

Cannon County,
Tennessee
Board of
Commissioners
Legislative Minutes

August 6, 2020

Call to Order - Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Courtroom of the Cannon County Courthouse.

Prayer and Pledge - Prayer was led by Chairman Greg Mitchell, Pledge was led by Commissioner Brent Brandon.

Roll Call - Jeannine Floyd, Russell Reed, Corey Davenport, Karen Ashford, Jim Bush, Greg Mitchell, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon, Ronnie Mahaffey. (All Present)

Approve/Change Agenda - A motion was made by Commissioner Corey Davenport seconded by Commissioner Jeannine Floyd to add Senator Mark Pody and Representative Clark Boyd to address the Commission. Also the motion was to add Finance Director Diane Hickman with comments and bids for the jail. Motion was approved by a voice vote.

Consent Agenda - A motion was made by Commissioner Jeannine Floyd and seconded by Commissioner Corey Davenport to approve both (a) meeting minutes of July 11, 2020 and (b) notary applications of Breeann Hale, Travis Hancock, Cindy Henry, Makayla Hunt, Betty Miller, and Cindy Odle. Motion was approved by a voice vote.

Public Comment - There was no public comment from the audience.

Old Business/Tabled Business - Greg Goff was not present to discuss the email he sent concerning Greenbelt Properties. Commissioner Jeannine Floyd will see if he wants to be added to the September agenda.

Commissioner Greg Mitchell introduced Senator Pody and Representative Boyd. Representative Boyd started off with giving an overview of what the State of Tennessee had planned for the new budget year. Since the tornadoes and Covid-19 hit everything had changed. When the government came back from quarantine, they looked at the April Revenue records and the numbers looked bad, so the governor allowed that money to be delayed until July. He stated that Tennessee is a resilient state and people are shopping and spending their money and that is being reflected in the revenue that we have coming in. Also a \$39.44 billion dollar budget had been approved and some cuts had been implemented in the recurring expenses. He also stated that there would be two tax free weekends in Tennessee this year. One had already occurred in July and the second one will occur in August, with the intent of stimulating the economy. Representative Boyd was involved in passing two pieces of legislation that could possibly affect Cannon County. The first one was a preemptive legislation that states that in the State of

Tennessee you can use whatever fuel you want to heat your home and cook your food. He stated that some states had passed legislation that would outlaw the use of natural gas or propane. This would have had a significant effect on Middle Tennessee Natural Gas. The other legislation deals with Short Term Online Rentals or AirBNB. Any online rental taxes will be collected by the companies and remitted to the state, then the state will send it to the counties and cities that it applies to. This type of revenue will be sent to the Chamber of Commerce. After these points were made, he turned the floor over to Senator Pody. He started out talking about Unfunded Mandates that the Federal Government passes down to the states. They found that this year extra money would be coming to the cities and counties via Covid money. \$100 million dollars to be divided among the cities, and \$100 million to be divided among the counties. There were several strings attached, but the strings have since been cut, and Cannon County should be getting about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars that can be used as the county sees fit. He also stated that our death numbers are far lower than the model predicted when Covid first arrived. Tennessee is one of the best states in the nation to be in. We're doing more testing, being very proactive in what we are doing, and our numbers are improving so much that the federal government has taken us off the map as a hotspot. The next legislation that Senator Pody will be involved in is to give businesses and schools, or anyone, more protection from liability due to Covid. As long as reasonable accommodations have been implemented, there can be no lawsuit if a patron contracted Covid at the business or school. The other legislation he talked about was TeleHealth through Facetime or Zoom. You can have a doctor consultation through this and not fear that you will be exposed to Covid. This is being implemented because the numbers bear out that many Tennesseans did not go to their doctors for other problems for fear of getting Covid and they actually died from these other problems. The third legislation deals with vandalism of statues or monuments during protests. They have a right to a peaceful protest, but if they want a statue or monument moved, they will have to go through proper channels in a systematic and proper way. His next topic was on roads and bridges in the county, mainly about safety. There are two schools that need attention and one of them is being worked on already. Some funds are not available because TDOT did not bring in the amount of revenue they had anticipated but they are still on par to covering all the programs already started. Next it was stated that the Ambulance reimbursement rate will be moved from a TennCare rate to a Medicare rate. At this time he opened up the floor to questions or input from the commissioners. Commissioner Jeannine Floyd asked about putting a signal light on the four-lane highway by Parsley's Market. Senator Pody does not think it will happen anytime soon because the state does not want to do it unless there is overwhelming crash evidence that it is needed and so far the data is not there. Commissioner Jim Bush stated that he had talked with an engineer in Chattanooga that was studying that intersection and that the engineer stated that the county should be concerned about the safety there because the average speed of a vehicle going through that intersection is 70 mph. He also stated that it is in a project stage of engineers looking at it to go forward. Senator Pody stated that was correct but from the information collected so far he would predict that they will come back with stepping up more

law enforcement in that area. That would be a cheaper alternative to putting up a new signal light which will cost \$300,000. The other alternative that has been discussed is closing that intersection and adding a j-turn that would take traffic down farther, then turn and go back the other way. Other j-turns in the state have not significantly slowed traffic but could possibly be safer than what is in place now. He also stated that it was rare for the state to finance a traffic signal in a county. It is generally funded by the county or city that is requesting it. Commissioner Jeannine Floyd brought up mandates from the state that commissioners would like to talk to Senator Pody about. She stated the tire situation, salaries that are mandated to our courthouse employees, but more of concern for her is the checks and balances that she doesn't think the state is doing it's part at the state level. Commissioner Corey Davenport asked for an update on bridges that are scheduled to be worked on. Senator Pody said the Improvements Act that Cannon County has the highest number of bridges that are to be worked on.

Finance Director, Diane Hickman explained to the Commission about the Circuit Court Clerk's Salaries. The current employees received more than the 3% raise that the other Courthouse employees received. Hickman said she had figured the 3% raise on the employees she had at budget time and one of the full time employees quit leaving the 2 full time and 2 part time employees receiving a 5% and 7% raise. She also explained the bids for the Sheriff's food. After comparing apples to apples IWC had the best prices on the foods that are used the most. Commissioner Jeannine Floyd made a motion to go with IWC, Commissioner Corey Davenport seconded the motion. Voting Aye: Jeannine Floyd, Russell Reed, Corey Davenport, Karen Ashford, Jim Bush, Greg Mitchell, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon, Ronnie Mahaffey. Motion Carried by a vote of 9-0.

911 Agreement with Cannon County - Commissioner Ronnie Mahaffey asked 911 Director to come forward and discuss with the Commission the Interlocal Agreement that 911 has with Cannon County. Commissioner Mahaffey said that if there are any changes to the agreement either party would have to give 180 days notice. Roy Sullivan said that if the County decides to withdraw or change the agreement it would require the 180 day notice otherwise it would automatically renew. In the agreement the county pays the salaries of 5 dispatchers and benefits of 2 dispatchers that the salaries are paid by the city. Director Sullivan said that he has worked hard over the years to secure funding so that there was no additional cost to the county. County Government is responsible for dispatch and currently it is consolidated with 911. Commissioner Mahaffey said that he wants checks and balances to make sure nothing is automatically renewed without the approval of the Commission.

Tax Relief Act - Tax Relief is what we are currently under and is no cost to the county. Tax freeze is different, it is for people over the age of 65 for their primary residence with an annual

income of \$31,090 and only applies if there is a tax increase. Commissioner Mahaffey called other counties and summarized what information he was given. Everyone reported a significant increase in the workload in the Property Assessor's Office and Trustee's Office. Norma Knox and Angela Schwartz gave some estimates of how much a tax freeze could cost the county and also an estimate of how much a supplement would cost instead of a tax freeze. With a tax supplement of \$25.00 it would cost the county \$6,875 and with a \$50.00 tax supplement it would cost the county \$13,750 and \$75.00 would be \$20,625. Commissioner Mahaffey commented that the tax freeze would be a safety net for those who need it. Commissioners Jeannine Floyd and Ronnie Mahaffey asked for this to be put on the agenda for the September meeting.

Budget Committee Governors Support Grant Recommendations - Commissioner Karen Ashford explained the items that were recommended by the budget committee. The majority of money is allocated for ADA repairs to bring the county in compliance. Michael Underhill spoke about the fire trucks, one used tanker and two used trucks, that they have been looking at. Commissioner Corey Davenport made a motion to approve number 12 and 13 to be done immediately (the donation to pay off the Rescue Squad note and approve the Fire Prevention) and everything else on the list to be bid out according to the new financial management policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Randy Gannon. Voting Aye: Jeannine Floyd, Russell Reed, Corey Davenport, Karen Ashford, Jim Bush, Greg Mitchell, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon. Voting Nay: Ronnie Mahaffey Motion was approved by a vote of 8-1.

Wheel Tax & Sales Tax Resolution

- a. Sales Tax increase 1 cent from current 8.75 cents up to 9.75 cents
- b. Wheel Tax increase by \$25 from current \$50 up to \$75

Director of Schools Freddie Curtis read the proposed increases that were passed by the Cannon County Board of Education. The Commission wanted more specifics on the dollar amount needed to build a new school. Commissioner Corey Davenport made a motion to rescind the June Commission meeting motion to put the sales tax on the ballot. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Russell Reed. Voting Aye: Jeannine Floyd, Russell Reed, Corey Davenport, Karen Ashford, Jim Bush, Greg Mitchell, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon, Ronnie Mahaffey. Motion was approved by a vote of 9-0.

Chairman Greg Mitchell read the Resolution to put the sales tax increase on the November ballot. Commissioner Corey Davenport made a motion to put this resolution on the ballot for the November election for the citizens of Cannon County to vote on. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Jeannine Floyd. Voting Aye: Jeannine Floyd, Corey Davenport, Karen Ashford, Jim Bush, Greg Mitchell, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon, Ronnie Mahaffey. Voting Nay: Russell Reed. Motion was approved by a vote of 8-1

A motion was made by Commissioner _____ to recess until Monday August 17th at 5:30 p.m.
Motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ Motion was approved by a voice vote.
Meeting recessed at 8:30 p.m.

August 17, 2020

Chairman Pro-Tem Russell Reed called the meeting back into order Monday, August 17, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call- Present: Jeannine Floyd, Russell Reed, Corey Davenport, Jim Bush, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon, Ronnie Mahaffey. Absent: Karen Ashford, Greg Mitchell.

This meeting was to discuss putting on the ballot a wheel tax increase to the voters on November 3, 2020. The School Board wanted to go with sample 2 that states: Shall Resolution No. _____ be approved which increases the local wheel tax in Cannon County from \$50.00 to \$85.00 for each motor driven vehicle owned by the residents of Cannon County, Tennessee and requires the proceeds of the increase to be used for new school construction. For or Against. Commissioner Randy Gannon questioned the wording of the resolution and the existing debt that is still owed. Javin Fann, Chairman of the School Board commented that the lawyers and Mr. Tepley had recommended the verbiage. Commissioner Corey Davenport stated that from what he understood the \$10.00 portion will be used to pay for the roofs and the \$40.00 would increase to \$75.00 and be used to pay off the debt that is owed and after that debt is paid in full it would be used for new construction. Javen Fann confirmed that is what was intended. County Attorney Chris Coats said that he did not think the Commission could change the wording that it would have to be sent back to the School Board for their approval and then voted on by the Commission. Mr. Coats said that the School Board would have to call an emergency meeting and then the Commission would have to approve it. Commissioner Ronnie Mahaffey said that our education system is not performing at a level that it needs to and consolidation is the only direction that we need to go. Commissioner Jim Bush recommended that they change the wording and vote that if it is approved by the School Board it goes on to the Election Commission. Mr. Curtis gave the numbers that the Commission had requested on the cost of a new school. The architect that the school has used in the past is currently building a school in Knox County for \$175 per sq foot. Mr. Curtis said that would be a bargain at 21 million dollars. The State Fire Marshal is talking about requiring a space large enough to house all students and employees to withstand a tornado. This could increase the cost upwards to \$200 per sq foot. Neal Applebalm Deputy Director of Finance has also been calculating numbers and at \$200 per sq. ft. with all exterior ground work and furniture and refurbishing Woodbury Grammar to become a Middle and refurbishing the High School would be an estimated 25 million dollars. Commissioner Corey Davenport made a motion to amend to read Shall Resolution No.

_____ be approved which increases the local wheel tax in Cannon County from \$50.00 to \$85.00 for each motor driven vehicle owned by the residents of Cannon County, Tennessee and requires the proceeds of the increase to be used for new schools construction after the existing school debt is paid and shall sunset when the new schools debt is retired. There was much discussion and suggestions for how the resolution should be worded. Commissioner Corey Davenport made the motion to amend to read Shall Resolution No. _____ be approved which increases the local wheel tax in Cannon County from \$50.00 to \$85.00 for each motor driven vehicle owned by the residents of Cannon County, Tennessee and requires the proceeds of the tax to be used for a new school construction and renovation of two existing schools and shall sunset when debt is paid off. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brent Brandon. Voting Aye: Jeannine Floyd, Russell Reed, Corey Davenport, Jim Bush, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon, Ronnie Mahaffey. Motion passed by a vote of 7-0

Commissioner Corey Davenport made a motion to put this amended Resolution on the November 3, 2020 election for the citizens of Cannon County to vote on pending the approval of the school board at an emergency meeting. There was a second by Commissioner Randy Gannon. Voting Aye: Jeannine Floyd, Corey Davenport, Jim Bush, Brent Brandon, Randy Gannon, Ronnie Mahaffey. Voting Nay: Russell Reed Motion passed by a vote of 6-1.

Commissioner Randy Gannon made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Jim Bush everyone signified by standing and meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.