

County Meeting
March 9, 2023, 6:00pm
Minutes
Union County Courthouse

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Lamar Paris at 6:00 pm. The Commissioner welcomed everyone to the meeting. The invocation was then given by David Dyer, Fire Chief/EMA Director and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Bill Walker. The minutes from the February 16, 2023 County Meeting were approved as presented and attendees were provided copies.

The first item on the agenda was a proclamation recognizing the Union County Recreation Department's 12U All Star Girls Basketball Team who are the new State Champions. They brought home the State Championship on March 4, 2023. This was the first State Championship won in this age bracket for these ladies and everyone is proud of all their hard work and dedication. Commissioner Paris then read the proclamation as follows:

WHEREAS, On Saturday, March 4th the Union County Recreation Department's 12 and under girls' basketball team brought home the State Championship during the Georgia Recreation and Park Association Class C State Basketball Tournament; and

WHEREAS, The team was made up of ten young ladies, who practiced every day of the week leading up to the tournament and took their practices to the next level by participating in practice games with the 6th Grade Boys All Star Team and the 7th Grade Girls All Star Team; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the State Tournament the 12 and under girls' basketball team dominated at the Mountain Athletics Conference, winning against Gilmer County by 34 points and they followed that by placing first in the District Tournament winning against White County by 22 points; and

WHEREAS, All the dedication, hard work and determination put forth by these young ladies paid off as they went into the State Tournament undefeated; and

WHEREAS, The first game of the State Tournament had Union County up against Gilmer with the Lady Panthers winning with a final score of 62 – 23 and then dominating over Manchester with a 52 - 5 victory; and

WHEREAS, The next game in the tournament was played equally as well as the first two games, with the Lady Panthers winning the next game with another victory against Fitzgerald in the closest game of their entire season, ending with a final score of 48 - 32; and

WHEREAS, The Union County Lady Panthers won the final game of the State Tournament playing against White County and winning with a final score of 58 – 36; and

WHEREAS, This team has given their all this season and they are proof that practice makes perfect while showing all of us that hard work and dedication really can pay off.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Lamar Paris, Commissioner of Union County, congratulate and recognize the Lady Panthers 12 and under girls' basketball team on their blowout season which resulted in the State Championship win and would like for all citizens to recognize and congratulate these talented and dedicated young ladies for their hard work bringing the State Championship home to Union County.

The Coach for the team said they had so much fun this season and the girls are so special. The Recreation Department is great, and she appreciated the support of the community. She also thanked the parents for their involvement and getting the kids where they needed to be on time.

Commissioner Paris proclaimed February 17, 2023 as Arbor Day. A tree was planted in the new park in the city to commemorate the 51st Anniversary of Arbor Day and the 29th year in Union County. This is all in cooperation with the Georgia Forestry Commission, City of Blairsville, Blairsville Garden Club, and the Union County Commissioner's Office.

This was a joint proclamation between Union County and the City of Blairsville and referred to as the Community Champions Initiative. Commissioner Paris then read the proclamation as follows:

We are at a point in our nation's history that makes it vital for people at the local level to come together to provide young people with career opportunities, life skill coaching and mentorship that lead to thriving families with exciting futures. As elected leaders, we understand the importance of involving every sector of our community in this effort. The Community Champions Initiative is a partnership that includes elected leaders, education leaders, business leader, faith leaders and community leaders that help guide our youth toward well compensated employment that provides opportunities for both career and educational advancement. It is important that we as elected leaders provide both a process and platform to bring all partners together to help move our youth in the direction of being well trained and motivated employees. The successful implementation of this effort will create a true "climate of success" that will bring the type of prosperity that benefits our long-term residents and benefits our community in the future. We as elected representatives will lead, endorse, and support the Community Champions Initiative that unites all sectors of our community together in an effort that will bring hope and opportunity, wealth creation, and asset building for our youth and families. This Proclamation was signed on the courthouse steps on March 1, 2023 (correction: March 7, 2023) with local leaders and The Beatty Team and the Chamber of Commerce who are working diligently on this initiative.

The Commissioner approved the Notice of Award of contract dated March 9, 2023 for paving through the Georgia Department of Transportation's Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) to Colwell Construction Company, Inc. in the amount of \$1,820,729.38 for the 2023 LMIG roads and \$275,539.35 for Cleveland Street, which were the lowest bids on the two projects. The cost for Cleveland Street paving will be reimbursed to Union County by the City of Blairsville. Union County received two other bids for this year's LMIG paving. C.W. Matthews bid was \$2,146,111.05 for LMIG roads and \$365,249.54 for Cleveland Street, Colditz bid was \$1,852,736.88 for LMIG roads and \$316,708.20 for Cleveland Street. The roads that will be paved this summer include:

Trackrock Gap Road

0.88 miles

Spiva Bridge Way

0.487 miles/Entire Rd.

Big Sky Road

0.963 miles/Entire Rd.

Owltown Road
0.689 miles
Poteete Creek Road
1.00 mile/Entire Road
Loving Road
1.40 miles
Ivy Log Road
1.066 miles
Tomahawk Trail
0.875 miles/Entire Rd.
Moccasin Road
1.136 miles

Commissioner Paris said that roads are critical for public safety. In order to be able to receive our part of LMIG state money this year, a total of \$ 777,561.99 from the State of Georgia, Union County will be spending \$1,043,167 from SPLOST sales tax funds as a match.

Commissioner Paris accepted an agreement between Geo-Hydro Engineers, Inc. and Union County for construction materials testing and special inspection services for the Union County Elections Building. This agreement has an effective date of February 13, 2023 and the cost shall not exceed \$21,590.00. These services are referred to as third party testing and the agreement is for any services that are needed on this project based on their estimated costs, which include things like concrete, foundation, reinforcing steel, structural wood, masonry and pavement testing that are needed during construction.

The Commissioner adopted the Union County Short-term Rental Ordinance. This ordinance will go into effect on April 8, 2023. The 1st Reading of this ordinance was held on November 17, 2022, a Public Hearing was held on December 5, 2022, an additional Public Hearing on February 9, 2023, and the 2nd Reading was held on February 16, 2023.

Commissioner Paris thanked the Short-Term Rental Committee and stated they did a great job. They worked days and weeks on this ordinance. The Commissioner stated that while he was aware that everyone does not agree with all parts of the ordinance, the committee has carefully listened to many comments and have made the final decision to adopt this ordinance. If problems are found in the future, the ordinance can be amended if necessary.

Commissioner Paris adopted Resolution R-2023-07 to set the Short-Term Rental License Fee Schedule. This is a very simple fee schedule, which sets the fee for a business license for a short-term rental at \$150.00 per year. This fee used to be \$10 for the initial license and there was no renewal required. This renewal requirement will allow Union County to keep up with those who are renting. Someone will have to be hired to handle all of the new rental requirements.

Commissioner Paris stated that this constitutes as the 2nd Reading of the revised Union County Ordinance related to Chapter 44, Land Use. Atty William Mercer was present to go over the most recent revisions to this ordinance.

Mr. Mercer then went over the revisions to this ordinance. There was a public hearing and a couple more changes have been made since then. The changes are summarized as follows: Section 44-34 where it used to be a, b, and c. It is now a, b, c, and d. It was separated out for easier understanding. There is a restriction that has always been there and depending on how much land you can have multiple of these dwellings. Section 44-35, changes were made to add shipping container homes, tree houses and silo houses to be included. A definition was also added for a garage apartment. The definition of tiny homes was changed. It was eight sentences and was changed to: Tiny home means a dwelling unit that is 400 square feet or less in floor area excluding lofts. Section 44-112(c)(1), dealing with parks the word deeded was added since some of these structures were deeded instead of titled. The entire Section 44-117 was added. The 2009 Resolution was added to be included in the Ordinance so everyone knows where it is and has access to it. These were the only changes and Mr. Mercer asked for questions. There were none.

The 1st Reading of the revisions Chapter 18, Section 18-105. If you came to the Public Hearing on Land Use. There has always been a variance board in Chapter 18. It was suggested to add all the things the building department does to be heard by this board. So that is what is being done. The Construction Board of Adjustment and Appeals will now hear variances for Chapter 18, 44, 46, 62 and 78. In the current ordinance the board would be comprised of seven members and two alternates. That is being reduced to five board members and two alternates. Some redundant wording was deleted, and cell phone tower variances were added to being heard by this board. These were the only changes. There will be a Public Hearing scheduled in the future.

Commissioner Paris adopted Resolution R-2023-08 to appoint Andrew Burks to the Board of Directors of the Union County Development Authority for the term of March 9, 2023 to March 5, 2024. This appointment will fill a vacant seat on the Board of Directors. The Development Authority made the recommendation for this board appointment.

The Commissioner adopted Resolution R-2023-09 to extend the moratorium on any proposed crypto mining sites here in Union County. The Moratorium was adopted on September 15, 2022 for 180 days and today is day 176. This moratorium is for 180 days, but the county is hoping to have a first draft available for a first reading in the next couple of months. As far as the Commissioner and staff are aware, no one has contacted them regarding starting one of these sites.

A nice lady has asked that the county do better in letting the public know better when things are going on. Commissioner Paris stated that the county is working on the sound system in this court room. He has nothing to do with the sound system, as that is the courts. If anyone ever has questions or needs clarification on anything, please contact the Commissioner's Office. A Request for Proposal was put out for a rescue vehicle for the fire department, and those proposals are due back by April 5th. That will be purchased with existing SPLOST funds. Chief Dyer had left and was unavailable for comment. The 2023 LMIG paving was awarded tonight to Colwell Construction and that paving should begin sometime in April. Work on the elections facility is starting now, and that facility should be complete by the end of December. The Gun Range project started about three weeks ago and the clearing of the trees has been completed. Fire Station 13 on the Murphy Highway is on the hill on the left before you cross Ivy Log Creek. The

single gym project, next to the new elections facility, should go out to bid in 30 to 60 days. The roundabout project at the Hospital is nearing the final design phase. They are still waiting for information from city water and sewer staff. This project should be going out to bid this summer.

The funding for these projects is coming from the following:

Rescue truck: SPLOST,

LMIG paving: GDOT grant and SPLOST

Elections Facility: SPLOST

Gun Range: DNR 90% grant and general fund match of 10% plus any additions required.

Fire Station 13: ARP funds

Single gym next to the elections facility: SPLOST

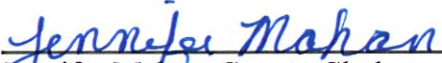
Roundabout: GTIB (Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank) / SRTA (State Road and Tollway Authority) grant and SPLOST funds as match.

All funds are in the bank and the county will again have no debt when these projects are all completed.

Windstream will be holding a Public Meeting on where their Broadband expansion will be taking place in the county. The county has no information on that currently.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:



Jennifer Mahan, County Clerk

Approved this 20th day of April, 2023



Lamar Paris, Commissioner