

County Meeting
July 20, 2023, 6:00pm
Minutes
Union County Courthouse

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Lamar Paris at 6:01 pm. The Commissioner welcomed everyone to the meeting. The invocation was then given by Elizabeth Stevens and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Bill Walker. The minutes from the June 15, 2023 County Meeting were approved as presented. Attendees were provided with copies of the minutes.

Commissioner Paris appointed Jordan Rogers to the Union County Library Board for a three-year term beginning on July 1, 2023 and ending on June 30, 2026.

The Commissioner appointed Rhonda Colwell to the Union County Library Board for a three-year term beginning on July 1, 2023 and ending on June 30, 2026. Commissioner Paris announced that there is a new Regional Library Director and a new Director for local library here in Union County. He stated he hopes they do well and get adjusted to new guidelines and regulations.

Attendees were provided as part of the agenda, a list of Business Licenses issued in Union County from June 12, 2023 to July 16, 2023 for the purpose of operating a Short-term Rental within Union County. Commissioner Paris approved all Business Licenses contained on the list provided and the list will be made a part of the minutes. The Commissioner then provided attendees with a few interesting facts regarding Short-term Rentals. There was a total of 46 licenses issued within the last month. The current number of STR licenses issued is 451, with several applications pending. The number of STRs in Union County was up 1.6% within the last 30 days. As of the date of the meeting there were 508 STR properties that were identified, and the Short-term Rental Enforcement Office has been working to track down the properties that are operating without a license. The average daily rate for a STR in Union County is \$311.61 per night. No matter what is done, there is always someone out there that will try and operate without a license. Short-term Rental Enforcement is watching online for rental units operating without a license, and if they are not licensed in accordance with the new ordinance enforcement will make sure they get licensed. This is to make it fair for all short-term rental owners and operators.

Commissioner Paris accepted an Accountability Courts Grant for Adult Felony Drug Courts in the amount of \$246,583.00. The grant period is from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

The Commissioner accepted an Accountability Courts Grant for Juvenile Justice Incentive in the amount of \$152,082.00. The grant period is from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

Commissioner Paris then announced that due to scheduling conflicts, the County Meeting scheduled for August 17, 2023 was rescheduled to August 22, 2023 at 6:00 pm in the Union County Courthouse.

Cindy Vandereedt requested to be placed on the agenda to speak regarding the 1st Amendment right to petition the government for redress of grievances. Commissioner Paris called on Ms. Vandereedt and reminded her that she had three minutes. Her comments are as follows:

I wanted to speak on citizen's rights. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United State of America reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people

to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” So, by now, everyone knows there is a petition circulating to give the citizens of Union County a voice and a choice whether they want to continue with a Sole Commissioner form of government or move to a Board of Commissioners. The petition allows the citizens the opportunity to choose what form of government they want. The government is supposed to work for and serve “We the People.” We have gone to several different locations to meet with citizens to get their signatures and what I am about to describe next is quite troubling. We have been harassed by some employees that work for the county and our elected officials in our local government. The people I am referring to have tried to intimidate and threaten us by being rude and disrespectful. I won’t repeat the profanity and ugliness being used but I will give a couple of examples: “Why don’t you get the f--- out of here.” “Why don’t you go back to where you came from” and one was “You are going to look good in cuffs because I am going to call the sheriff.” That comment was by a county employee whose salary we pay. There have also been some citizens who seem to think that unless you were born and raised in Union County you should not have a voice. All citizens who reside in Union County and pay taxes and are law-abiding citizens should and do have a voice in what happens in the county. I would like everyone to think about our God-given rights and what our First Amendment right says. I don’t care if you are a Republican, a Democrat, Libertarian, an Independent, it doesn’t really matter. This should bother everyone when people want to take away our freedoms. And last is, whether you agree or disagree with the petition, I would like everyone to remember our men and women who fought for the rights and freedoms we have today. So, we are losing our respect and dignity for one another. Let’s be respectful of each other’s rights. If we lose our rights, we have nothing left as a county. And I would just like to add real quick that um, I would like, really if maybe you guys could talk to county employees. And ask them to be respectful to the citizens of this county. I know that a lot of them do not like what we are doing, but as I just stated we have the right to do it. And the people in the county have a right and a voice to say whether they want it or they don’t.

Commissioner Paris responded to Ms. Vandereedt’s comments as follows: If you will provide us with a list of employees, employee names or where the incidents happened. We hear a lot of stories that are just the opposite. It is easy to get up and say this happened and that happened there. In our office, we are keeping a list of all the people that have complained about being harassed. I am not sure who is doing what but, in any case, if you have names and places and employees, we would like to have that. Our employees are not supposed to be rude, unless you are rude to them, then they will probably get a little stern. Our biggest concern is being at the transfer station, but we won’t get into that.

The Commissioner had a few brief comments on Fire Station 13. The new Fire Station is about 80% complete. It is going to be a very nice facility that will be a real asset to the county. There are 275 to 300 homes in that part of the county that the insurance for their homes will automatically decrease because this will bring them within five miles of a fire station. It will also allow emergency personnel to reach these residents quicker.

Commissioner Paris also gave a brief update on the construction of the voting building on the Gooch Bypass next to the new double gym, or Sports Complex. They are hoping this facility will be complete by October or November of this year. Adjacent to the voting building a single gym will be constructed that will be multi-use but will be used as the actual place to vote during an election. The voting building will house the Voter Registration offices along with the Board of Elections offices. This is consolidating all election related offices into this one facility. This new facility is also providing security for the equipment, but at the same time it is providing access for the public to see what is going on during an election. Commissioner Paris stated that the last thing anyone wants is for the public to be able to come back and say there is something fishy going on.

The final thing Commissioner Paris wanted to make everyone aware of was the increase in operating costs to the county. The county had to purchase a new long arm mower for the Road Department. One mower was giving them a lot of trouble so a new one had to be purchased. The Commissioner stated that about two years ago when the county bought a new long arm mower it was in the range of \$120,000 to \$125,000. This year, with a state contract, which is the lowest possible price, the cost for this new long arm mower was \$195,000. The cost of everything is going up and the county is hopeful everything will stabilize soon. Commissioner Paris acknowledged that citizens should have received their property tax notices and he realizes a lot of people panic when they get these notices, especially since the notice says what the estimated taxes are going to be. This notice always shows a lot more than what the actual tax bill will be, but unfortunately, the bills will not be sent out until September. The Commissioner explained that it is and always has been the goal of the county to lower the millage rate to try and keep property owners' taxes very close to what they currently are. The State of Georgia requires reassessments and if property values did not rapidly change this would not be necessary. Commissioner Paris was talking with another county commissioner and that commissioner stated this was their third year of their county's assessments going up and people were furious. It is not the fault of county commissioners; the state requires it. If counties do not do reassessments, they can be penalized, or the school can be penalized. The Commissioner reiterated that the goal is to keep taxes as low as possible and he knows that we have one of the lowest millage rates in the State of Georgia already. The county is trying to keep the taxes as low as possible, all while knowing there are extra expenses like the long arm mower. A new asphalt spreader and a new dump truck are also needed. Another goal of Union County is to keep the roads in good condition and safe. The roads have to be made safe for the public, so the county has to spend what is necessary to make that happen. The county has been waiting for six weeks for a tar truck to do surface treatment paving and the price of gravel and asphalt keeps going up.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:


Jennifer Mahan, County Clerk

Approved this 22nd day of August, 2023


Lamar Paris, Commissioner



Union County Short-term Rental Licenses Issued
June 12, 2023 – July 16, 2023

Chelsea & Clay Collins
62 Piney Point Lndg.
Blairsville, GA 30512

626 GROUP LLC
1388 Highland Trace
Blairsville, GA 30512

ALEXANDER RICHARD & MAXINE TRUST
571 Happy Hollow Cir
Suches, GA 30572

Benjamin and Kristin Carrington
160 Hicks Trail
Blairsville, GA 30512

BLASE CLIFTON GEORGE & CATHERINE
78 Bells Hollow
Blairsville, GA 30512

BROWN MEGAN E & TROY A
505 PAT COLWELL RD
BLAIRSVILLE, GA 30512

CALDWELL MARCUS E
437 Sheepstomp
Blairsville, GA 30512

CARATTI SPENCER W & KATHERINE
61 Poplar Ridge Drive
Blairsville, GA 30512

CARR NANCY E TRUST
184 Madison Avenue
Blairsville, GA 30512

Christine CuvIELlo and Stephanie Bradford
87 Largen Road
Blairsville, GA 30512

CITRIN GEORGIA LEE S (TRUST)
688 Collins Lane
Blairsville, GA 30512

CRUZ FELIX L MERCED & SUZANNE MERCED
46 JACQUELENE LN
BLAIRSVILLE, GA 30512

CVILLE LLC
87 Vernoy Spur
Blairsville, GA 30512

David Taube
111 S. Wilson Mountain Rd.
Blairsville, GA 30512

EDGAR CHARLES REID & DAVID
79 Laurel Lane
Blairsville, GA 30512

**EQUITY TRUST COMPANY CUSTODIAN FBO BILLY J SR
& LISA TOUPS**
443 Trailwood Dr
Blairsville, GA 30512

GESSMANN DONALD P & AMY C
239 Skeenah Springs Rd
Blairsville, GA 30512

GRIFFIN TIM
564 Sunny View Dr
Blairsville, GA 30512

HEIER KURT ALLEN & KATHRYN ELIZABETH
50 Sullivan Trail
Blairsville, GA 30512

HUNTER WILSON KEITH & JANE H
219 Moccasin Road
Blairsville, GA 30512

JOHNS APRIL ANN
54 Lake Dr.
Blairsville, GA 30512

Michael Kircher
15 Salmon Rd
Blairsville, GA 30512

LESTER JAMES M & SANDRA K

166 Silver Maple Drive
Blairsville, GA 30512

MARSH ROBERT & DIANA

689 Woodland Dr
Blairsville, GA 30512

MARTORANO JASON & ROSALIND RACHAEL

11 Copper Dr
Blairsville, GA 30512

Michael and Christina Brooks

172 Shady Trail
Blairsville, GA 30512

MODRIC SUNSHINE

206 Stennes Gap Rd
Blairsville, GA 33467

NANCY E CARR LIVING TRUST NANCY E CARR TRUSTEE

15 Marie Lane
Blairsville, GA 30512

Natallia Prudnikava

64 Pilot Vista Dr
Suches, GA 30572

NOAHS ARK ENTERPRISES INC

734 canaan valley rd
suches, GA 30572

NOTTELY PROPERTIES LLC

460 Spiva Cove Rd
Blairsville, GA 30512

ONE THE TWO LLC

19 This Way
Young Harris, GA 30582

PADOLL GEORGE E & PATRICIA

36 Amy Lynn Dr
Blairsville, GA 30512

PARKER HOLDING GROUP, LLC

360 P N Watkins Road
Blairsville, GA 30512

PAYNE JACOB E & LAUREN SUSANNAH

240 J England Road
Blairsville, GA 30512

PEREDO LAURA & MICHAEL

226 Viewpoint Lane
Blairsville, GA 30512

PLISZKA PAWEL & RENATA CICHOCKA

369 Luther Cain Dr
Suches, GA 30572

QUICK SARA & MARCUS LENNON

391 Choestoe Lane
Blairsville, GA 30512

R & S APPALACHIAN VACATIONS LLC

421 Paradise Road
Blairsville, GA 30512

REID JEFFREY P & GENIA C

396 Shope Road
Blairsville, GA 30512

SONEN MICHAEL & BETTINA L

1193 Booger Hollow
Blairsville, GA 30512

**SUTTON ROGER ALAN & JILL E ELBERT E & ELLEN S
SEIGNEMARTIN**

106 Highland Forge West
Blairsville, GA 30512

TOMLIN CHAD ALAN & NEALA

98 rainbow dr
Blairsville, GA 30512

WILLIAMS DEREK S

200 Firefly Meadows Dr
Blairsville, GA 30512

WILSON ROBIN & JAMES B CHRISTIANSEN

113 Lakeside Drive
Blairsville, GA 30512

Xia Zhu

167 Luther Cain Drive
Suches, GA 30572