there would be a tree buffer behind the range. He showed a drawing of what the firing range would look like, and with the county owning the property and doing part of the work, we can get a grant. He advised that with the Commissioners permission he would like to go forward in getting a cost analysis; he would not ask the county for any money as it will all be in-kind work, confiscated drug money, manual labor from the officers, and a grant. He advised that they would need some in-kind help from public works, now they are using the range at the Fish Hatchery. Administrator Harrell stated that he thinks the first step is to find out exactly what it will cost; he believes the cost will be minimal plus the fact that the county owns the property. The school has given the county a tremendous amount of dirt where they are building the middle school, so we will have dirt in close proximity to this. **All Commissioners agreed to go forward and see what the cost would be to build the firing range.**

CONDOLENCES TO SHERIFF HANCOCK

Commissioner Mathis and all commissioners offered condolences to Sheriff Hancock and his family in the death of his wife, Mary Ellen Hancock, as she was a well-loved and respected citizen of Crisp County and the hospital. Sheriff Hancock thanked commissioners.

APPROVE 2020 LMIG PAVING CONTRACT AWARD

Administrator Harrell reported that last week they had the opportunity to open bids for the 2020 LMIG. Georgia DOT gave us in the Local Maintenance Improvement Grant \$651,561.82 this year; there is a required 10% match of \$65,156.18, with total of approximately \$716,000 to use for maintenance on county roads. Earlier in the year Commissioners approved 4.66 miles of roads for resurfacing, which include Cork Ferry Road, 13th Street, Landfill Road, and Ferry Landing Road. We received two bids, Reeves Construction and The Scruggs Company, with Scruggs being the low bidder at \$893,012.46. The difference in the bid and what we need to use for road maintenance is \$241,450.64; that money will need to come from TSPLOST. He recommends award of this paving contract to The Scruggs Company, which would be about \$191,000 a mile. He advised that when they start this project, he is going to ask Mr. Gamble to put signs on these roads letting the public know this is TSPLSOT money that is being used. **Motion was made by Mr. Felton to accept the low bid for the 2020 LMIG paving contract from The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$893,012.46, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.**

DISCUSS AMBULANCE REPLACEMENT BID AWARD

Administrator Harrell reported that they opened sealed bids last week for a replacement ambulance of the one that was involved in an accident. They were three bids, and they had the opportunity to accept

or reject the bids. After going through them, he rejected them. David Edwards and Sherrie Leverett were involved in the bid openings, evaluated them, and they were disappointed in the warranty on the bidders. He advised that they are going back to the drawing board, with David Edwards' permission, and send back out for bids with some additional information on these warranties.

APPROVE 2020 AD VALOREM TAX DIGEST FIVE YEAR HISTORY & PROPOSED TAX RATE FOR ADVERTISING

Administrator Harrell reported Commissioners need to approve the 2020 Ad Valorem Tax Digest Five Year History & proposed tax rate for advertising. He does not have the document today, the tax assessor is still working on this as the appeals process was not up until last Friday. He advised that we are not raising taxes this year, and once he has the document ready to go they will go ahead and advertise if Commissioners approve. There will be a resolution forth coming after it gets released. **Motion was made by Mr. Mathis to approve the 2020 Ad Valorem Tax Digest Five Year History & proposed tax rate for advertising as soon as Mr. Harrell gets the final documents with no increase in taxes, seconded by Mr. Felton, motion carried unanimously.**

REAPPOINT WILLIAM TURNER AND JEFFERY HUNT TO BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Administrator Harrell reported that there are a couple of board appointments up for the Board of Tax Assessors; their terms expire on August 31, 2020. He received a letter from the Board of Assessors to reappoint Mr. Turner and Mr. Hunt to serve on this board. He also received letters from each of these men requesting reappointment and also received a letter from Dravian McGill, Sr. requesting his appointment to the board. **Motion was made by Mr. Mathis to reappoint William Turner and Jeffery Hunt to the Board of Assessors, seconded Mr. Dowdy. Motion was then made by Mr. Nance to reappoint William Turner and appoint Dravian McGill, Sr., seconded by Mr. Felton. Chairman Farrow called for the vote. Commissioners Mathis and Dowdy voted in favor of reappointing Mr. Turner and Mr. Hunt. Commissioners Nance and Felton voted in favor of reappointing Mr. Turner and appointing Mr. McGill. Chairman Farrow cast the deciding vote by voting in favor of the request of the Tax Assessors Board reappointing Mr. Turner and Mr. Hunt. Mr. Turner and Mr. Hunt is reappointed to the Board of Assessors terms ending August 31, 2024.** A brief discussion took place as to Mr. Hunt not being in compliance and needs sixty hours of training to be in compliance for this board.

APPOINT GUY T. YOUNG TO THE CRISP REGIONAL HOSPITAL AUTHORITY

Motion was made by Mr. Felton to appoint Guy T. Young to the Crisp Regional Hospital Authority to serve the unexpired term of Rann Folsom, term ending December 31, 2022, seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs. Leverett reported that today's financial summary is on the General and three major Special Revenue Funds of the County as of June 30, 2020. They are reporting YTD revenues of \$18.6 million and expenditures of \$19.6 million leaving a negative 5% expenditure over revenue balance of \$961,532. In the Water Fund, monthly revenues and expenditures increased net income to \$232,213. The USDA Bonds are current at \$1.3 million. In the Landfill Fund, revenues and expenditures pushed the YTD Income to \$315,729, and the GEFA Loans are current at \$1.8 million. In our Cash report, we ended the fiscal year

with \$11.6 million in the General and Special Revenue Funds combined, \$6.6 million in the proprietary funds and \$4.5 million in the SPLOST & TSPLOST funds giving a countywide total of \$22.7 million. Approximately \$14 million of that is reserved or restricted for special projects or uses. In our 2011 SPLOST Issue Report, we have appropriated \$22.9 million of the \$23.2 million. This month's distribution of the 2017 SPLOST Issue Report is up about 5% over this same time from a year ago. Actual expenditures and appropriations have reached \$8.2 million for this issue. In the issue to date report on the 2012 TSPLOST revenues, we have collected \$7.4 million since January, 2013. Following that is an updated schedule on our L.O.S.T distributions, which is also up 5% over last year. In the CDBG Revolving Loan Fund monthly report, we have nine outstanding loans for a total combined balance due of \$2.3 million. The final report is a summary report on the revenues by fund and expenditures by department. As of June 30th, all departments and divisions should be at or below 100% of their annual allowances. Overall, at this time the General and Special Revenue Funds are at 98%, the Water Fund is at 75% and the Landfill Fund is at 66%. All these numbers are preliminary as we still have several accruals and end of year activity to record.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Harrell reported that: 1) debit card machines have been installed in planning and zoning, finance, and the landfill; 2) he attended the manager's meeting with Grant Buckley, Steve Rentfrow and Edward Beach; 3) he met with Yancy Brothers and John Deere salesmen regarding needed equipment at public works and landfill. SPLOST has allocated expenditures for 9 pieces of equipment and we are in process of getting quotes; 4) he attended a pre-bid meeting for 2020 LMIG, opened bids for LMIG and for a new ambulance; 5) he met with Norfolk Southern, GA EPD/NRCS and other county officials regarding Cedar Lakes Subdivision flooding caused by the railroad. Norfolk representative said the railroad is conducting a water study and will be installing a pipe to address the water problem; 6) Governor Kemp has made available COVID-19 funding for Georgia, specifically Crisp County in the amount of \$590,848. We are working down through the requirements for reimbursement; 7) we are in the process of an engine replacement for a 2014 fire truck. We have spent over \$23,000 with various issues over the past two years. The International dealer in Tifton along with Navistar have committed to financial assistance with the replacement in the amount of \$10,466.34, and the county will be responsible for the remaining \$11,362.66; and 8) he attended a conference call with Governor Kemp regarding COVID-19 asking Georgians to continue to social distance, wear masks in public and wash hands. He also pointed out in their correspondence section the county's law firm, Lawson, Reid & Dean Attorneys at Law, was recognized in ACCG's Georgia Local Lens magazine recognizing a hometown hero, Martelle Davis. He also gave an update on the recreation department, they are open for some fall sports but on a limited basis, fields are open to practice but are not having any organized games right now; it is questionable if we can open. Also, public works is working on the Floyd Road project, and the state local impact bridge program whereby the state comes in and replaces bridges on our behalf; there will be a bridge replaced by Southern Concrete on Brock Road with work to begin this fall. In the last couple of weeks, they were also looking at bridges on Watson Road, Story Road and Lower Pateville Road.

DISCUSS CORK FERRY ROAD

Administrator Harrell reported that Commissioner Felton has asked about this and initially we were going to do a text amendment to the county zoning, but after talking with Mr. Lawson and discussing the best way to look at this, they think the best way is to rezone it. There are nine lots that are on Cork Ferry Road in the area of Ray Road, four doublewide mobile homes, three are stick built houses and two are vacant lots on this nine lot area. Mr. Felton owns one of the lots and there was a mobile home on it at one point

and it was burned over 50%. Based on the current zoning, you are not able to put a mobile home back on those lots. They are asking if the Commission allow him to move forward with looking at rezoning this area, have a public hearing and get the public's input. He advised that the purpose of this is Commissioner Felton wants to put a mobile home back on that empty lot, and Mr. Felton's contention is that if something happens to any of the other mobile homes that are out there right now, those people will not be able to go back with a mobile home under the current zoning. Chairman Farrow advised that when those people move out there, this was legal and zoned right, then we did a blanket rezoning and it was changed. **It was the consensus of the Commissioners to move forward try to solve the situation.**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Felton to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 a.m., seconded by Mr. Dowdy, motion carried unanimously.



Sam Farrow, Jr., Chairman



Clark Harrell, Administrator