

NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
September 2, 2014

The following is a verbatim transcription of the above referenced meeting in its entirety.

ELLIS: (inaudible) of the Newton County Board of Commissioners to order. Sorry about the tardiness. We had a few technical difficulties. I think we've got 'em going now. This is our regular meeting, September second, twenty fourteen. The, um... Commissioners we appreciate your being here tonight. We have perfect attendance. Staff... We've got some staff with us tonight. We appreciate everyone that's a guest here tonight. I know that you're taking time out of your busy schedule and we appreciate it. Commissioners, I do want to remind you about your microphones. The, uh, cameras up there, as well as the public have a hard time hearing us and make sure you talk into your microphones as close as you can. Every time we raise the volume it creates a lot of feedback. Those in the audience, we remind you silence your phones at this time. The thought for the day, "He who works with his hands is a laborer. He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands, his head and his heart is an artist." Saint Francis of Assissi. Tonight our invocation... Reverend Brannan... David Payne. Where... Brother Payne, would you, would you do that for us tonight? Would you give us an invocation? There he is. Come, come on up and then I'll let you make your comment at the same time. How would that be? Uh, he's going through ther... Uh, he's got a pump on him tonight. Why don't you tell us a little bit about that and then...

PAYNE: Oh, I was, uh...

ELLIS: ...give the invocation.

PAYNE: ...diagnosed with some colon canc..., or not some, colon cancer back in May and, and having do to some chemo because of the stage it was in, but I'm gonna be well. So just, uh, just staying busy and moving forward and prognosis is good, so...

ELLIS: That's good. Well he leads The Church at Covington, one of our large churches. We appreciate what you do for...

PAYNE: Thank you.

ELLIS: ...for your congregation. But not only them, I'm sure others in the community as well.

PAYNE: Thanks. Father, thank you for this night, for, uh, the leaders of our county, our community, all areas of public service, uh, all areas of government within the county of Newton County. Um, I ask you to give them wisdom, guidance, direction and courage to lead and be leaders, and God, that you would grace this county to continue to have your favor and to grow and to grow wisely. and to experience your goodness and the goodness of life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ELLIS: Amen.

PAYNE: Okay. Thanks. Little bit... I know you had moved public comments. I appreciate this. I've never done this before. I always come... So I'm not here as Pastor David now. I'm just here as David. Uh, thank y'all for what you do. Uh, I want to say something and speak up on behalf of public safety in general, uh, and then the Newton County Sheriffs, department, uh, in particular. Two Saturdays ago, we had a false alarm. It happens quite often. One of my employees had gone in, had an activated alarm. Called the alarm company. For some reason they didn't get back, didn't back with the dispatchers of Newton County. And I was meeting with that employee. We had a meeting set up. And about an hour later, later, a, uh, sheriffs officer came up. And, uh, of course I told him, was apologetic for the, the false alarm, it happens from time to time. But I'm like what, why did it take you an hour to get here. He's like well I had to come from 212. And, and I guess I just wasn't aware, as he began to talk to me, about the short staffed conditions that our sheriffs department is working under at this point. Uh, the next night I had a wedding and I interacted with a long term sheriffs officer who's been with the, the, the department for a long time. I know him and you would know him if I called his name. But I just kind of asked him, I'm like what's up; I didn't realize that you guys were this understaffed. And, uh, and he began to inform me that it'd been since like, uh, '07 since they'd had a raise, uh, they'd had a lot of people that were leaving the sheriffs department and that were some nights in our county that were four officers cars covering the entire Newton County. Uh, you know, I don't want to belabor the stats you already know, but population since '07, '08 has increased by 4000, call volume has gone up by over 11,000. You know, the budget has flat lined, decreased, and I know because of that officers, new officers, employment stats I'm sure has stayed, stated there. But the biggest thing is the low morale that it's doing to our, our officers that serve us. And unless you need one, then it's not important. But to me public safety is extremely important and we do all we can to contribute to our, our county, uh, helping, uh... Won't go into all that. But, but, but let , let me move on. And because there's no real substantive change in the foreseeable future, our sheriff office, office is in the place that you now find it and you know that it is, because you know all these numbers and these statistics. I... As public officials, and I live in the public, it's very hard sometime to make the right choice, because we're gonna, we're gonna make somebody mad any decision that we make. And you guys especially are faced with making somebody angry and it's compounded when you're trying to get reelected. But I feel like, and I was passionate enough about it to, uh... This is a chemo day. I don't feel good. But I was passionate about it, that I didn't want to forget it, to come and say that we are in a crisis. And I think that if my neighbors knew about it they would be willing to do the right thing. I am a fiscal conservative. My politics I keep very private. But I don't like taxes. I don't like tax increases. But I want my children and my grandchildren protected. But if you tell me... If you forget about being reelected and you tell me that we're in this type of crisis I'm certainly willing to pay more and I think most people would be willing to pay more. And I can't speak for everybody, but if you tell me, if you're just truthful with me I think, uh, this can, this can happen. I, uh... Public safety people need a substantial raise. They don't need something that's gonna, gonna be a kick at them. But they really... It is something we need to look at. I'm friends with Sheriff Brown, so I called him and asked him could I come and speak. Uh, the great thing is the crimes, the crime statistics have stayed about level or decreased every year, with the exception of one or two. They're doing an amazing job. They put their lives on the line, but unfortunately they're having to juggle between what's more important a lot of times. And I just think we could do better by them. And that don't even, we don't even go to the jail staff, the fire, the, you know, the ambulance services and all that. But I'm just saying let us know, let this county know what's going on. And, uh, if you would designate some money for that, I'd be more than happy to pay more than my share, uh, to be able to see my family, my community, my neighborhood and property is safe. Thank you. I, I do thank you for obliging me with this little exception tonight. Thank you.

ELLIS: And we appreciate you doing leading our invocation. And hope you do well with the chemo. Just, just to mention, there was a request to move, the, the comments this week to the end by a commissioner. Commissioners, as you know, I opted to put 'em up toward the front right after election. There were some people who asked why would we have comments after we voted. Why don't you share with me, commissioners, in the next few days your feelings so we can get a census on the Board, uh, as to when those need to be heard. We do have some slides I wanted to go through, as well as some more important issues. I believe there was a list of all of our road projects. Sewell Road, which is District One Commissioner, that one you see the progress going on at the bridge. We are saving the county a substantial amount of money by doing the work at public works. There's some of the piles being driven. You see the work that's being done concrete wise. Our guys are actually the ones doing that. They formed it up. They're pouring. Sometimes they have to go all the way to the other side of, uh, in Morgan County to be able to do the work. That is the bridge, Commissioner, I think you said the other day, that probably could support a locomotive and it probably could.

DOUGLAS: (inaudible)

ELLIS: A transfer truck can go across it after we're through. Yes sir, you have a question.

DOUGLAS: Yes. No, just a comment. I was out there just a week or so ago, so it looks like a lot has been done just in a week, in the past week, Mr. Chairman. So I appreciate it and I know the county residents that live there, that are cut off from Newton County that live on the other side over there are, are really happy. So it's good, good to see progress on this project Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

ELLIS: We are gonna need to close, uh, 36, Highway 36 as well as, uh, Highway 278. It'll go all the way to Oasis. Come in that way. It'll be set by a crane. And I think I told you Commissioner, it will be a wooden bridge it will be placed on top. And these are all DOT bridges and that will be inspected and they will no, have no load limit, so fire trucks, any other emergency vehicles can go across 'em. Also wanted to mention that, uh, the utilities on... If you'll look at the so called list of all the transportation projects there. And I think you have one in the audience if you want to follow along. The Alcovy Trestle had eleven utilities have already been relocated and snail will beginning to work very soon. The next one is airport road and 142. That's up there at Flint Hill School as you remember. We widened the road so that the buses could pass. Pittman has that one. It should be started very soon as well. And State Route 81 at Crowell Road is gonna be one we're gonna take a long look at in a little bit, so that's one one of the ones we know is gonna be important to us. Oak Hill Bridge Replacement Right of Way Acquisition, I believe we're finished with that now, so we should see that on our agenda real soon. Livingston Lane, I signed another deed today. I think we have about five left and that's your district, I believe. We mentioned the Sewell Road, uh, Bridge. It's underway. Within the next few weeks we hope we'll be complete, completely through with that one. Some of these other projects as we go down are in different stages. You'll be able to see some of those as well as the funding. The Crowell Road Interchange at I-20 is in the planning stages right now. We'll be looking at that in a few minutes as well. Some of those projects have already been done. Waterford Road at Settlers Road, as you go down at the bottom is complete. Dixie Road is complete. Cook Road is almost complete. They should complete that one tomorrow. It goes from Mount Zion to Bald Rock. It is underway and I suspect we'll have that striped within the next few weeks. And then our next road is Mount Tabor. That's Almon Road to Sockwell. I believe... I think Commissioner Schulz those are your district, so, at least one of 'em.

SCHULZ: (inaudible)

ELLIS: Yep.

SCHULZ: (inaudible)

ELLIS: Yep. So we've got those going. We do have quite a lot of projects going on right now. And I wanted to mention a few other things as well. You have a drawing there... You got a big stack tonight that was put on your desk. The ones that have the signs. You might want to grab that one. Those are Stanton Springs. That will be... We worked so hard to get that renamed. The County as well as Walton County has done that. We did that at the state level, as well as here in this building. Those are the signs that will be installed that cost us about thirty-two thousand. The Joint Development Authority is probably going to follow suit with us and cut some timber to be able to do some of these improvements for economic development. That project should be sometime in the very near future. We've been dealing directly with the Commissioner of DOT with that one, so he is very enthusiastic about it. The signage for Stanton Springs Parkway is something we think will be an addition to our whole economic package as we're going through it. The Yellow River/Mount Tabor Access, the millings, you got that one? The folks at the water trail seem to be using that so much that there's no place for them to park. That's the old Mount Tabor Bridge that was replaced. We recently added some millings. Commissioners they have asked us about some property that we own right at the Yellow River Bridge near the old high school. I believe there was some property that we own there traveling west on the left side right at the river. They've asked if we would allow them to use that as another access point. We could probably do the same, just add 'em a little parking. If there's no one that would object to that, we'll try to comply with them. They came in this week and asked. The millings are available. Really no cost, except spreading 'em out. Anybody object to us doing that? It gives them one more access point. Apparently there's just, uh, the river's full very weekend. Peachtree Academy does have already the speed zones up. The signal lights will be there pretty soon. They're being installed as, as well as the Georgia Department of Transportation's, uh, they're paying for all of the speed zone signs as well as the lights. Also on the square, you notice that quite a lot, lot of work has been done. I want to thank... I noticed the Mayor come in. Thank you for what you're doing for our town. Appreciate that very much. Saw concrete being poured today. They're trying to get ready for the, I guess the first concert. And that is through that MOU that we on our list in a little bit to take a look at. Something that I just, uh, want to read, make sure I get this one right. Many of you know Captain Kitchens. He supervises the day to day operations of the Newton county Judicial Center. We wanted to recognize him today. He's not here at this point. But he's responsible for making sure all of our guards are here for the Historic Courthouse, the Administration Building. He also supervises firearm training for the Newton County Sheriffs Office. I participated in that one time myself. So thank you Captain Kitchens for all you do. We've had visits lately from Senator Isakson at Georgia perimeter. We also had an opportunity to have a visit with Governor Deal In Madison. He came and invited all the four county park folks. We also had the opportunity to tour Baxter again. And there was an event at the Transportation Department last Friday. We had a pig barbeque. Our folks are doing so good right now. They're pil..., paving about a mile and a half each day. They are mowing twelve to fifteen miles each day. I don't believe we've gone through the county three times and it looks like we're gonna get through three times. Our transportation folks and fleet are doing a marvelous job. They actually... I think Animal Control caught that pig somewhere and they finished it out and cooked it last week at their own expense and provided lunch for about forty folks, including Mr. Middleton. And there was a celebration for Robert Griffith, who had a stroke not too long ago, had to retire from the County. Didn't really feel up to having a retirement party,

so we were able to do that as well. Some more things of... I believe you have in your stack the timber value for the Ellis Track as well as you'll see the aerial photograph there. The winning bid was something over two hundred and twenty thousand. The only thing that will be taken out of there will be a ten percent commission for the forester. We probably won't plant, we won't plant that back since it is at the Landfill. There are some strong buffers, if you'll notice, that were provided near any residence, or if they were near the river or if they were just on the streets themselves. So even with that, it even brought more than Mac Barber, our forester, thought it would. Again, the price of timber, especially hardwood, is at its, at its peak right now. Turner Lake Dam, Commissioners when we had the contractor come to actually take a look at the dam, as you recall we had a phone conversation, a three way, with our consultant, with our engineering firm. It went over the ten thousand... I think Miss Schulz you made that motion. It did go over the ten thousand. We're entertaining some others that have already made a visit. When we get those complete if it's not under ten thousand we'll just have to bid the project out. It is still losing water every day. Commissioners, there were some questions about the financial retreat. We've done our best to be able to get that scheduled. It doesn't look like it's working. Wayne Tamplin, Pat, myself, uh, the new County Manager, Tom, as well as Michelle met last week. And they offered to do maybe some individually with you commissioners. If that's something you'd like to do, Wayne said they would do that at no cost to try to get you up to date. We've had a hard time scheduling. It is football season for the weekends, as well as all the other activities that we've got going on. So if it maybe something that you'd like to do, if you'll just give me your comments. A note was passed to me. Somehow I forgot the pledge to the flag. Tonight we're gonna let our new County Manager lead our pledge. This is a big night for him. I'm proud of him. He's done a great job. He's honest. He's loyal. He's gonna do a tremendous job for us. I have every confidence in the world. I've had a chance to work with him for the last year and a half. I know his abilities. And tonight Tom, would you lead us in our pledge. Let's all stand. (Pledge to Allegiance) And with that we'll let you give us a report if you have a few things.

GARRETT: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. I just have a couple of items for you. On the 2011 SPLOST as we keep moving forward with that, the Judicial Center is moving along and I hope to bring back a, uh, a uh, groundbreaking date to you guys, to the Board here at the next meeting. So we can, uh... I know that has been much anticipated to get that project started. I've also requested, as previously discussed, from the public safety folks the vehicle list for the second half of the SPLOST vehicle purchase. And that will be forthcoming to the board for consideration soon as well. And, one other item, if you'll remember, the Board entered into contract with Palmetto Grant Consultants a few months ago. We've had a series of meetings and have identified some, some grant opportunities that they're exploring. And, uh, they're doing some targeted grant applications and scheduled meetings with several departments in the next couple of weeks. So hopefully, we'll be bringing for the Board's consideration several grant opportunities at the next meeting or the next couple of meetings so we can try to offset some of those budget concerns that we have so... That's all I have.

ELLIS: Thank you. Commissioner?

MADDOX: Mr. Chairman, certainly appreciate y'all's (inaudible)... At this time, I'd like to move to change the agenda to add or discuss the management of and responsibilities of operations, financial processes and possibly personnel.

ELLIS: We have a motion and second. Any discussion? Commissioner?

DOUGLAS: Let me ask Commissioner Maddox if he would include in that a discussion on checks and balances and how, how, how outstanding or how checks are signed by the county before they go out.

MADDOX: Uh, so amended and just as a side note, that is, that is what is meant by financial processes.

DOUGLAS: Okay.

MADDOX: So checks and balances is within that motion.

DOUGLAS: Okay. Thank you.

ELLIS: All in favor? All opposed? We will add that. Would it be okay to add that after item number thirteen, Commissioner?

MADDOX: (inaudible)

ELLIS: So we'll make that item number fourteen, changing Citizen Comments to fifteen, Commissioner Comments to sixteen, Executive Session to seventeen, and the adjournment will be eighteen. And, I don't know if I got that whole thing. Would you give me that list again so I can call it back out when it comes time? Finance.

MADDOX: To discuss management of and responsibilities of operations, financial processes and possibly personnel.

ELLIS: We have two sets of minutes tonight. The first the Board of Commissioners Work Session minutes dated August nineteenth, twenty fourteen. May I have a motion please? One and two. Any discussion? All in favor? That's unanimous. Commissioners we'd like to table the Executive Session minutes dated August nineteenth twenty fourteen, because we do have some additional things to be added to that to give you to me to review. Commissioners our next meeting will be the sixteenth, should be September sixteenth. Commissioners can I have a motion to table? Three and five. Any discussion? All in favor? Item number three, this is administrative in nature, the appointment of the County Manager. Who'd like to make that motion? District Five.

MADDOX: Thank you Mr. Chairman. In an effort to address responsibilities and accountabilities in our day to day operations, I move to appoint Tom Garrett into the County Manager's position, effective today, while also shifting the responsibilities of the Fleet Services Department and the Engineering Department to his responsibility and oversight as County Manager.

ELLIS: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion?

MADDOX: I do Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Commissioner.

MADDOX: Over the last year, I've heard the conversation about who's going to get the power or the authority in our county government, who's going to be able to hire and fire. It's disappointing, as I believe the real conversation should be about who's gonna, who's gonna

have responsibility and leadership in our community. The recent actions and events should clearly prove that the Board of Commissioners and the Chairman should provide over... (End of Track 1/Disc 1)

SCHULZ: (Beginning of Track 2/Disc 1) I do have a question, uh, and this is for the County Attorney. Uh, in the enabling legislation the role of the Chair is for the Roads Department. How does that, are we in compliance with enabling legislation if we leave Fleet and, uh, Engineering to the County Managers responsibility.

CRAIG: I may be mistaken, but I believe the transfer of Fleet Management and Engineering occurred in the budget process at some point and time. As such, you are free to assign it, reassign it as you please. It's not part of the Charter.

SCHULZ: Thank you.

ELLIS: Further discussion? Commissioner Douglas.

DOUGLAS: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Uh, uh, another question for the County Attorney. I believe though that the Road Department itself could not be moved without a Charter amendment. That would be a legislative amendment of the Charter. Is that correct?

CRAIG: I would, I would want to look at that more carefully. Uh, if it is the reassignment of administrative duties that it maybe that that could be done. But I'm not prepared to speak to that tonight. I think it's a, it's a complicated matter. I'd want to do a little bit of legal research before I gave you advise on that.

DOUGLAS: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Further discussion? All in favor? All opposed? It passes four to one.

DOUGLAS: Mr. Chairman (inaudible) motion I'd like to make if I could.

ELLIS: Certainly.

DOUGLAS: Mr. Chairman, I move that we eliminate the position of Assistant County manager effective immediately.

SIMS: Second.

ELLIS: That's one and two. Any discussion? All in favor? That's five to zero. Is Miss Josephine Brown here tonight? Hey Miss Josephine. We might let you take care of both of your items if you'd like. We appreciate you do everything you do for our seniors. This is going to be through the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. It's a contract for Multi-Funded Services/Area Emergency, Agency on Aging Division. Hi.

BROWN: Good evening. Again, I want to thank the Board for all they do in seniors in Newton County. I stand before you this evening with the contract from, uh, Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging and, uh, this has been prepared for the signature of the County Chair. Uh, there's several areas within this contract that has to be signed and notarized. And I am presenting it to the Board tonight for their perusal and for the signature, so that I may get it back to Northeast Georgia so that we will be in compliance with all that's within this contract.

ELLIS: Alright, Commissioners can we get a motion?

HENDERSON: So moved.

DOUGLAS: Second.

ELLIS: That's four and two. Four and one. Any discussion? Commissioner.

MADDOX: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Yes sir, thank you Mr. Chairman. Uh, this says the first date... I'm not sure who asked this though, but it says the first date of this contract, the renewal, would be July first of fourteen.

BROWN: Correct.

MADDOX: Which, which again adds to a time sensitivity. But why is it...

BROWN: Well the reason, the reason it's just getting here, it did not come down from the Office of Aging until last week. The Office of Aging was... It's always... This is something... We never get the contract, the actual contract, until the middle of August. It was nothing on my part, nor Northeast Georgia's. They have to wait until the Office of Aging sends everything down to them and they have the funding in place.

MADDOX: I... Please understand, I was not implying that it was your fault. I thought it was among us. Not...

BROWN: No, it's not among...

MADDOX: (inaudible)

BROWN: This the State.

ELLIS: Another one of those housekeeping items. Any further discussion?
Commissioner?

SCHULZ: This is actually, uh, for Miss Jackie. Uh, I only have page three and four. It looks to be a page that's missing. I guess the signature pages.

SMITH: (inaudible)

SCHULZ: So...

SMITH: And what we... This is just a yearly housekeeping matter, that we get money from them...

SCHULZ: Right.

SMITH: ...and all we're doing is accepting the money.

SCHULZ: I think it would be helpful to... Since you have to have the signature, I think it would be helpful to have the signature page part of our minutes so that we can...

SMITH: (inaudible)

SCHULZ: At least include the signature page.

BROWN: There are several signature pages...

SCHULZ: I think that would be very helpful.

BROWN: ...within this document.

SMITH: The contract (inaudible)

SCHULZ: But I think it would be helpful for us to know exactly who the signatories are.

BROWN: Okay. Well other than, uh, Mr. Ellis, the, this other, the other signatories would be Peggy Jenkins, the Executive Director of the Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging and Jim Dove, the Executive Director of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. So those are the signatures that would be on this document to go back to the State of Georgia.

ELLIS: Thank you. Any further discussion? All in favor? We're gonna jump down to item number nine, which is I think approval of the amendment to your CSBG Grant to receive...

BROWN: Community Service Block Grant.

ELLIS: ...an additional ten thousand seven hundred and forty-five dollars. Which is good news.

BROWN: Yes. And that money will be used for emergencies. Uh, specifically in bad weather where seniors that are home bound or in isolated areas, it would also serve as a mechanism for those that are confined to their homes if there is bad weather, specifically on weekends, that we could get some meals to them on the weekends.

ELLIS: Alright. Great. Any discussion before we have a motion? Let me hear a motion please.

HENDERSON: (inaudible)

MADDOX: (inaudible)

ELLIS: Two and five. Any other discussion? All in favor? Thank you Miss Josephine.

BROWN: Thank you.

ELLIS: Item number seven is found on pages six through nine. This is already renewed. Miss Carter, would you like to mention a little about this Memorandum of Understanding? We do have the Mayor here and this really regards the square.

CARTER: The way that this MOU was originally worded is it automatically renewed on July first of this year. And it's an automatic renewal, unless either the city of the county would provide notice it does not want to renew. Uh, so the parties, you know, certainly could enter into a new agreement for two thousand, for this year if they so chose, but, uh, as of right now this agreement stands renewed.

ELLIS: Alright, any questions at all? So we don't need to take any action on this. Thank you very much. Going back to number six, this is from Juvenile. Anybody here from Juvenile tonight? Good. Great. Approval, uh, to accept two hundred and seventy-four thousand three hundred and ninety dollars. You're gonna have to help me with the acronym. It's a grant to Juvenile Drug Court. We appreciate y'all being here.

UNKNOWN: Well good after, evening. So the acronym is, uh, for SAMHSA is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health, uh... Oh goodness, now. ...Service Administration. There we go, so... And we are here to... I don't, I don't think Diana has been here the last couple of times to accept grants, but we certainly want to recognize her. She's our Director of Programs and Services and was very instrumental in writing the grant. Uh, anyone who's tackled one of these grants knows they are an incredible amount of work. And so we are real glad that she's here with us tonight. And we're really glad that she works at our Juvenile Court, because with her work, along with our juvenile partners, uh, we, uh, are able to ask you to let us to accept this grant in the amount of four, two hundred seventy-four thousand three hundred and ninety dollars for the Drug Court Program. The official title of the grant is the grant to expand drug substance treatment capacity in adult tribal hearing to wellness and juvenile drug courts. So this is to do exactly what it says, it's to expand our ability to provide treatment to the juveniles in our Drug Court program. There is no match. It was a competitive application. And we were one of... They expected to give fourteen awards nationwide, so we were one of fourteen awards to receive it. It will be for three years and will be that amount of money for three years.

ELLIS: Well congratulations on getting that grant. Commissioners, let's get a motion.

SIMS: (inaudible)

DOUGLAS: Second.

ELLIS: Two and one. Further discussion? All in favor? Unanimous.

UNKNOWN: Thank you.

ELLIS: Thank you ladies.

UNKNOWN: Thank you for your continued support.

ELLIS: We appreciate y'all being here with us. Item eight, from Administrative Services. Looks like we're gonna dispose of a copier from Superior Court. Anyone here tonight? We can handle this one. Is this going to Gov Deals? Uh, Commissioners, let's go ahead and get a motion on that.

SIMS: (inaudible)

MADDOX: (inaudible)

ELLIS: Any discussion? All in favor? That one passed. Mr. Garrett's gonna handle number ten. It's, uh, a contract between Newton County, the Board of Regents, and the Extension Service. We've got Ted here tonight, our famous county agent. We appreciate what you do. If you want to come up, you can speak to us a second. We're always glad to hear from you. And then Tom can handle it.

WYNN: I'd just like to thank the Board for their support over the years for the 4-H program in Newton County. It's certainly one of the strongest ones in the state, which it should be because we're the founding county for the State of Georgia and, uh, a really good program. This contract is for our Terri Fullerton, which is our 4-H leader. And, uh, I'd appreciate, uh, your support here.

ELLIS: Tom, would you like to say anything?

GARRETT: Yes. You have, you should have a handout, five pages stapled together there. It's a cover letter, along with essentially two separate signature sheets and budget descriptions. The first... If you'd look at the first signature sheet you'll see that it's for the period July 1 twenty thirteen through June thirtieth twenty fourteen, which was our fiscal year that just finished a couple of months ago. The adjustments made, made on the back page there, on the... Excuse me. ...on the second page, twelve hundred and seventy-nine dollars, that amount's already been paid. That was an adjustment in insurance from employee. And this is, as I understand it, the University just wanted to clean it up to make sure that although we've already incurred that amount that, uh, in their records that it reflected that additional in.., insurance premium. The second one, just to piggy back on that, is the same, it's actually the same, issue. The... It's for the period July first twenty fourteen through June thirtieth twenty fifteen. And it's another adjustment to the insurance, uh, for the same employee, who has had a change in marital status and is also expecting a child to, to try give that some explanation. The contract itself, much like the MOU spoken of earlier, automatically renews, unless with ninety days notice, either party chooses to cancel it. So the contract itself is really not the issue here. It's, it's simply the benefit package for the employee that's provided by Newton County. And if you'll see, the budget amount, we did increase the budget this year. When Ted came before us the exact amount wasn't known. There was an increase of a little bit to cover some of the insurance premium and it's still a little bit, a little bit short of our budget amount. We'll have to work with Ted and the University to cover that additional twenty one hundred dollars as you, as you see. But I think we'll be able to do that through either adjusting line items or however, however you want, talk with the University about that, so...

ELLIS: The Chair will entertain a motion.

DOUGLAS: (inaudible)

SIMS: (inaudible)

ELLIS: One and two. Further discussion? All in favor? Unanimous. Thank you very much for the good work you do...

WYNN: Thank you.

ELLIS: ...for our young people. Commissioners, you have, uh, the slide set... Tom attended the very last meeting of the ARC for his tenure, unless he goes back with me. I'll be going from now on to represent the county. I want to go over... And you'll see, everyone in the audience you'll see, Newton County has a wonderful opportunity. Right after taking office, former Mayor Ramsey gave me some wise, wise advice, that you never know when federal money is gonna come down the pipe and we've got it coming. So we're preparing now to have some projects reviewed by the ARC, that's the Atlanta Regional Commission. The... You're gonna see an overview of all the programs we're gonna look at, Newton County Project Recommendations and a summary. And as we go through... Next slide. There are really three things here that we want to take a look at in a few minutes. But this is the ARC. They made this announcement, I guess last week, so August of twenty fourteen. All of the applications have to be in by twenty fourteen. That is the date they will be basing their projects on. If we don't meet that deadline... It has to be in a MPO, which is you know is the Metropolitan Planning Organization. You'll see a map to come in a just a few minutes which designates that. There are a number of projects that they're gonna look at, but ours is really the Surface Transportation Program, acronym there STP. There is, as the next slide shows, as much as a hundred and forty-five million dollars state wide that would be federal funding through the year, fiscal year twenty-nineteen. It's an extremely big deal. We feel like that we have some projects. Number three, of the three type of projects we're gonna look at are existing projects with funding shortfalls. We think we've got that covered, but again we've had some bids that have come in a little higher than expected. We're gonna look at new projects. We'll see those in a few minutes. And we're gonna look at planning studies that will enable us to look the next time money comes down the pipe. All... Again, all of these have to be down by fiscal year twenty-nineteen. Next slide. Pie chart showing that the vast majority of the money are going to be at the Surface Transportation Program, a hundred and sixteen million almost, that we should be able to get some money for. As you know, we're twenty-fourth in population in Newton County. We have about a hundred and thirty state routes here that might potentially be resurfaced. We've got an abundance of other projects that we're gonna show ya that we hope might be included. So a hundred and sixteen million, we think we're gonna be able to get our share of that. The next slide shows the division. The left side or the, or I should say the western side of Newton County. You see the delineation there. That's Highway 81. It goes all the way almost to Jackson Lake on 36. That's the Stewart Community. And then back across. I think that's 212. Anything that's to the left of that or along those corridors would be money, would be subject to the money that's available. We feel like we have in our highest concentrated population areas an opportunity to get quite a lot of money for Newton County. Next. These existing projects with shortfalls might not be something that we're gonna be able to do, but we're gonna look at them again. The new projects, those are gonna support long range plans, objectives, and frameworks. You can read along as you go. But planning studies is the next topic and we're gonna try to look at focusing on corridors, subareas, project feasibility, concept development and then multi-mobile. We'll see some of these are working better to our, uh... Again, it's the Surface Transportation Program. Maintenance of roads, bridges. Those are gonna be things we're gonna take a look at. Next. Next slide. There's some tap money we probably won't take a look at. Next. Here's where we're gonna focus, Newton County will be responsible for twenty percent local funding. We'll be looking at the 2011 SPLOST to be able to that. Again, it's gotta be within the MPO and then whatever projects give us the best opportunity to get the funding. So those are the four we're gonna focus on. We've already been looking at Crowell Road and I-20, Miss Schulz. I know that you've been excited about this for quite some time. This allows for us to be able to almost, we want to say guarantee we get that funding. Brown Bridge Road at Yellow River, that bridge we'll see in a little bit is old and needs to be replaced. Also, the one at Snapping Shoals Creek we'll see its age in a few minutes as well. And then we're gonna do a study on the whole Brown Bridge Road corridor. It is one our most heavily traveled roads in the

county. That one shows some of our projects and for some reason they didn't show up quite as well. There we go. There is Crowell Road up at Almon, Brown Bridge, Brown Bridge at Snapping Shoals. That's a bridge that we're gonna try, try to look at as well, so all of those things, including the corridor itself, all the way from the city limits to Salem Road. So we'll have an engineering study that will be paid for, basically by federal money, to tell us places we might be able to improve traffic flow. Maybe there's some choke points. Maybe there's some businesses that provide a little extra traffic. We'll be able to focus money... We really can't afford to widen Brown Bridge. It needs it right now, but the money do that is not really coming down our pipe at this point. Next. Let's look at the Crowell Road for just a second, that interchange... Commissioner you told us at one time how many signals were there. I don't remember...

DOUGLAS: Twenty-three.

ELLIS: Twenty-three signals are located at that important entrance to I-20 and to one of the gate, gateways to our community. So the intersection improvement decreasing the number of signals and increasing capacity is what that should do. On the next slide you will see a drawing of how it might look. We've been in front of DOT three times. The Commissioner is in favor of this project. We feel good about this one. And the next slide tells us about estimated cost and a lot of studies. If you'll look at the bottom line, the investment from the federal government, federal government would be close to two and half million dollars. Our, our match is twenty percent, six hundred and sixteen thousand. That entire project is over three million dollars. We feel good about that one. Next. Brown Bridge, as you know we had trouble back in April of two thousand and thirteen. We did some quick fixes on it. We spent thirty thousand. We were able to get some DOT money from that. It really needs to be replaced. It was built in nineteen sixty-one, an average of nine thousand four hundred and eighty cars go across it each day. It's one of our most heavy traveled bridges that we own. We have about fifty-five bridges and culverts. As you know we have a lot of water ways. It's posted at sixteen tons. Next. The cost to do that, as you can see, five million dollars almost to do it. No way Newton County can afford to do that. But if we invest nine hundred and sixty-five thousand of SPLOST money, we have a chance to get three point eight million dollars from the federal government to assist us in doing a very important bridge replacement. It was done... The Snapping Shoals Bridge is next. It was built in nineteen sixty-three. It's rated at sixteen tons. It has almost seven thousand trips per day. And the cost of that one would be about two and a half million dollars. Again, a big load on the taxpayers. But with our SPLOST money if we invest five hundred and three thousand dollars we believe we'll get two million dollars back. The study on Brown Bridge, if you travel Brown Bridge you know there's an awful lot of places where traffic slows. It's a major corridor. The trips there are from nine thousand to sixteen thousand per day, depending on what part of Brown Bridge. SPLOST and ARC are calling for those projects. We know that right now we can't afford the twenty-five to thirty million dollars it would take to widen it. But we believe that investing a hundred twenty-five thousand, only twenty-five thousand which would come from our tax payers, can provide us a study that might help get us in a position we can add some turn lanes in a few places, doing anything to establish or to take away those choke points. So if you look at all these projects together, the bottom line is we stand to get almost eight and a half million dollars of federal money into Newton County. It's gonna cost us two point one million which we have in SPLOST money. The total of that would be ten and a half million dollars. So we feel like the tax payers are gonna benefit in a tremendous way. We're glad about this. We'll be looking at some consultants pretty soon. Tom passed me a note. We'll be doing that hopefully for the September sixteenth meeting. We'll also have the timber (inaudible) on there, as well as some other areas we'll be adding to our agenda. And with that,

we're gonna move on to a very important project and Tom's gonna handle it. It is item number twelve, also from Transportation. This may be his last act on this particular project.

MADDOX: Mr., Mr. Chairman, can we, can we back up a minute and have just a little q and a on the last topic...

ELLIS: Sure. Absolutely.

MADDOX: ...transportation? I think we're about to be asked to vote on what is a pretty important project, very important project. And I certainly applaud the efforts to get federal money and bring it in here. But can we... First of all, can we get this sent to us, cause I don't... It may have been sent to us, but I haven't seen it.

ELLIS: It was hot off of the presses today, so we can get it to ya. You're talking about electronically?

MADDOX: Yes sir.

ELLIS: Absolutely.

MADDOX: Very, very nice presentation.

ELLIS: Tom, Tom worked hard on it this afternoon.

MADDOX: I found... Just in the quick presentation, I found about nine questions. Would you guys prefer me to send those questions to you or, uh...

ELLIS: We'll be glad to do it that way. If you'd like to ask 'em tonight...

MADDOX: Well...

ELLIS: The Board's pleasure. It's almost eight o'clock.

MADDOX: Well, well the immediate one I guess tonight is what we're about to vote on is there a deadline on that being submitted? Because page two, uh, the second, the bottom portion says October of two thousand fourteen is TBA. So if any of this ends up shifting to, to the next meeting, so, so we have a better understanding of it. Will...

ELLIS: Well...

MADDOX: Will there be any penalties?

ELLIS: You, you want to handle that? Cause the next item really gets us into the road to do this. Go ahead

GARRETT: The, the funding implications for the projects will be due in October of, of next, next month, October twenty-fourteen. They haven't given us a firm date yet. They've just said October. Uh, a portion of the next item is, would be helping to do that application for that I-20 corridor project. Does that answer your question?

MADDOX: Sure.

ELLIS: Commissioner Douglas.

DOUGLAS: I'm looking, I'm looking at this, uh, diagram here. Could you put that back? Can you put that picture of the dia...

ELLIS: It's the Crowell Road/I-20.

DOUGLAS: Yea.

ELLIS: I don't know what slide number it is.

DOUGLAS: It's on page eight. Well the question I have is this... I'm just gonna call it a horseshoe for the sake of a name.

ELLIS: Alright.

DOUGLAS: This horseshoe, would that land have to be condemned or would whoever the property owner is be willing to sell it? Do we know that?

ELLIS: The property owner, I.... It's a federal process that you have to be very careful of what we say tonight.

DOUGLAS: Okay.

ELLIS: But there are some, uh, there, there, there will be, there will need to be a negotiation with DOT to be able to acquire that and Mr. Craig's office will handle those negotiations.

DOUGLAS: Alright. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: I believe most of those land owners are already aware of this project. Any other questions? Commissioner Schulz.

SCHULZ: I'd actually like to address Commissioner Maddox's question. One of the concerns for the consultant is that if ARC has the call for projects on the first of October we want it to be ready so that we do not miss this opportunity. So that's why it's being brought to us tonight, so that we can at least begin a portion of the process. Not all of it. But to begin a portion of it, so that if in fact they were to call for those projects on October one we would be, we would be queued in line and wouldn't have to scramble to get it all together at the last minute.

MADDOX: So our decision hands over information to a consultant whose gonna try to tee this up for state or federal...

ELLIS: E, e, exactly. It's Gresham Smith. We were made aware or, or we at least, at least heard the rumors about three months ago that this call for projects was going to happen. So we began then to take a look at what we could do to be ready as we got closer to that date. We were assured that it was gonna happen and our project was gonna be a high priority. So we've been working now for three months to get it to this point. I feel pretty good about it. Any other questions?

MADDOX: Yes sir, I'm sorry. Thank you. During that process, was it decided that we were not even going to explore TAP opportunities. I, I, I say that, I, I don't think the county budget allows any activity there. But we've got three cities that are very much participating in TAP type activities I think, so...

ELLIS: We are trying to be as specific with ours as we can, so that we get the ones we think are the highest priority. So those are the ones that we chose, the best opportunity to get DOT's attention. Commissioner Schulz?

SCHULZ: I guess, uh, I'm thinking also in terms of the, the 2011 SPLOST where this money is coming from. The, the (inaudible) money is more closely aligned with the money that we approved for the 2011 SPLOST where this funding would come from. So I, I, I, my understanding is that that's another reason for setting that as a priority.

DOUGLAS: Chairman.

ELLIS: Commissioner Douglas.

DOUGLAS: You, you know I'm, I'm a little, little bit uncomfortable and let me explain it. I'm looking again at that horseshoe, as I call it. It seems like to me... And this is a six hundred and six, six hundred and sixteen thousand dollars out of our, the pockets of our taxpayers again. Seems like to me that if we could just get somebody smart enough to synchronize those traffic lights across the bridge up there that we wouldn't have... I mean, the traffic flow is not so much I don't think that you have to build a whole new road, road system. Seems like to me if we could just get somebody smart that could synchronize those traffic lights we'd save the taxpayers a lot of money.

ELLIS; I think we've had this discussion before. Those traffic lights are closer than what DOT would like for them to be.

DOUGLAS: Who...

ELLIS: And that's why they're so little...

DOUGLAS: Who put 'em up there? Did the county put 'em up there?

ELLIS: Oh no, these are all DOT.

DOUGLAS: DOT put 'em up there and now they're telling us they're too close together?

ELLIS: Touché.

DOUGLAS: Now that doesn't surprise me at all.

ELLIS: Touché. I understand.

DOUGLAS: That does not surprise me in the least. It just seems like to me that DOT could come back and, and if they're too close together maybe they'd get it right if they came back out here and try it again and save the taxpayers of Newton County six hundred and sixteen thousand dollars.

ELLIS: We did hire professionals. Gresham Smith is well known for their work with DOT. So we did have the engineering firm to take a look at it and make sure that this was the very best option. I know Tom and I were there at the Commissioner's office at least twice together. I was there again myself and the Commissioner committed at that point early on that this was one of those projects that they realized needed to be done. It was a high priority for them. Any other comments or questions?

MADDOX: Just a real quick one.

ELLIS: Sure go ahead.

MADDOX: And I do appreciate the dialogue. Again, I go back to if we knew about three months ago that there would be... What was the phrase, called for, whatever the phrase was.

SCHULZ: Call for projects.

MADDOX: Call for projects. Thank you Commissioner. I think the first time I've heard about that, heard that phrase was this morning. If we knew about it three months ago I think it's a real miss that, uh, that we didn't know about it. (inaudible) especially with it being on the agenda tonight. Now we're expected to vote on it in just a few minutes. I think it's a huge miss not to explore TAP. Is there any possibility of using city money and it flowing through us. And I hope I'm not saying anything out of line, but I know the City of Oxford, the City of Covington and the City of Porterdale have really applied years of energy and effort to try to pursue this. I'm not talking about unincorporated Newton County. They don't want it. But there's three partners that we have that are very much interested in it. And again, if there's a time sensitive nature to this, I, you know, I, I question again and I emphasize the deadline of October one. If this shifts out two weeks does that give.. In my simple mind, which is simple, according to my wife. ...the consultants still have two weeks to work harder, to dress this thing up from September seventeenth to October the first. I think a shift is in order, but that's just my view.

GARRETT: Commissioner, on the TAP money, uh, two years ago when we did a call for or when ARC did a call for projects it was a totally different set of criteria. But we did work with the City of Covington and the City of Oxford toward getting some, we essentially submitted the application they did prepared for the pedestrian bridge over I-20. It's ongoing now. So I think we could have the communication with the cities just to, and I could go over it with them and the Chairman to explain what the criteria are to make sure they understand. If that's something, if that's something y'all want us to do.

ELLIS: If, if they're in the MPO, I believe they were invited to those meetings. And I don't know if they have a Transportation Director from the City that goes regularly or not. But I'm sure they, the City of Oxford would be aware. Again, that was rumors. We never heard for sure until two weeks ago that this call for projects was going to happen. So we were working on, not inside information, but just speculation that it was about to happen. So we were fortunate at least to have that information to be able to work on it from three months ago and get to the point to where we are today. Commissioner Schulz.

SCHULZ: I'd just like to... You know, I'm certainly sensitive to the, to your concerns and my hesitation with postponing this until the next meeting is Commissioner Sims

and I met with the Economic Development Team. And one of their greatest concerns was... the Economic Development Team from the Chamber. And one of their greatest concerns in terms of attracting retail development is that they'd had many of the potential retailers say very specifically to them that one of the, one of their hesitation for investing in the county, especially in the western side of the county where the roof tops are and that would be their biggest determining factors in investing in the county was the traffic congestion. And we know that Salem Road is one of the solutions to that traffic congestion, but we don't have the money necessary to remedy Salem Road and plus we'd have to deal with Rockdale County. So in the, when we looked at the transportation plan in, back in 2011, prior to the 2011 SPLOST, we looked at ways to relief Salem road. And one of those was Brown Bridge and then the Crowell Road and especially at the interstate, because that is heavily traveled. And if we would put that money in that would show some commitment back from Newton, from the county, so eventually we would get money back from the state. When Commissioner Sims and I and Tom Garrett met again with the Economic Development Team and they every much are concerned about us being committed to continuing this dialogue about resolving the traffic congestion on the western side of the county in an effort to give them leverage to attract retailers. So, you know what, if we were to decide to postpone this, I certainly don't want anything that is going to impact our ability to, to, to receive that money from ARC. Because it's critical in terms of not only in terms of solving the traffic congestion at I-20, but the entire traffic congestion on that western side of the county. So, you know, I think we need to be real mindful of is this, is it... When, and when we look at this particular approval of the fee proposal it's only a portion of what they actually need. So it's, we're not asking for the entire amount. So I'd just ask you to keep that in mind, that we don't want to take any chances that we might miss out on this money.

ELLIS: Any other discussion? Commissioner.

HENDERSON: Uh, this is my question. I don't know exactly who it may be to, but if, I mean by postponing it what, I mean, is it that gonna take it off track. Is this gonna derail it or will it give us time more time to look at it?

ELLIS: We really, in the essence of time, probably should have had this on our last agenda. We just weren't sure about the call. It didn't, it wasn't announced until after our last meeting. So I would urge the Board, instead of taking a chance of loosing out on eight million dollars or in this case less than that, but it's still a very important project. This is going to relief an awful lot of pressure on Salem Road as well. So these improvements are going to do a world of help for us as far as transportation. Safety. Newton High is right up there as well. No telling how many buses, students that come through that area of that intersection ever day. It's gonna take a big load off of some of our other roads, Brown Bridge as well. So I think this is one of those times when we need to go ahead and act as quickly as we possibly can. So what else? The Chair would entertain a motion. (inaudible)

MADDOX: Prior to a motion, can I, can I weigh in one more time if possible. You know, again, the things that were discussed here do not even cover the concerns and the issues that have been brought to me in the last, twice in the last two weeks. And in my mind they're pretty significant concerns. If there's not a known immediate deadline that, that equates to a (inaudible) spot for us, I would much rather have... Even if it's a special called meeting on Friday. I, I don't care when it is. But personally, I don't feel I have enough information on this and enough clarity. I'm okay with the project. I think it's very important. It's almost as important as Salem Road, which is probably the worst road in the county. I would much rather address Salem Road issues. I think those citizens have been waiting probably fifteen, eighteen years for

help. So, you know, and that's just my request. That's certainly up to the greater, to the larger Board.

ELLIS: Commissioner Schulz, you're the, you're the commissioner. I'll take your lead.

SCHULZ: (inaudible) before we make any other...

SIMS: (inaudible)

ELLIS: Sure.

SIMS: Thank you Mr. Chair. I know we went back and forth with questions, but at least on this end I never did hear how long would it take to get these documents prepared and we just kept saying.. We didn't say. We never did say how long it's going to take. So if we do postpone for a week, or the next Tuesday, or whatever that date that might be I would certainly want to give the staff enough time to get it done. But at the same time, we did just receive this today.

ELLIS: Well it went out in the packages over the weekend. But Gresham Smith will be handling all the documentation and I'm sure they need as much time as they possibly can.

SCHULZ: (inaudible)

GARRETT: Just to be clear, the fee before you for consideration for the item on the agenda is for an actual design, to begin the actual design, surveying and environmental work, at Crowell Road and I-20. It does not address any of the other projects mentioned by the Chairman.

ELLIS: (inaudible) page you on Tom?

GARRETT: Forty-one. It doesn't address any other projects mentioned in the Chairman's presentation. The total fee shown by Gresham Smith Partners is three hundred thirty nine thousand five hundred dollars; however, in that we only have the commitment thus far of five hundred thousand dollars by GDOT. You know, my recommendation is to do just the first three phases of that project. Which if you see there, if you, if you read from right to left on that, on that proposal you'll see it's just under a hundred fifty thousand. And, that way the county's not obligated to an amount that far exceeds the twenty percent max which is typical for this type project. It's a hundred and fifty, roughly a hundred and fifty thousand for the five hundred thousand that we've already been committed in GDOT funds. To answer your question, the intent originally was to bring the other projects back with some help to do applications. The application process they've developed is pretty strenuous and we want to get a good chance at getting some of those projects. The intent was to bring those projects back to the Board September sixteenth, those fees from engineers, so they can put the applications together for the date in October, which is... They haven't said October first or October thirty-first. They haven't... It has not been announced yet, the actual deadline. It's just October. So we were trying to give them as much time as possible, but it probably would not be more than a month which we hope would be adequate to put the application together.

SCHULZ: (inaudible)

ELLIS: Sure.

SCHULZ: So I, I think there's some confusion. The presentation we received tonight, we are not asking...

ELLIS: No.

SCHULZ: ...for a vote on that presentation. The only vote would be for the approval for the first three items on the Gresham Smith cost proposal only for the intersection at Crowell Road. And those first three items total around four hundred and forty-seven thousand dollars. So we... You know, I think we have plenty of time to review this packet and make decisions about this packet. We don't have to make a decision tonight about this particular packet. Absolutely. We were given this tonight and there's no way we can make a decision on this.

ELLIS: Huh, uh.

SCHULZ: But what we do have in our packet is the cost proposal for at least the first portion of the Gresham Smith fee proposal and it's not the entire, entire proposal. We would still come back or Mr. Garrett would still come back and ask for this Board to approve the remaining funds after we've gone through the first steps.

ELLIS: And Commissioner Schulz, we did go through... As you know, we opened the bids in your presence as well from all the ones that put forth bids. And Gresham Smith, they were chosen and I believe well deserved chosen as the ones to do this work. They came in on, on, on budget as far as the money. So this is one that you've heard and seen about for quite a long time.

DOUGLAS: Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Yes.

DOUGLAS: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Commissioner Schulz, I understand and hear what you're saying about taking the first step. But you know what, I've been in government long enough to know that boy once you take that first step and start spending money there ain't no going back. That money, that money is right on down and spent. And I'm not talking about this project. I'm talking about any project. And, uh, so I'm uncomfortable taking even the first step tonight until we get all this straightened out as to what's going on here and what we're doing. I don't see any point in spending any money right now until we know for sure what we're going to do. I'm still uncomfortable with this and I'm just concerned if we say well we'll just take that first step and we're just gonna spend x amount of money right, you know, just right now and then we can come back later and talk about the rest of it. Well you know you've been in government long enough and I've been in government long enough to know that that may happen, but I've just never seen it. So I'm just uncomfortable with that. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Commissioner Schulz.

SCHULZ: I just want to remind the Board, I, you know, I respect your position. I don't like to spend money any more than anybody else. These were projects that were part of the road projects on SPLOST, so we do need to be sensitive to the fact that these were projects

that were voted that were included in the road projects and that they were voted on by the voters. So we do need to remember that how the voters perceived what was, that SPLOST money was going to be spend.

ELLIS: Any others? At this point Commissioners, what's your pleasure? Commissioner Schulz would you like to make a motion and see how it goes?

SCHULZ: Okay so let me just ask Tom one more question. If we were to, if we postpone it till the sixteenth will that give your team and the consultants enough time to have it prepared by October first.

GARRETT: That schedule was the original plan for all the projects, with the exception of the I-20/Crowell Road project for which most of, a lot of work has already been done. The other projects are just in the development stages. So we will need help from consultants to get it put together. Applications, they've made it quite labor intensive and it will be, we will get the applications submitted as best we can.

SCHULZ: But we could bring this particular proposal back, because it is, it's almost, it's just a matter of giving the Board enough, another two weeks to review this proposal.

GARRETT: I think that would be... (End of Track 2/Disc 1)

ELLIS: (Beginning of Track 3/Disc 1) Any further discussion? All in favor? It is tabled unanimously. Item thirteen, also administrative. This is a discussion regarding Development Services Director. Commissioner.

DOUGLAS: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to make a motion and then I'll have a couple of comments. I want to move to initiate an update and posting of the Developmental, the Development Services Director's position immediately, allowing Mr. Garrett, after input from legal and HR to present hiring recommendations within thirty days. That's the...

SCHULZ: (inaudible)

DOUGLAS: Yes. I move to initiate an update and posting of the Developmental, Development Services Director's position immediately, allowing the County Manager Mr. Garrett, after input from legal and HR to present a hiring recommendation to the Board within thirty days. I have a couple of comments if I could now Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry.

HENDERSON; (inaudible)

DOUGLAS: You'll have to ask the Chairman.

ELLIS: Let, let, let... Alright. Alright Commissioner, since you have, you know what you are going to ask. Let's let Commissioner Henderson ask and you may have the answer for him.

HENDERSON: Well, well thank you Mr. Chairman. Can everybody hear me? Well the question I have is that, is there gonna be hiring from, you know (inaudible) other departments. I guess...

DOUGLAS: I'm sorry. I didn't understand what you said.

HENDERSON: Well I guess, in other words, say for instance, we have an opening for a Sheriffs Deputy or an opening over at the Clerk's Office or for whomever, who have an opening wherever and then we get an update from the County Manager and all that...

DOUGLAS: I think that's probably a subject for another motion. This is just Developmental Services Director.

ELLIS: Commissioner.

DOUGLAS: Just a couple of comments. I think we owe it to the citizens to hire a leader in this department with an experience, a person that can manage the staff, dramatically upgrade customer service and improve relations and procedures with local and small businesses. I believe the Board's overall view is to move forward quickly on hiring someone from the outside. This is a very key position over in the Administration Building. Developmental Services includes several different key departments, and so the motion is that...(End of Track 3/Disc 1)

Note: The second disc was not readable. The remainder is taking from the audio provided by *The Covington News*.

DOUGLAS: ...the County Manager would try to have a, I guess have a name for us, I guess thirty days by the first of October meeting, Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Commissioner Maddox.

MADDOX: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just, just to follow up on Commissioner Douglas' comments, you know I certainly think it's time to move forward. Um, I think there's a, you know, with the conversations I've had within the Board and outside the Board with local businesses, I think, I think there's a dramatic need to, uh, upgrade and improve some of our processes and functions, especially when it relates to small businesses, uh, and customer service. Um, I think the citizens deserve someone from the outside with years of experience that, would within those areas that, that can help us, those citizens. Those applicants are out there. I think the motion that Mr. Douglas made, Commissioner Douglas made allows, uh, resumes to, uh, a position to be posted, resumes to be collected and filtered and maybe two or three names presented. And, you know, I do hope there's an invitation for one of us to even sit in a couple of those final, final interviews. But again, the goal is to move the county forward in a manner that looks towards the challenges we have today and hopefully the prosperity that we deserve tomorrow. Thank you.

DOUGLAS: (inaudible) follow up Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Sure.

DOUGLAS: This, this position has been empty for how long now, about a month now or so? How long has it been empty?

GARRETT: About a month.

DOUGLAS: About a month. Yea. So this will be a sixty day process basically or sixty days without somebody actually as the Development Services Director over there. So I think it behooves us to, to get a move on here and see if we can fill this position.

ELLIS: Any other discussion?

SIMS: I have a question.

ELLIS: Absolutely.

SIMS: I guess this question's for the County Manager. Are we, do we have a, uh, updated job description to give you thirty days of interviewing or do we need to extend it by two weeks?

GARRETT: Well, uh, given this discussion, sir, I'll make this first priority my first day on the job tomorrow morning and if I need more time I'll bring it back to the Board.

SIMS: Okay.

ELLIS: Further discussion? I'm not sure of the exact motion. If you'd like to read it again. We do have a motion and a second. I'll let you read it.

DOUGLAS: The motion Mr. Chairman, the motion Mr. Chairman was to, uh, for the... To put it in layman's terms, the motion was to, uh, for the County Manager to initiate the necessary procedures to bring to us within thirty days a recommendation a to be the new Development Services Director.

ELLIS: I have a motion and a second. Any further discussions? All in favor? That is unanimous. Item number fourteen. Commissioner Maddox.

MADDOX: (inaudible)

UNKNOWN: (inaudible)

MADDOX: Thank you (inaudible). I forgot that. Sorry. Ladies and gentlemen....

ELLIS: Hold on, hold on just a second so we can change the CD. Alright, go ahead.

MADDOX: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Uh... I guess this would be item, is it fourteen?

ELLIS: Four... We can call it fourteen a if you'd like.

MADDOX: Along with some of the other motions earlier, we're embarking, we are embarking on a new County Manager and new leadership. With that comes fresh eyes and a new approach to management. I believe our responsibility is to provide a path, environment and structure that allow for the greatest potential level of success for our county and our County Manager. Within that, we should encourage the utilization of a pool of resources and advisor, advisors; for him and then, allow him to do his job without overreaching or meddling in the finer details. I move to authorize Tom Garrett to utilize the approved Professional Services budget

and to take full advantages of the services of Northeast Georgia Regional, ACCG, and John Middleton in a limited consulting role for approximately six to twelve months as determined by Mr. Garrett on sensitive or critical areas.

SCHULZ: Second.

ELLIS: We have a motion and a second. Any further discussion?
Commissioner.

HENDERSON: Thank you Mr., thank you Mr. Chairman. How, how much will that cost us for six to twelve months?

MADDOX: I, I would, I would say I can't exactly, uh, determine the, the specific number. But, uh, it has been budgeted, there's numbers in there that are budgeted for ACCG training and membership, same for Northeast Georgia Regional. Uh, as far as John Middleton, I've been in chats with him for about ten months. I think the Board even voted on it early part of this year to at least have a conversation with him on his availability. Bottom line is I would ask the question... I do appreciate the question. We, we, uh, we're in a situation where we all should watch the county dollars. But I would ask the question a different way. You know, without utilizing his tribal knowledge and his experience and his expertise in areas how much would it cost us not to utilize him. That's the question I would ask. You know, I think as a friend and him being a good man, if I called him tonight I believe he would call me back. He would take the call. I think the same with any of us that has invested time and energy in his friendship. He's a good man. But at some point... He's a retiree now, uh, effective last Friday I believe. And there's gotta be some type of small motivation involved for him to return our calls as we move forward, because he's gonna get on with life. And, you know, again this is a, this is a small element. I envision ten to fifteen hours a week max, max. I doubt it will be that. But if there's critical areas that Mr. Garrett would like, uh, history and knowledge on I feel like he should be able to utilize that resource. If it's a, if it's a major, major, uh, area and, and costs, I would hope Mr. Garrett would kinda of bring some of that back to us as a need.

HENDERSON: Uh, uh, thank you Commissioner. It's just one last thing I just want, I just want to mention. I remember we had done something similar to that on the Recreation Department, uh, when we received a new director. And the question we had then was how long were we gonna pay the ex-director for directing or co-directing the Recreation Department. And I think all of us had said at that particular point that we didn't want to keep on spending double money. And the conversation was that, that we needed to cut it off. And so... And I think, I know John, he had specifically said, and we had said around this Board as, as a Board, that we didn't want to pay to continue to have two directors. So what we done was they kinda cut it off. So I understand that when you start doing a job you're gonna need some help. I understand that. But I think we don't need to be paying uh, uh, double for the same services that we're doing. And ACCG, we do pay that some of the others, but I think that if, if my good friend John, and I tell you what he told me, we spoke at the barbeque with the big hog. You can write me letters and said I won't answer, said you can call me, I may pick it up and I may not. So impression I got is that he didn't want to be bothered, (inaudible) but if that be the case I think it should be a limited amount of money, not a whole lot. And knowing Mr. Garrett, the County Manager, he's a very smart and intelligent young man. I think that he, he understands his job. He's educated enough to do it and I think he, he is like most of us. When I was a freshman Commissioner and then a sophomore and then moved on to a senior Commissioner, yes, it took me a little time to get it together, but I got it together and I know Tom is way smarter than me. He's already got it together and I think he has jumped in here running. You know as each

of us individuals... And I think that he's capable, he's a good man and he don't need all that help.

ELLIS: Further discussion? We have a motion and a second. Commissioner, since you have that you mind reading it again?

MADDOX: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Item fourteen motion was along with the new leadership comes... Motion. Yes. I move to authorize Tom Garrett to utilize the approved professional services budget to take full advantage of the services of Northeast Georgia Regional, ACCG and John Middleton, in a limited consulting role over the next six to twelve months, as determined by Mr. Garrett on critical and sensitive issues.

ELLIS: We have a motion and a second. Any further discussion? All in favor? That's unanimous. Fourteen B.

MADDOX: Let me find it... Thank you Mr. Chairman. With the recent disappointing actions related to county funds and without sound, ethical judgment being utilized consistently; an effort is needed to provide clarity and a process that meets our current charter language. I move to allow Tom Garrett to take the lead in a review of authorizations and procedures that relate to payments and checks issued by the county, expecting an update or a recommendation of potential improvement, with upgraded checks and balances back to the Board within thirty days.

ELLIS: Second that? Have a motion to second. Any discussion?

DOUGLAS: Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Absolutely.

DOUGLAS: This is a, this was part of this, uh, checks and balances that we supposedly had was a problem waiting to happen. And, and, and apparently this system has been in effect for some time, predates three of us being on this Commission. Um, but it makes a mockery to say we have checks and balances when we have a machine signing two names to a check. Uh, and so this is something that should be on the front burner, uh, that this county is going to issue checks then they need to have two sets of eyes on those checks I think. Rather than a machine running them and stamping signatures on there, um, even if we, even if we keep the current system, uh, I just want to go on the record and say you won't see my name on another check, cause my name is out of, out of the rotation now uh, and, uh... I just think that this, this was obviously a problem waiting to happen as far as the checks and balances go. So now that it has happened now, uh, and so I would appreciate it, us passing this resolution and if you ever see my name on another check here is cause I came in and signed the thing. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Further discussion? I have a motion to second. Commissioner, I'll let you read that again.

MADDOX: Uh, motion was to allow Tom Garrett to take the lead and a review of all operations and procedures that relate to payments and checks issued by the county. Expecting an update or a recommendation of potential improvements with upgraded checks and balances coming back to the Board within thirty days. Thank you.

ELLIS: Is there a motion to second? All in favor? Passing five to zero.
Commissioner.

SCHULZ: Fourteen C, continues of checks and balances... This Board takes very seriously the fiduciary responsibility to be good stewards of the public's money. Taxpayers elected us this position to make sound financial decisions and I know that during the preparation and adoption of a budget, we work diligently to provide for a strong and efficient government. Any actions that compromise the public's trust and our ability to fulfill our responsibility must be addressed. The recent action of Commissioner Henderson requesting a cash advance from the county funds to be construed as misappropriation of public funds, a breach of the Newton County Code of Ethics and is against the oath of office that each Commissioner is required to take prior to assuming office; therefore, I move that the Board take the following steps: remove Commissioner Henderson from any boards that requests funding from Newton County in the form of appropriation. This includes, but is not limited to the, the Recreation Board and the board at Nelson Heights Community Center. Locks should be re-keyed, all rental fees for the Nelson Heights Community Center should be paid directly to and administered by Newton County. The current board at Nelson Heights Community Center dissolved and a new board formed, suspend all work activities including land acquisition pertaining to Resolution R050614A until further notice. This will allow for better understanding of the issues related to the Nelson Heights board and allows for better understanding of the overall finances.

ELLIS: Commissioner.

DOUGLAS: Commissioner Schulz, could you, you, you use some land parcel, designators there I think.

SCHULZ: I passed out the motion.

DOUGLAS: Just tell us what, what the land is you're actually talking about in laymen's terms.

SCHULZ: Resolution R050614 is the resolution for the District Four SPLOST projects that we passed on May the sixth. I'm just asking that we suspend those, um.

DOUGLAS: Are those the parks you're talking about, the parks?

SCHULZ: Yes, that we suspend that land acquisition until we further understand what's the um, um what's going to happen to the Nelson Heights Board. The voters in District Four approved District Four projects and I'm not going to suggest that we not approve District Four projects. I'm just saying that we need to suspend that particular resolution till we understand more clearly the, the information of the Nelson Heights Board.

DOUGLAS: So just to, just to follow up if I could, Mr. Chairman?

ELLIS: Absolutely, go ahead please.

DOUGLAS: Just to, just to make sure we are all on the same sheet of music here... So you want to remove Commissioner Henderson from any board that requests funding from Newton County in the form of appropriations, including Rec Board and the Nelson Heights Community Center Board, where he's the chairman. I believe that is correct? Um, the, uh, uh, re-keying of the Nelson Heights Community Center, all rental fees from Nelson Heights

Community Center should be paid directly to, administered by Newton County? Then, uh, also the current board of Nelson Heights dissolved and a new board formed? Uh, suspend all work activities and land acquisitions basically in the six parks we approved back in the spring. Is that correct?

SCHULZ: That's correct.

DOUGLAS: Let me, well let me ask you this, if we, if we remove him as chairman of the board, remove him from the Nelson Heights Board, why should we dissolve the entire board? Why would we do that?

SCHULZ: Well my understanding is that the board has not met and I think that what needs to happen is that the board needs to be reformed and be a viable board. Right now the board is nonfunctioning.

DOUGLAS: Who would form, who would be in charge of forming the new board?

SCHULZ: Well I think that needs to be part of the Nelson Heights Community. That's a non-profit, and they need to reform their board. But right now there isn't, there isn't no, no, um, that board is not functioning.

DOUGLAS: Does the Nelson Heights Community have a, I don't know, like a homeowners association type thing they could form a board. I mean how does that, how would they reform? What would be the mechanics of how they would do that?

SCHULZ: Um, Chairman Ellis, you serve on that board. Can you give us a, a...

ELLIS: Right now I'm an ex-officiate member. I believe there is about four or five active members that I don't know the last time they did meet. Maybe the Commissioner can tell us about it.

HENDERSON: If, if I could, I would like clarity, the reason why I'm being asked to, uh, uh step down. As to Commissioner Schulz has stated is because I requested a payroll deduction loan and that the payroll deduction loan was paid back. And there have been, to the best of my knowledge, unless it's something that I, uh, uh has maybe did and I was unaware of, was not fined, um, or was not locked up, uh, uh for anything or convicted of a felony, which would cause me the seat. And I've been asked to step down from most of all of the boards off of a payroll deduction loan. And so what I would like to ask and I think this goes towards legal is can you, uh, have someone step down from a board when there's nothing really, I mean there's nothing, no basis of the fact that you have a Commissioner, Commissioner Schulz, who have on every, everything we done necessary and truly everything done in the community of people of color that she has always been against and yet her district is about fifty-seven percent of Afro-Americans. And it's hard for me to understand that even what she is talking about is same stuff we went over in our Executive Session, but she talks so much about us not talking in the Executive Session. She leaked it to the press. They put articles about myself and my children in the paper of something we paid back. Not because of something I felt we had to, cause there were twenty-five or thirty people that got payroll deduction loans. And we paid it back, not because we felt we had to, but because we paid it back, the simple fact that we didn't want people to think that we were taking advantage of the County, even though, that was not the case. It's been from you name it, she has really just been a nightmare to me and District Four for I don't know whatever reason, cause it was election time and she wanted her friend to

be elected, she didn't get elected. J.C. Henderson did. And not only did her friend lose by, uh, a few votes, she lost by several votes, a few hundred votes. But I don't always get my way and it's, um left up to the people, but I think to request that step down off the boards, especially you know where there is no basis for me to be stepping off any board, so I think this is a legal question that needs to be asked, should I step down and have not commit no crime, not even an ethical crime. It's only Commissioner Schulz.

ELLIS: Were you asking legal to answer, Commissioner?

DOUGLAS: Does that board have a vice-chairman or second in charge?

HENDERSON: Uh, uh (inaudible) vice-chairman. We set up a meeting for this Thursday at our Community Center.

DOUGLAS: I just think it's a little, uh, punitive, is the word I'm looking for to dissolve the whole board. You may remove one, you may remove the chairman. You don't think that's too punitive? I'm talking to, uh...

HENDERSON: (inaudible)

DOUGLAS: ...Commissioner Schulz.

SCHULZ: (inaudible)

DOUGLAS: I would just make a motion to remove, uh, Commissioner Henderson as the chairman and allow maybe the Commission Chairman take the lead and find, uh... You're on the board over there. You know who the members of the board are Mr. Chairman?

ELLIS: I do. I would be willing to help in any way that I can, but I certainly am sympathetic. My own thoughts, I don't understand where the Recreation being included is.

DOUGLAS: Well right now we are on the Nelson Heights board. I would strike the part about dissolving the board out of your motion and leave the rest of it in place.

ELLIS: We had a motion and a second I think, Commissioner Sims. Am I right Commissioner Sims seconded that motion?

DOUGLAS: So would you be willing to...

SCHULZ: I would be willing to remove the part to dissolve.

DOUGLAS: Okay, thank you, thank you, Commissioner Schulz. With that, I have no problem.

HENDERSON: Can I have a legal opinion?

ELLIS: Legal opinion before we go any further would be wise.

CRAIG: I hear what you're saying. I believe the Board does have authority to take actions in this regard. It's within the Board's power.

HENDERSON: Last question, what, what is I been found guilty of, if I've been found guilty of anything?

CRAIG: I think you need to direct those remarks to the person who made the motion.

MADDOX: If I can weigh in for a second. Just listening to the arguments I kind of see things on both sides. There's no question that there's some things in this motion that have been to the heart and J.C.'s passion, Commissioner Henderson's... Sorry. ...passion for a number of years. Um, um, and as time marches on and clarity is provided to some of the questions that are out there right now, um, um I think you can hop back on the saddle in some of those areas. But I think just today, I don't how many open records requests we got in today. I think the citizens are demanding, requiring, need clarity in some areas. And, I'm not saying that's in your area, but some of the things that are out there in the community. Today it allowed me to look back in an email from May the ninth this year and I will share that email with the entire Board, but it talks about the code of ethics and, you know, it did raise some questions to my mind.

HENDERSON: Who is it from? Well then read it.

MADDOX: You can pass those. I would prefer not to, but I guess...

HENDERSON: (inaudible)

MADDOX: I guess, I guess my thought is forgetting that individual, that specific detail. My thought is we, as a Board and our Chairman as leaders of the community, we should be talking about jobs, we should be talking about lowering taxes. The preacher earlier made a strong argument. And that same argument the preacher made about public safety, it popped up during the budget work session. We should be talking about improved public safety. We should be talking about finishing Bear Creek. We should be asking ourselves how in the world do we fix the budget deficiencies that we have, they are significant. What we end the last fiscal year with? What? A deficit of seven hundred and fifty-thousand dollars? We should be educating the citizens with that, so they could know the troubles we're in. Instead, we spent two hours today reading the code of ethics in an email sent by the Chairman. Not sent by me. Uh, so, uh, there were signs out there earlier. They had issues to address and programs to share. Personally, I don't think we did that. I think we have improvements to make. I think they are required.

ELLIS: Commissioner Douglas. Oh, I'm sorry. That might be a rebut... Do you mind if he goes...

HENDERSON: At the end of the day, I want to know if it was privileged information on that email and I want it read in public, since I'm accused in public. Read them out in public.

SMITH: This is only one email and Chairman Ellis had asked for a copy of the code of ethics. And, not only did he receive a copy of the code of ethics, but you did and every other Board member did. And that's all this email is, it's just a copy of the code of ethics. A copy of your code of ethics and that's all. It is, it wasn't a complaint or anything.

ELLIS: I believe Mrs. Schulz made the original request several months ago.

HENDERSON: So the complaint is that Commissioner Henderson, like several other Commissioners, at least we know one of them, the other Commissioners, former Commissioners, had requested a payroll deduction. Which I, um, you correct me if I'm wrong, it was requested by several other people. That the former Chairwoman also authorized a payroll deduction to county employees after it was said that John Middleton said that he told us in an Executive Session, said that he told us that he told Kathy, which was the Chairman then, not to um, uh, issue the check. And, but what it was, John Middleton, he was the former County Manager and the Administrator, and he in return asked myself and Commissioner Ewing and Tim Fleming if we would look at him becoming the County Manager. So only what I'm saying is this at the time when this was supposedly brought up that he wouldn't have said to much to the Chairman, because the Chairman had the power to choose the Executive Assistant and they had the power over him, so, therefore, he wouldn't have not said that. Another thing to make my case, there was no minutes. Where are the minutes? If you're going to accuse me and say that I'm doing wrong, or wrong doing, then where are the minutes that ya'll talk so much about, Commissioner Sims, Commissioner Schulz and others that says that, that shouldn't happen or didn't happen. Are they in the minutes? But it's something we asked in an Executive Session back there. Where are the minutes that said that I had did something ethic, ethical wrong or wrong? Where are the minutes where other Commissioners, that we talked so much about who said that, uh, there shouldn't have been a payroll deduction? I'm asking where are those minutes from the Executive Session? Can you provide those minutes? I requested those minutes. There are no minutes. Are there any minutes, Mrs. Smith?

SMITH: The County Attorney (inaudible)...

HENDERSON: What I'm saying is, I've been set up and accused of something, said we gonna strip your powers and he gonna take this and that and yet, there are no minutes no where. And we are talking about another board. We are not talking about this Board. We're not talking about Commissioner Douglas, not talking about Commissioner Sims. I think maybe Commissioner Schulz maybe... Where are the minutes that states there shouldn't have been no payroll deduction? It's gotta be some kind of evidence that you picked up or gathered to print out that I did something wrong. And there is no minutes, so this is something that this Board is brought up, made a motion up against me when there's nothing that states I did anything wrong. That's all I'm saying. So this is something that's been going on for a long time and it made people just get up and decide they want something to do. But, you know, if I did something ethically wrong, there should have been some minutes. That's all I want to say. And there are none.

ELLIS: Commissioner Douglas, do you have a comment?

DOUGLAS: I did, Mr. Chairman. But, you know, I just want to get this over with and put it behind us. I don't think the people appreciated it. I don't think the member of the Board appreciated it. I think it's just time to resolve it and move on.

SCHULZ: Do I need to restate the motion as corrected?

SMITH: Yes.

SCHULZ: Okay, um, that I move that the Board is taking the following steps to remove Commissioner Henderson from any boards that request any funding from Newton County in the form of appropriation. This includes, but is not limited to, the Recreation Board and the Nelson Heights Community Center. The Nelson Heights Community Center locks

should be re-keyed. All rental fees for the Nelson Heights Community Center should be paid directly to and administered by Newton County. Period. Suspend all work activities, including land acquisitions pertaining to Resolution R050614A, until further notice. This will allow better understanding of the issues related to the Nelson Heights board and allows for better understanding of the overall finances.

ELLIS: If we have a motion and a second... Are there any other discussion? All those in favor raise your right hand. All those opposed? Four to one. Any other business? Citizen comments are next. If you would like to make some comments before the Board, you know Commissioners usually do not address those comments. You'll be given three minutes if you'd like to make a comment, Please line up to my left, so you could be able to make those comments. Please state your name (inaudible)...

WHEELER: My name is Fred Wheeler. I live at 7124 High Lake Terrace in Covington. I've lived in Newton County for seventeen years. During that time, I have attended work sessions and meetings for the Board of Commissioners. But until last month, I had never spoken. Why is that? First, I believe it was the twenty fifty plan and the contiguous relationship of Newton County and The Center are very serious mistakes for our county's future. Secondly, as I mentioned at the last meeting, many of us feel we've been let down by our elected officials. As this thing moves from its perceived need to its creation by outside experts, it passed through a collaborative stage when purportedly our elected officials contributed to the plan that was finally released to the public a couple of months ago. Somewhere during this process, someone should of stood up and said, "Are you crazy, this is wrong headed. And the citizens of Newton County will not stand for it." Well that didn't happen. So a void has been left for the citizens to fill. What I fear is that few or any of our elected officials actually have read the plan. It joins the Tropic of Cancer, DOS Capital and Obama Care; things people discuss, but no one has really read. Whether you have read it or not, you owned it. The website for both the Board of Commissioners and The Center and the message delivered for the information meetings leave the impression that you are sponsors and supporters of the plan. By deferring the plan to the Planning and Zoning people with only the instructions that they over look the twenty and ten acre lot minimums, you have given the implied support to the rest of the plan, including the possibility of requiring nineteen and nine acre lot minimums. There are many details in the plan that should be reconsidered, for example, do we really want to limit homeowners to two colors, you want to require commercial establishments to have three inches of mulch around trees and bushes. Is our county mulch inspector... Thank you very much.

BROOKS: My name is Karen Brooks, 365 Hinton Road, Social Circle, Georgia. In dictionary.com I looked up the word steward. The meaning, a person who manages another's property or person's financial affairs; one who administers anything as an agent of another or others. You are stewards of our tax money. Not only is it the citizens'. We expect you to be good stewards, but to listen to the people on how it is spent. In the last meeting, the Board of Commissioners voted against the wishes of the people to continue funding The Center, which has had ten years to come up with a plan. But wait. Now we're going to continue paying them and have the Planning Commission rewrite and make a plan with no end date for completion. So how long are we going to pay The Center? Just a question. Don't you think the people deserve an answer? In one of my favorite movies, the shop owner says to the store manager, "Cinnamon has no cash value." I think in this case of the relationship with the twenty fifty plan, this statement applies with how the taxpayers are feeling. I'm sorry that a previous Commissioner spent so much time on this project, but I say again after ten years we have no return of the taxpayers' investment regarding time or money. As to continuing the commitment to funding The Center's general operation, our tax dollars should not be paid to support a non-

governmental agency. The brand from The Center has been delivered and sent and reassigned now. Continued use of public funds to fund operations at The Center should cease. If the Center needs funds to operate, it's best left to the private sector, that's where it started. Why does the Board of Commissioners continue to be bad stewards over our tax dollars. We, the people of Newton County, have looked to this Board to stop the insanity and you failed us again. The Board continues to destroy the trust of the people of Newton County. We move from one crisis to another. I wonder if the trust can be restored with this current Board. I've not seen any signs until tonight of the Board trying to restore the trust. I see you all nodding your heads during citizen comments and then voting not to listen to the people that elected you, but yet the people that you believe have power. I would remind you that those in power broker over the minority, not the majority. I challenge you all to try to and rebuild the trust, which I think you made a step to the people of Newton County. Show some gumption and stand up for the people. Stop the insanity that has become norm for this Board. Thank you.

UNKNOWN: (inaudible)...

TAYLOR: Dennis Taylor, 575 Ellington Road. I heard a motion tonight, but you didn't fix the problem. Fixing the problem is simple. Why was that you wrote it down where everybody knew what the policies are, what the rules are. Why did ya'll not just vote tonight and say no more payroll to be paid in front. It's that simple. You still got time to do it. Fix it tonight. I mean it's so simple. And the second part, everybody left this courthouse after the last meeting was slapped in the face. We thought ya'll head us and then he makes the motion that came from somebody else, a long term Commissioner, and ya'll passed it. We thought we were going to have a citizen committee. Maybe not what was getting done, but with real citizens and ya'll shoved it behind a closed door. That's all you did. That's the reason you do not have trust. Put it on paper, vote on it, make it an ordinance that no elected officials can get advances. It's that simple. If ya'll do something else for the other employees that would be different, but elected officials should not get advances. They should be above everybody else and they should know better.

ELLIS: Anyone else from the public? Public comments are closed. We'll start with District One.

DOUGLAS: Mr. Chairman, at this late hour, I would like to amend the agenda. Um, Dennis Taylor was absolutely correct. We have not enclosed the loop. I would like to make a motion that we prohibit any loans, cash advances or, anything of that nature to any elected official, until we can get a, a written policy in place, um, whatever time that maybe.

ELLIS: Are we amending the agenda or are we making a motion?

DOUGLAS: I'm making a motion, Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: I think we need to amend the agenda one more time.

DOUGLAS: Then I'm going to amend the agenda in order to make that motion, Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: Okay, I'll allow it, since it's late in the day. We'll go ahead and let it be that way. So, we have a motion to amend the agenda and to...

DOUGLAS: You want me to say the motion again?

ELLIS: Please do.

DOUGLAS: The motion is we prohibit any cash, pay day, whatever you want to call it, loans, monetary loans, to any public official, until we can get a written policy in place.

ELLIS: We have a motion.

MADDOX: Commissioner Douglas, would you entertain an adjustment to include, that includes anybody, any employee, any county employee? Did you say only county employee?

DOUGLAS: No, I say any elected official.

MADDOX: Can you include any county employee, until basically, that, that reflects the motion that was made two weeks ago privately? Regretfully, it was not, had visibility to the public.

DOUGLAS: The motion and the amended motion then... Jackie, do you think you can keep up with us? The amended motion is that we prohibit any type of pay advances or loans, county money to any county employee or elected official, because this Board is not considered county employees, any elected official, until we can get a policy on paper that we can agree on.

ELLIS: We have a motion and a second. Not only do we amend the agenda, but we went ahead and made a motion as well. Is there any discussion? All in favor? All opposed? It's going to be four to one. Commissioner Sims would you like..

DOUGLAS: Very briefly, I just want to welcome Tom Garrett as our County Manager. I look forward to working with you, Tom, and look forward to helping move us forward and see a lot of positive things out of you and your office. Welcome aboard. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

SCHULZ: Mr. Chairman, I believe that tonight we have begun to take the action of taking collective action in regards to breach of public trust, but we are not finished. To fully restore the public's confidence, that we as a Board are completely transparent, I believe the events related to Commissioner Henderson's previous events be fully investigated. If we have nothing to hide, and I know I have nothing to hide, we should all welcome this investigation.

HENDERSON: Thank you Mr. Chairman. It used to be that we were a group of caring people. I'm not saying that you're a group of people that did anything wrong, just a group of caring people that used to care about one another. The same type of people that... Back when I was growing up, you know, the concept was that it took an entire village just to raise one child. It took an entire village to show they cared. It used to be that, that before you would accuse and convict somebody of a crime, that you would've possibly did just that, ask an opinion or went to a Grand Jury to see what was the outcome. If anything would have been done wrong or maybe ask for an opinion. But, you know, we live in a I guess strange times, where I guess you're guilty en though it's manufactured or you're guilty because you may not agree with the same ideas as some do and, and the way they believe. Or, maybe you're guilty because maybe some say maybe a few more people had, had an opportunity through, probably didn't have an opportunity. But the good news... I got some good news out of all this. The God that I serve is

one that sits up high and looks down on you. And He knows each of us better than we know ourselves. And if He is a just God, same we say then what I'm saying is that it's not for me to punish or condemn or accuse or to give out punishment that eventually each of us will one day get. So the good news is that they crucified Jesus Christ. Glory be to God in the high. Thank you.

ELLIS: Commissioner.

MADDOX: Chairman, just very briefly, tonight we saw a meeting where we had some weighty, heavy issues in front of us. You know, it's unfortunate that we're having this discussion. As I said a few minutes ago, we should be having a discussion about, about our journey forward, about our future, hopefully, our prosperity. You know, there were, if the public, uh, even us, if we truly reflect on what happened tonight, I think there was some pretty strong decisions made here tonight and just want to re-emphasize that and, um, let those actions speak for themselves. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

ELLIS: There was a lot said tonight and I dreaded about addressing some of these things. I'm going to say that it's a tragedy that Mr. Commissioner, Commissioner Henderson has served this county and it's his sixth term and the Recreation Department has been very near and dear. It's one thing to strip him of what he loves and that is Nelson Heights. I'm saddened by both. You know, he got, he got his son in college. He plays basketball. I've never seen him play basketball, but I saw him play football. He scored four touchdowns in one game. I don't remember if he made All Area, All State. I just don't remember. He got a chance to go to Tuskegee Institute. He would be the first in his family to do so. I was the first to go to college. My father's VA benefits allowed me to go. At the last minute, his coach left. I don't know what circumstances were, but he had a chance to go to college and then suddenly at the last minute it was stripped away from him. I think we all know that there's a lot of other kids that have the same issues and they found a way to make it work and their parents had the ability to do that. Maybe they were able to find a loan at the last minute. I don't know many of us that can walk into Newton Federal or a United Bank or what, wherever and get that within a couple of hours situation. His son's got a chance to better himself. I hope he is not under too much pressure after hearing all this and seeing it in the paper. He had a couple hours to make a decision. I think it was in the newspaper, couldn't find John Middleton. Which, there was no policy. I had the clerk look. Went to payroll. Have text messages that show that we checked and some of those loans had been made, they weren't really loans. It was salary. I believe, he already done one. He paid it back. He was a six term Commissioner. So I made a decision in about really thirty minutes, because it took that long just to get that information. I mean he's in college, the loan has been paid back. I don't know the circumstances or how he got it. Others now want to question that. Hindsight's twenty, twenty. So might ask me if I'd do it again, might not be fair. Got the loan within a few days. I believe twelve. I don't remember exactly. I got the bank next door to tell me it's about ninety-seven cents per day interest. Twelve bucks. Kid's in college. I look forward to seeing him when he comes back on his next break and I hope to get a chance to see him play basketball. There's a good chance he'll earn that scholarship back. It'll be done before. He asked again. He got it. Not... He's taken a lot of other stress and strife. And I don't particularly like tonight. Maybe I'm part of the problem. If I am, Commissioners, I'm sorry. I was stripped of some power tonight as well. That's fine. That's the way the Board feels, that's, I'll accept that. A few weeks ago, I came to the conclusion that it was really my questioning in the twenty fifty plan that had so many people upset with me. I didn't do it out loud, but every day I went to The Center and The Chamber. I asked them to please make this pl an something that's palatable to the citizens. And every time I got the same reply, they were not willing to do it. And so I made some political enemies in my first year and a half. Some of

those people probably take the light in what's happened here tonight. I made a lot of mistakes. I'll try to do better. I'll try to work just like this group has said. I know my shoulder will be to the plow tomorrow. We'll try to take the Public Works to new heights, working on all this transportation, trying to get money into Newton County. Maybe my leadership will improve. I sure have made a lot of rigid mistakes. Some of the things that were done tonight, they reckon (inaudible)... Now it's about all I got to say. Do we need an Executive Session? Anything else? This meeting stands adjourned. Let me get a motion.

SCHULZ: I... (END OF RECORDING)