

# NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## MINUTES

**Newton County Jury Impaneling Room**  
**Tuesday, August 7, 2001**

**Chairman Aaron Varner, presiding.**

**Present:** Chairman Aaron Varner, Commissioners Mort Ewing, Ronnie Dimsdale, Ester Fleming, J.C. Henderson, Billy Strickland, Administrative Assistant John Middleton, Attorney Scott Cole.

**Also Present:** Cindy Tumlin, Covington News  
Crystal Tatum, Newton Citizen  
Large Group of Citizens

**Call to Order:** Chairman Varner extended welcome and read thought for the day.

**Invocation:** Rev. Jim Moore, Canaan Baptist Church

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Led by Chairman Varner

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES/DATED JULY 17, 2001**

**Motion:** For the adoption of minutes as printed.

**Proposed by:** Commissioner Billy Strickland, District Five

**Second:** Commissioner Ronnie Dimsdale, District One

**Motion Carried**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES/DATED JULY 23, 2001**

**Motion:** Recommend move for approval as printed with correction of page 20, line two , a typographical error: should be “**bad weather**” instead of “**bid weather**”.

**Proposed by:** Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

**Second:** Commissioner Billy Strickland, District Five

**Motion Carried**

### **PROPOSALS, CONTRACTS, RESOLUTIONS**

A. Unfinished Business:  
None

B. New Business

### **PRESENTATION OF INDIGENT DEFENSE CHECK**

Chairman Varner invited Mr. John Strauss of the Public Defenders office to come forward and address the board. Mr. Strauss introduced Mr. Bill Kurtz, of the Georgia Indigent Defense Council to present a \$45,000.00 Grant to the Public Defenders Office. On behalf of the Georgia Indigent defense council, Mr. Kurtz praised the Newton County Public Defenders Office for the outstanding program that has been established.

### **LIBRARY APPOINTMENT – DISTRICT ONE**

Commissioner Ewing, of District One recommended that Mr. Stan Harrison of District One be appointed to fill vacancy.

**Motion:** To recommend the Board's consideration and approval that Mr. Stan Harrison to fill Library Board position for District One.

**Proposed By:** Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

**Second:** Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Four

**Motion Carried**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE TRAINING PROJECT GRANT**

Chairman Varner reviewed the Georgia EPD proposal to provide a grant that will reimburse the County for 100% of Rodney Roberts (Code Enforcement) salary, benefits and expenses, and training materials. EPD would like to use his expertise 50% of the time and provide environmental code enforcement training to other counties that are not having the success rate and program quality that Newton County has demonstrated. This will allow us to fill Rodney's current position (80% EPD Grant Funded), in addition to having Rodney serving Newton County 50% of the time.

**Motion:** Motion to accept the Georgia EPD Environmental Code Enforcement grant.

**Proposed By:** Commissioner Ronnie Dimsdale, District Two

**Second:** Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Four

**Motion Carried**

### **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN NEWTON COUNTY & NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEE**

John Middleton explained the shared position provided through grant funding from USDA for approval of an amendment to the current agreement that runs through the year 2005. The funds for the conservation technical assistance position are one-third Federal, one-third-Newton County and one-third paid by Jasper County the amendment to this agreement is an increase to salary and benefits of \$165.00. This raises the Newton County total to \$9,381.00. It is a budgeted expense for FY2002. This is a County position that provides conservation technical assistance to support the conservation program sponsored by USDA-NRCS in Newton and Jasper County.

**Motion:** Motion to approve as presented.

**Proposed:** Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

**Second:** Commissioner Billy Strickland, District Five

**Motion Carried**

### **ISTEA GRANT**

Chairman Varner reviewed the recent ISTE A project meeting held with City of Covington. The total cost for the project is \$959,192.00, Eighty percent Federal Funded - \$767,354.00 with twenty percent local match - \$95,919.00 each for Newton County and the City of Covington. Through that we would look through In kind services and the sell of street lights. The project will be done in three phases:

Phase 1: Carroll Street to the Square - \$357,340 (Projected Cost)

Phase 2: Floyd street – Ramsey/Library - \$149,712 (Projected Cost)

Phase 3: Remaining Funds/Contingency to be utilized on the Square project as presented.

Discussion of the project details followed, as security, specific work to be performed, accuracy of estimates & contingency allowances were reviewed.

**Motion:** Move for approval of the ISTEPA Project as presented, with Newton County matching funds (In Kind Services or Cash) not to exceed \$95,919.

**Proposed by:** Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

**Second:** Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Four

**Motion Carried**

### **SPEED LIMIT CHANGES - Edwards Road and Brown Bridge Road**

Commissioner Fleming, District Three, discussed concerns regarding the recent increase in Speed Limit on Edwards Road to 55 MPH, and the need to reduce the Speed Limit back to 45 MPH. Both Commissioner Fleming and Sheriff Nichols have spoken with residents of the area about their concerns. The road is used as a “cut through” from Gum Creek Road to Mount Zion Road, which creates even more traffic and potential for traffic safety issues. While this change would not allow the County to operate radar on Edwards Road, it could still make use of the Radar Trailer to monitor speeds and warn drivers of the speed limit. Commissioner Fleming made a Motion to reduce the speed limit on Edwards Road to 45 MPH.

Commissioner Dimsdale, District 2, followed this with a review of similar concerns on Brown Bridge Road, citing previous traffic studies, accident rates, and general safety concerns expressed by residents.

Commissioner Fleming amended his original motion to include the Speed Limit on Brown Bridge Road be set at 45 MPH.

**Motion:** To set the Speed Limit on Edwards Road at 45MPH.

**Proposed by:** Commissioner Fleming, District Three

**Amended Motion:** To set the Speed Limit on Edwards Road at 45 MPH, and set the Speed Limit on Brown Bridge Road at 45 MPH.

**Proposed by:** Commissioner Ester Fleming, District Three

**Second:** Commissioner Ronnie Dimsdale, District Two.

**Motion Carried**

### **FUTURE LAND USE/ NEIGHBORHOOD NODES**

Chairman Varner requested the agenda be amended to allow Randy Vinson to make a presentation on Neighborhood Development Nodes.

**Motion:** To Amend Agenda to include Neighborhood Development Node presentation.

**Proposed:** Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Four

**Second:** Commissioner Ester Fleming, District Three

**Approved:** Unanimous

Randy Vinson distributed preliminary maps demonstrating the concept of “Neighborhood Nodes”. The current land use map designates the development nodes. These are primarily centered around major intersections in the county where heavy development is expected. The Neighborhood Nodes would apply to smaller areas and would encourage pedestrian friendly neighborhood centers in areas where existing subdivisions already exist.

### **STREET LIGHT PETITIONS: NONE**

**ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE: NONE**

**COUNTY CHECKS/APPROVAL:**

**Motion:** To approve county checks as submitted  
**Proposed:** Commissioner J.C. Henderson  
**Second:** Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One  
**Motion Carried**

Citizen Comments (5 Minutes or less)

Executive Session:

Time: 7:50

Chairman Varner entertained a motion to go into executive session for purposes of discussing land acquisition and personnel matters.

**Proposed by:** Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Four  
**Second:** Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One  
**Motion Carried**

**Motion to Adjourn:**

**Time:** 9:05

**Proposed by:** Commissioner Ester Fleming, District Three  
**Second:** Commissioner Billy Strickland  
**Motion Carried**

Respectfully Submitted,

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John Middleton, Acting Clerk

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R. Aaron Varner, Chairman