**JEFF DAVIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**MARCH 10, 2020**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman Ricky Crosby, Commissioners James Benjamin, Brad Crews, Hank Hobbs and Vann Wooten, Attorney Carla Powell, Administrator Keith Carter and Clerk Sherri Lytle.

Chairman Ricky Crosby called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and Commissioner James Benjamin gave the invocation. Chairman Crosby led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Joint Development Authority Director Andrea Taylor was present and stated they had a Census Coloring Contest for the Elementary School and Middle School and also a Census Essay Contest from the High School. Ms. Taylor explained how important the census data was for our county, state and on the federal level. The census forms should arrive in the mail this week. The last two census Jeff Davis County was only accounted for about fifty percent of the people. For every person missed is worth about $2500 a year. It’s very important that everyone fill out the Census Form.

Ms. Taylor recognized Mrs. Debbie Hobbs who organized this through the school system. The winners for the essay from the 9th grade – 1st place Sergio Marquez and 2nd place Carolina Pena; 10th grade – 1st place Joshua Parker and 2nd place Christine Herndon; 11th grade – Aamere Joyce and 2nd place Christian Stam; 12th grade – 1st place Eli McEachin and 2nd place – Ashlyn Bouknight. Each winner received a Walmart gift card.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Lisa Taylor was present and stated she had damaged from her truck due to a wash out in the road. She said “the road is extremely dark on Morris Williams Road and claimed the wash out was almost up to her knee. There was no markings whatsoever. My son was traveling on this road busted his tire and wheel to the point their having to send it off to get it fixed. I’m requesting the county pay some of the damages to her son’s truck. I got a police report”. Commissioner Hobbs ask her did this happen after the heavy rains we just had and she stated it did but it was so dark he didn’t see the wash out. Chairman told her to leave her number and the board will discuss it and get back with her.

Mr. Halton Jeffcoat was present to speak on a washout at 253 Broxton Highway. He ask who grades the road between the church and nursing home, city or county. Administrator Carter explained the county doesn’t grade it because it’s a private drive. He ask the Board about Floyd Road. He and his two brothers own land there. There was a ditch along the road and asked why it had been covered up. All the water falls down on his brother’s place. The Board told him they look into it.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 11TH MEETING AND MARCH 2ND WORKSHOP**

**Motion:** To approve minutes for February 11th meeting and March 2nd workshop.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Brad Crews

**Second:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Motion Carried**

**APPROVAL TO PAY MONTHLY BILLS**

**Motion:** Approve to pay monthly bills.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Second:** Commissioner James Benjamin

**Motion Carried**

**J.D.A. DIRECTOR ANDREA TAYLOR DISCUSS/APPROVE SILICON RANCH PHASES 5 & 6**

Andrea Taylor stated we have guest here tonight Luke Wilkinson and Matt Kisber from Silicon Ranch. She stated that Silicon Ranch is one of our largest existing industries and largest tax payer in our community and they’re planning for phases 5 & 6. Now they’re finishing up with phase 3 and about to start on phase 4. Phases 5 & 6 are proposed to be at 107 megawatts each with $85 million investment for each phase. Because of more competitive pricing regarding solar power the company is asking for more aggressive tax abatements for phases 5 & 6. The tax abatement they’re asking for is 65% for 25 years. What was approved for phases 3 & 4 were 50% for 17 years. The Development Authority voted but they’re still kinda questioning what was voted upon. The Development Authority did vote to go along with what the county had voted on in the past and that was regarding the fact any solar development over 107 megawatts be given a 50% tax abatement for 17 years. Commissioner Crews asked her why she was questioning what the Development Authority voted on. She said “it was a unanimous vote but I would say there were still a few people, Mrs. Terry Stone being one, not being in favor of what was voted on”. Mrs. Terry Stone stated she didn’t vote. Andrea Taylor said “Silicon Ranch for phases 5 & 6 are going to create about 350 – 500 construction jobs for each project. The 65% tax abatement that was in question or proposing approved by Early Co. and Appling Co. for an 18 megawatt project. They’ve purchased some of the land for phase 5 and haven’t purchased land for phase 6. They have option on some of the land. Silicon Ranch has proposed a 65% tax abatement for 25 years. Commissioner Hank Hobbs wanted to clarify this is only about phase 5. Silicon Ranch requested phases 5 & 6 be voted on now. Commissioner Hobbs said the Development Authority would have to vote first.

**Motion:** To go with what they’re asking for the 65% tax abatement.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Second:** Commissioner James Benjamin

**Motion failed.**

Commissioner Brad Crews stated to the board that they were voting against a board that they appointed. Their board said they want to do a 50% abatement. There’s no need in having a Development Authority if we’re going to take the place of them. That board recommended a 50% abatement and I’m going with that board’s decision. If the Development Authority brings back their recommendation for 65% I will consider it but I’m not voting against them. Attorney Powell stated we have to approve/deny that board’s recommendation.

**Motion:** To approve Development Authority’s recommendation

**Motion failed**

Attorney Powell stated this means it’s denied and it needs to go back to the Development Authority.

Commissioner Hobbs said “before it comes back to us make sure the numbers are correct. These schedules aren’t correct. We’re voting for a schedule based on a percentage not a number. The Tax Assessors and state auditors can take it going forward so we don’t get problems further down the road”.

Ms. Andrea Taylor discussed EP Footwear a couple of years ago they have an issue with a bond that wasn’t issued when they were given a tax abatement. The company had asked at that time for interest and penalty on the taxes to be forgiven. It was discussed and they were told it would be forgiven. They want it to be voted upon because of the total 2018 tax interest & penalty is over $13,392.17. A correction the Development Authority and county made several years ago. On behalf of the Tax Commissioner she asked the interest and penalty be waived for 2018.

**Motion:** To waive $13,392.17 of 2018 interest and penalty for EP Footwear.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Hank Hobbs

**Second:** Vann Wooten

**Motion Carried**

**Motion:** To approve county’s support up to $5,000 in the Branding/Marketing campaign.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Hank Hobbs

**Second:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Motion Carried**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Terry Stone spoke to the Board about the Silicon Ranch tax abatement and thinks we all need to work with them. She stated over time it’s 38% an average. Commissioner Crews explained that he’s not voting against it he’s not voting against the Development Authority.

Heather Mims was present to discuss a huge pot hole on Ira Graham Road that needs immediate attention. Her son was coming home Friday night from his job and hit one of the pot holes and busted his rim and tire which has cost her $627.00. It is still sitting on the side of the road because their waiting on a new rim and tire to come in. She took pictures and passed them to the Board. After coming to the office to speak to someone about this she returned home and saw where they’ve patched the holes. She said it was pathetic and wasn’t going to hold up. She encouraged the Board to take time and ride down this road. She’s asking for the Board’s help. Commissioner Hobbs said we’re working on a project now starting at the Douglas Highway all the way through and agrees it’s a mess. Chairman Crosby told her to leave her number and they’ll get back with her.

**ROAD SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT LEWIS – OPEN SEALED BIDS FOR WORK TRUCK**

Mr. Lewis stated the specs are for any make Chevrolet, Dodge, Ford, etc. 4500 Truck. Bids read as follows:

Woody Folsom 5500 GMC $108,372

Daniel Chevrolet

Swainsboro 4500 Chevrolet $ 93,594

Woody Folsom’s bid can’t be accepted because it’s not what we advertised.

**Motion:** Refuse all bids and bid it again.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Second:** Commissioner Brad Crews

**Motion Carried**

Tax Commissioner Susie Kersey couldn’t be here but Andrea Taylor already discussed the EP Footwear.

**APPROVAL TO BID WORKERS COMPAND PROPERTY LIABILTIY INSURANCE**

**Motion:** To bid Workers Comp and Property Liability Insurance through LaRocca.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Hank Hobbs

**Second:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Motion Carried**

**APPOINT A COMMISSIONER TO NEW JAIL PROJECT**

**Motion:** To appoint Commissioner Hank Hobbs and Chairman Ricky Crosby to the New Jail Project.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Brad Crews

**Second:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Motion Carried**

**APPROVE/DENY CLOSING COURTHOUSE ON GOOD FRIDAY**

**Motion:** To approve closing the courthouse on Good Friday.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Brad Crews

**Second:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Motion Carried**

Chairman stated we will skip and come back for approval to advertise for Purchasing Clerk.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

Commissioner Brad Crews wanted to address the two ladies J.D.A. Director Andrea Taylor and J.D.A. Member Terry Stone that he wasn’t trying to be ugly but if any Board that we appoint brings a recommendation to us to approve he’s not going to vote against them. We can’t vote on Phase 6 because it don’t exist.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL**

**Motion:** To enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel at 6:57 p.m.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Hank Hobbs

**Second:** Commissioner Brad Crews

**Motion Carried**

**Motion:** To enter back into Regular session at 7:14 p.m.

**Proposed:** Chairman Crosby

**Second:** Commissioner Hank Hobbs

**Motion Carried**

**Motion:** To advertise one week for a Clerk and a Purchasing Clerk.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Hank Hobbs

**Second:** Commissioner Brad Crews

**Motion Carried**

**Motion:** Approve to pay Sherri Lytle $200 per diem as contract labor on an as needed basis after her retirement until a Clerk is hired and trained.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Hank Hobbs

**Second:** Commissioner Vann Wooten

**Motion Carried**

**Adjourn - 7:15 P.M.**

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Sherri Lytle, Clerk Ricky Crosby, Chairman

**CLOSED MEETING AFFIDAVIT**

State of Georgia

County of Jeff Davis

Ricky Crosby, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Jeff Davis County, Georgia, being duly sworn, states under oath that the following is true and accurate to the best of his knowledge and belief.

1.

The Board of Commissioners of Jeff Davis County met in a regular scheduled and duly advertised meeting held on the 10th day of March, 2020.

2.

During said meeting, the Board voted to go into closed session.

3.

This executive session was called to order at 6:57 p.m. Motion by Commissioner Hank Hobbs and seconded by Commissioner Brad Crews with all voting in favor.

4.

The subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting was devoted to the following matters within the exceptions provided in the open meetings law:

1) Consultation with the county attorney to discuss pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the Board of Commissioners or any officer or employee may be directly involved as provided in O.C.G.A. 50-14-1(1):

2) Discussion of the future acquisition of real estate as provided by O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(4):

✓ 3) Discussion or deliberation on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a Board of Commissioners officer or employee as provided in O.C.G.A. 50-14-3-(6).

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Sworn to and subscribed before

Me this \_\_\_\_day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ricky Crosby, Chairman

Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Jeff Davis County

Notary Public

My Commission Expires: