

**OPERATIONS & PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE MEETING
March 22, 2021
5:30 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Debra Kraft, Chair
Kristen Larner
Pat Dawson

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Bill Oliver
Laura Zimmerman
Grant Noland

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dave Drobisch

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Carol Reed, Auditor
Mary Eaton, Recorder
Josh Tanner, County Clerk
Jessie Smalley, HR
Rocki Wilkerson, Workforce

Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kraft at the Macon County Office Building.

MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes of prior meeting (12/14/2020) made by Ms. Larner, seconded by Ms. Dawson, roll call vote showed the motion carried 5-0. Note: January & February meetings were cancelled due to lack of agenda items.

APPROVAL OF PAYROLL AND CLAIMS (Note – Mr. Oliver is now present telephonically)

Motion to approve payroll as presented made by Ms. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Larner and roll call vote showed the motion carried 6-0.

Motion to approve claims as presented made by Ms. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Larner and roll call vote showed the motion carried 6-0.

REPORTS

Auditor's Office –

Ms. Reed reported that this would probably need to go before Finance & the full Board, but the County has been notified that, as part of the \$1.9 trillion COVID Relief from the Federal Government, that Macon County will get \$20.1 million. Half of it, \$10 million, will come in the next 60 days. We will need to have a plan, figure out how to spend it. It has to be spent by 12/31/2024.

Ms. Kraft said she had been on the ZOOM meeting with UCCI today and they are still waiting for mandates and stipulations as to how it can be spent. We can't just spend it. It will have to be accounted for and answered to. Ms. Reed said that with the amount being so large, we will

probably need to hire someone to manage it for us, such as a consulting firm or someone. She said she has spoken with other Auditors and Finance Managers on ZOOM also and most of them are going to hire a Consulting Firm that does this specifically. From the point that the first half of the money arrives, we will need to have a plan in place. It can be spent for a variety of things, but it will need to be spent correctly.

County Board –

Mr. Tanner addressed the agenda item referring to a discussion in regard to County emails for County Board members.

Mr. Tanner said that all County employees have a County email address, but the board members do not. It is something we can provide. It is up to the board. It does not take a resolution to get the email addresses, but if the County Board wants to require all the members to use the County email address, that is something that will probably be set as a policy and that would probably take a resolution. He said he would speak with the State's Attorney's office about it and how to word that a policy is being set to require the Board Members to use a County provided email. That is up to the board members as to whether they want to require it or want to just make it an option. If it is an option, the email addresses can be ordered and we can just make it happen. But, if the Board is going to require it, then that will take a resolution.

Chair Kraft commented that she has had so many board members say they don't receive emails. A couple of years ago, she said she and Chairman Greenfield had tried to get a group email together, but it just didn't work. The trouble in receiving emails is not just from the County Board office, but also from other board members or constituents. She said she had had a discussion with Mr. Tanner about it a couple of months ago.

Mr. Tanner said the issue they are having is that the emails they are using are not controlled by the County. They may be gmail or yahoo. Most of them are not necessarily personal emails. They are accounts that were created by the Board Member for the purpose of County Board business, but since it is not controlled by the County Board or the County as a whole, we can't do anything with that. If you get a gmail account, we can't help you with that. There is nothing wrong with creating a gmail account for County Board purposes. The State's Attorney's Office has always advocated that personal correspondence be separated from County correspondence because all County correspondence is FOIAble. Ms. Larner asked a question about intermingling County and personal emails. Mr. Tanner said that they definitely do not want to use their personal email address to conduct County business because then, in the event that someone FOIAs it, someone is going to have to look through all the personal emails to determine what is personal and what is not personal. A separate email account is definitely needed for County Board business. It does not have to be provided by the County. That is just an option. Our Technical Support can provide that if the County Board wants that. There is a cost to it of less than \$50 per year per board member. It will eliminate some of the problem that Ms. Kraft spoke about because sometimes gmail gets interpreted as spam, whereas our domain name (co.macon.il.us) has been authenticated. It will go through most email systems because it tracks back to a domain owned by a local

government. You will get less junk mail or less filtered out if you are using that email address. It just hasn't been done because the Board has just never had a Chairman request it be done and the Board, as a whole, has never asked for it.

Ms. Kraft said that just today in the ZOOM meeting, they kept talking about the packet they should have received on Friday that she said she never got.

Mr. Tanner said this is certainly something that can be done, but to do it, there will be an expense, but it is not really that much. He said they are happy to do it, they just need to be told whether you want to do it or not and then the Board, as a whole, needs to decide if they are going to mandate it or just provide and let the Board Members choose to use or not use it.

Ms. Zimmerman commented that she felt it would need to be required after having some conversations with Mr. Baggett where he said he thinks the Board Members may be leaving themselves a little bit open legally because there are rules about County records and things like the FOIA information and things like that. She said, just to be on the safe side, she feels that if they don't want people conducting some business on one email and some other business on another email that may get into the FOIA situation, it would be better to require that this email is to be used and it would simplify the whole thing going forward. Chair Kraft agreed. Ms. Dawson agreed that she felt that there are just too many ways to get into trouble.

Mr. Tanner said that if the committee wants, he could get with the Assistant State's Attorney and get a resolution that can be reviewed at the next O&P committee meeting. Everyone agreed that is what they would like to see happen.

Ms. Dawson commented about a discussion she had had with the Assistant State's Attorney about receiving mail at her residence. Mr. Tanner said he thought it had been brought up that there is a desire to remove from the County website, the address. He said that is not something that requires a resolution. He asked if that is what the members would like to have happen. When it was discussed, there has not been an O&P meeting since. Chair Kraft asked for clarification.

Mr. Tanner explained that on the County website, each member's address is listed. There was a suggestion that while you have to provide a County Board member's address, if it is requested, removing it from the website might require someone to make one more step to do it before you would be sent mail that is of a more threatening nature. Your address will be public information at some point. It is just a matter of how much effort you want someone to have to put forth. Right now, someone could anonymously find your address without any effort whatsoever. If you want those removed from the website, they still will be able to call the County Board office and get your address because it is FOIAble. They can get it from White Pages or Google too. It's just a matter of giving an extra layer that they'll have to put forth a little extra work and effort to do it. They will still have the email and phone number on the website. Mr. Tanner said it could be whatever they want on there. Everything can be removed and just an email left.

Ms. Dawson said a couple of board members had gotten mail at their house that was not very favorable. Mr. Tanner verified that the committee members were asking him to remove the address. Ms. Lerner commented that there has to be some way for people to reach out to them. Ms. Dawson said she felt that if they want to reach out, they should do it via a County email. It was explained that the reason all of the information was put on there was to let people know and be able to more easily identify which board member was in what district. Currently, there is a picture, name, address, phone number and email. They agreed that they did not have an issue with the pictures so people could put a name with a face. Ms. Kraft explained that she receives a lot of phone calls from constituents and municipalities. She said she felt that the phone number and email needed to stay. They agreed that they could understand not wanting the personal home address listed, but felt that the phone number and email address needed to stay public information.

Mr. Tanner verified that the direction is to remove the home address only. Chair Kraft asked for input from the members that had joined via phone. Ms. Zimmerman said she agreed that taking the address off is fine as long as everyone feels safe leaving their phone numbers on there. She said she had had no issues. Mr. Noland agreed saying he had no problem with removing the address but agreed that leaving the picture, phone numbers and a County email address makes the board members more approachable.

Mr. Tanner said he would remove the physical addresses of the board members from the website and would contact the Assistant State's Attorney about drafting a resolution for the next meeting requiring the County emails.

County Clerk –

Mr. Tanner reported that the Primary was held. About 3,300 people voted. The initial cost to the County was \$65,000. The State will reimburse some of that, but it won't come to even half. There was an expense to the County for that. As a side note, there is legislation introduced in this session that would prevent what happened in that particular Primary from happening again, meaning a write in candidate would not be able to trigger a Primary. A Primary would still be triggered if a certain number of candidates filed their petitions on time, but a write in would not trigger it. As that legislation moves forward, Mr. Tanner said he would let them know if it passes. Last time was 10 years ago, so it is not like it happens that often. But, it is still a lot of money.

Early voting has begun. There were about 210 early voters so far for the Consolidated Election. The other downside to having the Primary was that anybody who voted in the Primary was not eligible to early vote until March 12. They had to wait longer than those people who did not vote in the Primary. That is simply for the reason that an election is technically not over until 2 weeks after Election Day which gives time for all of the vote by mail ballots to return. They had to be postmarked on Election Day. The margin of vote by mail ballots out was unlikely to change the winners and losers, but it could have changed the ballot order. So, printing the ballots had to wait until March 12. There were a fair amount of voters on the first day and it has picked up since then.

There are supplies left from November for COVID protocols, so they will be doing the same thing this April.

It is time for the County Board to redistrict itself. He said this morning's UCCI ZOOM meeting covered some of the redistricting process. The County Board will have to decide how many board members they want, how many districts they want, or if they even want districts, if they want to go at-large, if they would like to elect the Chairman at-large or by the board members. There are a number of options that the County Board has to consider. The composition has not been changed in probably at least 30 years, but the option of electing anywhere from 5 to 25 members from districts exists. There are currently 21 members. Everyone could be elected at large. These are some things to think about. It has to be done by July 1, so at the June County Board meeting, you will be voting on how you want to organize yourselves. There is a wrinkle here, this time. Normally, there would be more discussion previously, but you are required, if you elect by districts, to make sure that the population is proportional. The US Census Bureau does not have the numbers and will not have them until September which is long past the day that you have to pass and approve this.

Mr. Tanner said he had been hoping to get something from the UCCI meeting that would explain how you do what you are really not able to do, but there were not really any good answers. Ms. Kraft said she had gotten the feeling, from the same meeting, that they might encourage the elimination of the voting districts for the County Board. Mr. Tanner explained that that would be an easy way to solve the problem. Eliminating the districts eliminates the proportionality problem. Then, just whatever number the Board chooses would be elected at large. That is not always a popular choice. Mr. Tanner said he plans to speak with the State's Attorney's Office. Statutorily, they are required to provide us the numbers by April 1st, but that is not going to happen. Ms. Larner asked if Ms. Kraft felt that the Census Bureau not being able to provide the numbers was what she felt was pushing the possible elimination of the districts at electing them at large. Ms. Kraft explained that it was just the feeling she had gotten. She asked how they would be able to do the districts if they don't have the population numbers for those areas. Our only option is to just leave things as it is. Mr. Tanner said yes, you could leave things as they are although, we know the district populations have probably changed. Eliminating elections by districts is the easiest way to solve the problem, but maybe not the best way. Ms. Kraft said she does not necessarily agree with it, it's just the feeling she got. Mr. Tanner said he will speak with the State's Attorney and get something to the Board because they will need to make a decision, even if it turns out to be to do nothing. By doing nothing, Mr. Tanner clarified, means leaving 7 districts with 3 members each in the same shape they are now. Ms. Dawson said that doing that does not really meet the criteria for the amount of people. Mr. Tanner said that someone could sue, but they would have the problem of saying that it does not meet the criteria, but they need the same information as we do to say that. To prove that it is not proportional, they would have to have the same numbers, but they could sue after the fact. Courts have been leary to get involved in reapportionment. Ms. Zimmerman commented that the State has to make these same decisions too. So, is there a chance they will push that back. They've been talking about doing that at the State level – pushing back the Primary from March to later in the year because of this. So, if the

State is going to push their stuff back, wouldn't they just push this back too? She said she really did not want to be in a situation where they get rid of the districts. She said she felt that would be a really bad idea. That is not something we should be considering. There is preliminary data we can base ours on and then tweak it as the actual data come in too. Mr. Tanner said that is why he wants to get the State's Attorney's office involved too. They will be able to better explain the legal portion. The controlling laws for the federal reapportionment, the state reapportionment and the county reapportionment are different. The federal and state law just requires that they reapportion every 10 years, but does not prescribe that they have to use the Census. It just says it has to be done every 10 years. When it comes to the County level, the law is more specific and says you have to reapportion every 10 years and it defines how you derive at the population equality. It says you have to use the most recent census. So, whether by intent or not, the language that controls how we reapportion is different than the state and the federal. Ms. Zimmerman asked if the state dictates that and sets the law for the county. Mr. Tanner confirmed saying that they could change the law, but that would require them to do it pretty quickly. There have not been any bills introduced and he said he wasn't even sure if it is on their radar.

Mr. Tanner said he would get with the State's Attorney's Office and find out what his advice is. You have a Statutory deadline to meet, but they did not provide the data to meet that deadline. July 1 is the deadline, but you really want to get this done sooner than later. Whether it is June, July or August, none of those days are within the realm of getting the numbers needed to do it. There is also the possibility that because the pandemic is what has caused the delay in getting the numbers, that the Governor could issue an Executive Order allowing you to do certain things. The problem is that the Executive Order would only be for 30 days and he would have to keep reissuing it until you finish what you are doing. Then it would expire after the pandemic is over and then it is unsure how that would affect the reapportionment. There are not a lot of good answers. Hopefully, the State's Attorney will give you some type of advice, but whatever advice he gives you is not going to be definitive. You are just going to have to make a decision as to what you are going to do and then move forward with it and then accept the consequences of that decision. There will definitely not be just one solution to this. Some of it does not apply to some counties because they are commission counties. Other counties already elect at large so it won't affect them either. For us, we are a Township Government and we elect members by district, so we have to deal with it.

Recorder –

Ms. Eaton offered to answer questions about the December, January, & February reports she distributed.

Ms. Dawson asked how everything was going. Ms. Eaton said it is busy. There are lots of people coming in.

Workforce Investments –

Ms. Wilkerson reported that they had a monitoring visit from the Department of Labor last week. The exit interview was held on Tuesday. The process was done virtually. The exit interview was

all questions about things already reviewed. There were lots of questions on the relationship with Crossing, the process with the customers, & relationships with employers. Cook County & Macon County were the two that were selected out of the 5 that were funded throughout the state. Ms. Wilkerson said she felt that they did well, especially considering the pandemic. They should be getting a letter next week. It is a two year (Opioid) grant and at the end of the conversation, the DOL said they were 99.99% sure that we will receive another year extension. That means it will go through June, 2022. The program goal for the 2 years was to have 84 customers that completed detox and all the substance abuse training and into jobs as soon as possible. Currently, there are 46. Ms. Wilkerson said she thought they were going to make it. With everything that shut down throughout the pandemic, that is very positive. At the end of the interview, Decatur was asked to make a presentation to the staff at the Department of Commerce regarding the Opioid Grant.

Crossings Healthcare and Workforce had their first graduation ceremony last week for the Industrial Skills class. That was for all the customers that wanted to get into manufacturing. There were 8 enrolled and 4 to finish and get full time jobs.

Currently, a grant with the Trades is being worked on. It is called the Youth Career Pathways for the pre-apprentice program. They are working with Richland, Level Up and the trades / the unions. The grant has to be submitted by April 1. It is up to \$500,000 and it is to expose the youth age 18 – 24 to all the different trades and what is available in this area. The class would run over 18 months and would start once funding is approved. The goal would be to recruit about 100 people so 40 really good students could be enrolled in the program.

Citizen's Remarks - *no citizens were present. There were no comments submitted via email.*

Old Business - *none*

New Business – *none*

CLOSED SESSION *None needed*

NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 19, 2021

ADJOURNMENT Ms. Lerner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Dawson and the meeting was adjourned by Chair Kraft at 6:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, County Board Office