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**NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
March 20, 2001**

Newton County Executive Office Board Room

Presiding: Chairman Aaron Varner

Present: Chairman Aaron Varner, Commissioners Mort Ewing, Ronnie Dimsdale, Ester Fleming, J.C. Henderson, and Billy Strickland; Attorney Tommy Craig and Clerk Jackie Smith

Newspaper: Cindy Tumlin, Covington News and small group of citizens.

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

Invocation: Commissioner T.M. "Mort" Ewing

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Chairman Varner

Chairman asked the audience to hold their comments until the proper time and assured them they would be addressed and treated with respect.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES DATED March 6, 2001

Motion: To adopt minutes for March 6, 2001 as submitted.

Proposed by: Commissioner Ronnie Dimsdale, District Two

Second: Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

Motion Carried Unanimously

**NEWTON COUNTY PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH BUILDING
BID**

Chairman Varner stated this project was discussed at the work session. He gave a recap of the project stating previously we had requested bids, which came in to high. The board considered RFQ, however with federal dollars being involved make RFQ's ineligible. He said that he and Attorney Craig met last with Commissioner Jim Higdon, DCA and they expressed a desire to see this project move along. They (DCA) allocated \$500,000 towards this project previously.

Commissioner Henderson stated he would like to see it go back out for bid.

Commissioner Fleming stated agrees with Commissioner Henderson and would like to see it go back out for bid. He questioned site work to be done on the project “in-house”. He voiced his concern that by using our Public Works Department to do inkind service on this project, it would tie up the Public Works Department from doing their work elsewhere.

Commissioner Fleming stated there had been lots of discussion on this project and in talking with many people he understood there could be some cost cuts without sacrificing quality. He, too, favored re-bidding process in hopes that we could complete the project in budget, and utilize the expertise of local people in the building area who could help us in drafting what we need to put out for bid.

Motion: Move to re-bid the project.

Proposed by: Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

Second: Commissioner Billy Strickland, District Five

Motion Carried Unanimously

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

No action needed

APPOINTMENT TO WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY FROM DISTRICT FIVE

Commissioner Billy Strickland apprised the board that he had spoken with Johnny Capes regarding his desire to continue to serve on this authority. He stated Mr. Capes has done an excellent job as district five’s representative to this board and duly made motion to reappoint him for a five-year term.

Motion: To re-appoint Johnny Capes to serve on the Water & Sewer Authority for a five-year term. Term will expire March 31, 2006.

Proposed by: Commissioner Billy Strickland, District Five

Second: Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Four

Motion Carried Unanimously

PROJECT NO. 00984 (100) NEWTON COUNTY RIGHT TURN LANE & ACCESS ROADS AT FIRE STATION NO. 14

Chairman Varner apprised the board that there was two bidder and the low bidder was Cummings Grading Company. Cummings Grading Bid was \$187,368.35. When you add in engineering and other fees, the total cost will be \$209,998.89. This project will be divided three ways between the Library, Recreation Commission and the Board of

Commissioners; this comes to approximately \$70,000 each. Program Manger Billy Williams recommendation was to award the project to Cummings Grading. (Letter of recommendation is made a part of these minutes)

Commissioner Henderson asked where NCBOC's \$70,000 was coming from? Chairman stated it would come out of General Funds.

Commissioner Dimsdale asked if the Library Board had funds readily available or we will be, in effect, generating a loan for that amount? Chairman stated we would be generating a loan. There will be document drawn up to that effect per chairman.

Motion: To approve Project No. 00984(100) Newton County, Right Turn Lane & access Roads at Fire Station No. 14 on State Route 212.

Proposed by: Commissioner Ester Fleming, District Three

Second: Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Four

Motion Carried Unanimously

DNR – WILDLIFE DIVISION REQUEST TO PURCHASE GASOLINE FROM NEWTON COUNTY

Chairman Varner stated this request was discussed at the work session and it was the consensus of the board to approve DNR's request. (Letter of request made part of these minutes)

Motion: To approve the purchase of gasoline from Newton County (At Public Works Department) by the Department of Natural Resources for Conservation Ranger who serves Newton County at Large.

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

Second: Commissioner Billy Strickland, District Five

Motion Carried Unanimously

KREINES & KREINES PROPOSAL/TELECOMMUNICATION TOWER/SCOPE OF SERVICES

Chairman stated that the board received a copy of the proposal last week stating giving details of project. He mentioned that Rockdale County voiced interest in coming on board. He also heard from Jasper County who voiced their interest as well. The cost to Newton County is approximately \$74,000, but with getting other counties on board we could defray some of the cost. He stated he also understood some of the cost could be recouped in application fees.

Commissioner Fleming commended Commissioner Dimsdale for bringing this to the surface, but commented that after studying the proposal he felt our planning staff, our

legal staff, this board as well as communications with other counties that are dealing with growth issues like we are, we could accumulate a wealth of knowledge and save this money. He stated it might take time, but felt confident we could do this ourselves.

Commissioner Henderson stated right now we are trying to save money and we have other projects we are going around asking people to help us with financially and feels that if can save money here, we need to.

Commissioner Ewing voiced his concern over time frame. The Moratorium is for 6 months on cell tower applications in an effort to give this board an opportunity to draft some new ordinances to make it possible for us to deal with the cell tower issue. Our concern is whether or not we have the staff expertise and the staff time to meet that deadline. He commented that we needed to have something in place within the six month. He agreed with Commissioners Fleming & Henderson if it could be done in house within the time frame and have staff expertise.

Commissioner Fleming stated he felt we could do it in the time frame of the moratorium.

Commissioner Strickland asked the County Attorney if he thought we had time to do this.

Attorney Tommy Craig stated he really didn't know. He said his office could come up with an ordinance, but wasn't sure about the time.

Commissioner Dimsdale stated he had reviewed several ordinances from other counties and his preference was Bartow County to glean information from and incorporate into the one we will be doing. He stated Kreines & Kreines said they would be doing projections, etc. K&K will produce and layout a master plans for Newton County saying we want telecommunication signals in the county, we want coverage for county. It would provide more control, 3 different ways to bring in signals and the more intrusive to the community would be putting up the high tower. That would not be precluded from the process, but it would be the worst option of the process. We are looking for alternate ays to get the signal out into the community, which can be done in a multitude of ways. This is a benefit that I see is coming from K&K. K&K only represent local governments, which is extremely rare. References came back glowing of the firm. Without taking anything away from staff, he felt staff was not equipped to do this job.

Commissioner Fleming stated he did not have an issue with consultants and if went in-house, he would not have a problem using them from time to time. He said also if we could get some commitment from other counties to reduce the cost it would help.

Commissioner Dimsdale said Rockdale County has expressed an interest and would like to be apart of this, but their hands are tied as far as scheduling goes because their process in authorizing something is different from ours (they have to let out for bid).

Commissioner Ewing had spoken with Jasper County Commissioner who indicated they were interested in getting in on the study, however no figure was discussed. Many of their commissioners attended the seminar held by K& K recently.

Commissioner Henderson stated when talking about spending \$75,000 he sees unfinished projects like Clark Street Park and the Driver's License Building. He said we need \$6000 to renovate the part at Cousins School for Drivers License and can't do that. He said it was sad today to see people standing out in the rain waiting to get their license renewed. Finishing these projects would benefit the community and that's what he sees with \$75,000.

Commissioner Dimsdale stated he felt if we chose not to do this it would be a severe mistake and we would suffer for it in the future.

Commissioner Henderson asked where the funding would come from? Chairman stated funding would come from Professional Services.

Motion: To hire Kreines & Kreines with the understanding that they would be through prior to the end of moratorium so Board of Commissioners can take action on whatever proposal needed.

Proposed by: Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

Second: Commissioner Ronnie Dimsdale, District Two

Motion Failed

For: Commissioners Ewing and Dimsdale

Opposed: Commissioners Fleming, Henderson and Strickland

CLEANING SERVICE CONTRACT

Chairman Varner requested that this item be tabled for further discussion at a work session.

Motion: To table for discussion at work session.

Proposed by: Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

Second: Commissioner Ester Fleming, District Three

Motion Carried Unanimously

RESOLUTION NO. R-03-2001 – FUND ACCOUNT FOR GAITHER PLANTATION

Chairman Varner asked Commissioner Ewing to apprise the board of this resolution.

Commissioner Ewing stated several years ago when the county purchased land for the Bear Creek Reservoir, the Gaither Plantation property was included. Soon afterwards a volunteer committee was named called "The Friend's of Gaither's". There are

approximately twenty-five people who work as volunteers to help carry out the work of Gaither Plantation. The budget has been extremely tight and continues so. We have requested and been fortunate to receive donations, but at the present time we can not even apply to the Newton County Community Foundation because we are not set up to receive tax deductible donations. This resolution will make it possible for individuals, groups, companies, corporations, anybody who made a donation to Gaither Plantation, their donation would be tax deductible. This resolution asks to be given that opportunity and those funds are segregated so that donations can be kept separate from the general fund and used on behalf of the plantation. Any money spent out of that fund will first come before this board for approval.

Chairman Varner stated it is our desire to see Gaither Plantation become self-sustaining and this will help that happen.

Commissioner Strickland stated he felt this is making it easier for people to donate and receive a tax deduction. Board concurred.

Motion: To adopt Resolution No. R-03-2001 Fund Account for Gaither Plantation.

Proposed by: Commissioner Mort Ewing, District One

Second: Commissioner Billy Strickland, District Five

Motion Carried Unanimously

Note: The original resolution is contained in file number R032001, incorporated herein by reference and expressly made a part of these minutes.

ZONINGS: NONE

STREETLIGHTS:

Creekside Manor (off Mills Drive)

Motion: To approve streetlights as submitted.

Proposed by: Commissioner Ester Fleming, District Three

Second: Commissioner J.C. Henderson, District Five

Motion Carried Unanimously

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE LICENSE: NONE

APPROVAL OF COUNTY CHECKS

Motion: To approve county checks as submitted.

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURN:

Being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jackie B. Smith, Clerk

Aaron Varner, Chairman