



Bedford County Board of Commissioners Courthouse and Property Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: **Tuesday, January 17, 2023**
Time: Meeting to be held consecutively after Law Enforcement Committee Meeting.
Location: Bedford County Historic Courthouse, 2nd Floor, Community Room

Minutes

Courthouse and Property Committee Members

Commissioner Julie Sanders, Chair
Commissioner Adam Thomas
Commissioner Drew Hooker
Commissioner Troy Thompson
Commissioner Diane Neeley

Call to Order

Prayer

Roll Call

PRESENT

Julie Sanders

Adam Thomas

Drew Hooker

Troy Thompson

Diane Neeley

Minutes Approval:

1. Approval of December 20, 2022 Courthouse & Property Committee minutes.
Motion made by Neeley; Seconded by Hooker (unanimous).

Reports:

2. Codes Report
Codes Director Amy Peterson distributed her report and noted that new permits for 2022 were up slightly from 2021 and that total revenues were also up. She added the department has not seen a slow down and that there is still a steady stream of applicants for permits.
3. Planning/Zoning Report – Enclosed
Director Chris White introduced his deputy, Blake Burleyson, and discussed his responsibilities. One of Mr. Burleyson's responsibilities is mapping and the goal was to put maps on the county webpage so citizens have a visual to make better decisions. Having access to the information is instantly beneficial to realtors, builders and to the average person who is building. This task has been completed and online there is a searchable document available. The next item is flood maps. There are a lot of interactive links on the Planning Department's page that are all in the works at this time.

Commissioner Hooker asked about the six-month moratorium and how it will affect fees collected. Director White said it will affect subdivisions, just not those with five lots or less, which is what the department gets quite often. It shouldn't affect, by much, the amount of collected fees.

4. IT Report

Director Carney addressed what his department had been through with the flooding on Christmas Eve. He was able to remote into the system to check server status and noticed something wasn't right. Drove to the department and found a lot of flooding in the office that was quite extensive. Water got to most of the equipment. The department quickly moved systems to another location and contacted the Fire Chief and Maintenance Director and they came on site and helped. Firefighters helped to move water. Austin Defoe helped on Christmas Eve to move to dry location and they were able to recover 14 of the 15 systems – ISOMS was down. No data was lost as all was backed up. A server was damaged so they went ahead and ordered the system and rebuilt the server when the parts came in. ISOMS was down for 12 days and when it came back on it was right where it was on Christmas Eve. The office is now located in an adjacent vacant office. They are waiting for the insurance. An adjustor showed up and items were declared damaged for insurance. Servers are now running at full capacity. Director Carney said he had felt like the office location was a good fortified one that did not have sprinklers but did not plan for a water break from above.

5. Fire Department Report – Enclosed

Chief Thomas added to the information in his report that as of today they are fully staffed but was up and down this first month and the department is working on policies to help retain staff.

6. E911 Reports – Enclosed

There was no one from E911 present.

7. GIS Report – Enclosed

Director Carney had nothing to add to his report.

Approve Reports: *Motion made by Thompson; Seconded by Hooker (unanimous).*

Other Reports - For Information Only: *None.*

Old Business:

8. County Property Listing

Chair Sanders said she has noted a few things incorrect on the new county property listing and asked fellow members to let her know so that Ronda Clanton can update accordingly, and she would email to the committee. Mayor Graham offered for his office to email the corrected list.

New Business:

Mayor Graham noted the update he had given a few months ago on how best to move forward with the old jail at which time he thought it would have to be salvaged or gutted before it was removed. Since that time, the county has been informed that it can actually bid out for someone to give a dollar amount to haul off or for demolition, but the Commission will have to first declare the property surplus. Motion to send to the Commission to surplus the property made by Thompson. Commissioner Hooker asked if there were any other uses for the property. The Mayor reminded that it had been declared uninhabitable and that the Commission didn't have a real vision to sell the property, but just to get it in the original space for future needs. Commissioner Hooker then asked if there was any idea of the rough costs. Mayor Graham said if the property is declared surplus then bids can be gotten. They can be rejected and nothing has to be done, but that it is most correct to first be declared surplus because the costs are unknown at this time and there is not a lot of funds set aside for this.

Commissioner Thomas from the floor clarified that the old house for jail administration and judicial commissioner were included in the property. The Mayor confirmed this and that this structure was also in dire condition and there is not money appropriated. This does not include the historic rock jail. Director Peterson said it may fall to the county to do an environmental study to be included in the bid. There was consensus the property was deplorable and something needs to be done long term. Motion was seconded by Sanders (unanimous).

Commissioner Thompson noted there have been social media posts regarding trash in lots across the county that is building up and asked if anyone had ideas. Commissioner Yockey said the county has nothing available to help with the issue, but if the County Powers Act were to go through in future, some things could be set up to help. Commissioner Neeley said she didn't think that was where they needed to go on the issue. She related an issue on Fly Road in an desolate

area that people are using as a dumping ground. There is no way to know where the trash came from and people are reaching out on Facebook for help. The dumping increases during holidays when convenience centers are closed. Building supplies, dead animals, furniture etc. are dumped at this location and on Sims Springs Road and others in the county but she added “it is not really a Powers Act problem.”

Mayor Graham asked if these locations are on private property. Commissioner Neeley said there was a wooded area and a swamp on one side. Commissioner Hooker said there was an issue near his home of people discarding tires. Director Chris White said there is not a county property maintenance code and one would have to be adopted to hold property owners accountable. He queried “if you go down this path, how much does it cost? The county doesn’t have skid steers to do property maintenance...there is blighted property all over the county...First we have to have legal jurisdiction...if by law we declare the property has created some sort of danger to the general public, we give 60 to 90 days...we have to hold ourselves accountable for the exact time...we have to do it if they don’t...the only way we can pay ourselves back for that is to put a lien on that...You are talking about a budget for an entire department, pay for lien, pay for dump, pay for attorneys, pay for personnel. It is an endeavor. It is a lot.” Commissioner Hooker said the only person being punished is the person that is being dumped on and “that is going a little far.” Chris White said the only jurisdiction is that of a deputy. Commissioner Hooker asked that the Law Enforcement Committee bring this issue back up with the Sheriff. Commissioner Maddox from the floor asked if there was a clean-up crew from the Sheriff’s Office. Commissioner Neeley has in the past called the highway department and they have picked up. Commissioner Maddox noted that convenience center hours had recently been changed to be more convenient but sees frustration on social media of centers being closed and asked if it was possible to extend hours of operation.

Mayor Graham related for the new commissioners that over \$2million in upgrades were made to convenience centers to handle furniture, etc. by investing in higher-end compactors. The number of units was also increased. Hours were increased for the three busiest centers and it is the administration’s goal to increase them at all centers. Significant improvements have been made. When consumable went up with Covid, that triggered the county to be able to make use of ARP funds. Mayor Graham – “Some wanted us to be able to open on Sunday. We are leaned out. If the Commission thinks we could put some dollars behind it...people throwing stuff on the side of the road wasn’t because they couldn’t dispose of it. We have made a lot of improvements. We want to add a location on 231S. To refresh your memory, the road superintendent does manage this for the mayor, but it is the mayor’s responsibility. We are fortunate that highway superintendents have taken that on so we didn’t have to have the vehicles. It is the most cost efficient way to do this. Most counties have a solid waste department unto itself. It would be costly. The day will come when we need to do that...We are actually open more hours than Rutherford – we did a study, unless it had changed significantly. It is a challenge.”

Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

*Motion to re-elect Julie Sanders as Chair made by Thomas; Seconded by Thompson (unanimous).
Motion to elect Drew Hooker as Vice-Chair made by Thompson; Seconded by Neeley (unanimous).*

Announcements

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Sanders.