

County Meeting
August 20, 2020 6:00pm
Minutes
Union County Courthouse

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Lamar Paris at 6:00 pm.

The invocation was given by Jack McKechnie and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Bill Walker. The Minutes from the July 16, 2020 County Meeting were approved as presented.

Commissioner Paris asked David Cook with Sons of the American Revolution to come to the front for the presenting of a Proclamation. The Commissioner then proclaimed September 17th through September 23rd, 2020 as Constitution Week with Thursday, September 17th, being Constitution Day. On this day in 1787 the U.S. Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution of the United States of America. With this Proclamation, the county is giving official recognition to this document and the anniversary of its signing. All citizens are asked to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberty. David Cook accepted the Proclamation.

The Commissioner then stated that in 2010 when the alcohol referendum was passed, he made the commitment to set aside up to \$50,000 each year from alcohol license fees and tax receipts to put back into the community for the purpose of helping to combat the alcohol and drug abuse problems that already existed in Union County.

Roughly half of these funds are distributed each year in the form of local grants for which qualified organizations can apply. A completely independent, committee reviews the applications and awards the grants. The committee has done an excellent job and the Commissioner commended them highly for the time they spent selecting recipients. These committee members wish to remain anonymous. Commissioner Paris had no input into which organizations received the grants nor how much they received. This year, five organizations applied for a grant and four were awarded funding. Representatives were present from each organization to receive their grant awards. The Commissioner then awarded Substance Abuse Grants for the following local organizations.

Change in our World, Inc. – \$5,000
Rebecca Brendle

Freedom Ministries - \$5,000
Boo Spiva

New Hope Counseling - \$5,000
Troy Beaver

Union County Family Connection – \$5,000
Katy Jones

The Commissioner then stated there were two speakers on the Agenda, and he reminded them to limit their remarks to five minutes.

The first speaker was Carol Lively with the Lake Nottely Improvement Association to discuss water quality in Union County. This is a summary of Mrs. Lively's comments. Mrs. Lively stated a small group of people were making decisions that could affect the entire community with regards to the City of Blairsville Wastewater Treatment Plant accepting and processing leachate water. Her research included an article showing that leachate water contains some harmful chemicals including PFAS, which never fully breaks down. They are referred to as forever chemicals. Wastewater treatment facilities cannot fully treat leachate water to remove these chemicals. Lake Nottely Improvement Association appreciates all that Mountain True has done to protect the local waters but they only test minimal contaminants. It was suggested in a recent radio show that these forever chemicals would not show problems in many years and Mrs. Lively is not concerned for what will happen to the lake in her lifetime, she is concerned about the health and safety of the lake for everyone's children and grandchildren. Mrs. Lively said Commissioner Paris as a leader should tell the City of Blairsville no to process leachate water. Her research says it is not good no matter what people are telling Commissioner Paris. Many other wastewater treatment plants are refusing to take leachate to process so why are we taking it? She closed stating that we needed to keep leachate out of our lake and our drinking water. She then asked the Commissioner to help them.

Tim Pollock spoke regarding water quality and the increase in the permit application of the City of Blairsville Wastewater Treatment Plant to increase their permit from 400,000 gallons to 1,000,000 gallons of wastewater per day. This is a summary of Mr. Pollock's comments. His first observation is that this is not just an issue for the City of Blairsville. It is an issue for all Union County residents. He is concerned that Commissioner Paris is not alarmed about this issue. Don't half the county residents get their drinking water from Lake Nottely? Doesn't this affect the whole county? What would happen if the lake died; then would the county die? He asked Lamar to apply pressure to Senator Gooch and to the City of Blairsville to stop accepting leachate water. He said there is a lot of confusion as to how much leachate water can be processed by the City of Blairsville each day. He said that it has been mentioned that the city has a permit to process 25,000 gallons of leachate per day but they cannot find any record or proof of this contract. Mr. Pollock asked where this is written down and where can he find it? When the city representative says they will never process more than 25,000 gallons per day what happens when he moves away or changes jobs if this is not written down anywhere. He said that Callie Moore with Mountain True said that processed leachate water was good for the lake. Mr. Pollock said if leachate is good for the lake then why isn't everyone lining up to take this leachate water.

Commissioner Paris then took a moment to say that Union County and himself cannot tell the City of Blairsville to stop processing this leachate water. He has no authority to do this. He has no authority over the City of Blairsville Wastewater Treatment Plant, the City of Blairsville drinking water, or any of the water authorities that provide drinking water to Union County residents. Lake Nottely is also owned by TVA and not by Union County Government.

Callie Moore with Mountain True spoke regarding the water quality monitoring of Butternut Creek and the Nottely River Watershed. This is a summary of Mrs. Moore's comments. Mrs. Moore stated she is the Western Regional Director of Mountain True, whose mission it is to

support clean water. They have been sampling streams and lakes in the Hiawassee River Watershed for over 20 years and Meeks Park was one of their first sampling stations. She is speaking to clear up issues regarding e.coli in Butternut Creek since there has been a lot of inaccurate information put out lately from other sources. She provided everyone with a handout of the sampling stations located in Union County and pointed out that there is a tributary watershed that drains into Butternut Creek bringing potential pollutants into the creek. The chart on the handout had dates of sampling sites and they have much data on the Meeks Park sampling site and the Farmers Market sampling site. Callie Moore provided a graph showing ecoli data for the Farmers Market site, the Golf Course site and the Meeks Park site. The data shows high peaks of e.coli at the Farmers Market site and at the Golf Course site, which are above where the Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges their processed water into Butternut Creek. The data shows that the Meeks Park site is the cleanest of the three sites. That does not mean that it is clean, but it is cleaner below the wastewater treatment plant than above it. This is caused by non-point source pollution such as livestock having access to the streams, wildlife concentration in the area and failing private septic systems. In her 18 years the Wastewater Treatment Plant has not contributed to the e.coli in Butternut Creek. Mrs. Moore then stated that she has never said that leachate water is good for the lake or water quality. She is sorry that her comments were interpreted that way, but her comments were referencing the efficiency of the Wastewater Treatment Plan in processing traditional pollutants. Mountain True is not fighting the leachate water processing because everything they do is based on science. Before they ask the City of Blairsville to stop doing something that they are doing legally, Mountain True must have a reason to ask them to stop. They cannot just say they need to stop because there is hazardous stuff in the water. They have to have proof through science to say this should be stopped because of PFAS contamination. Mountain True is going to see about testing for some heavy metals going forward. Mountain True has not formed a position on the expansion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant's Permt from 400,000 to 1,000,000 gallons at this time. The charts referenced are attached as a part of the minutes.

The Commissioner approved a Lease Amendment between Union County and the United States Department of Agriculture, for the address of 185 Welborn Street, Pat Haralson Civic Center. Effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023. The annual rent to be \$7,200.00 payable at a rate of \$600.00 per month.

Commissioner Paris accepted a Commitment Letter between Union County and Legacy Link for the required local share during FY-2021 in the amount of \$11,450.00. These funds are used by the Area Agency on Aging as match to draw down the federal and state monies for administration, coordination, information and referral, employment and training of older workers and volunteer programs at the Union County Senior Center.

The Commissioner accepted a Contract between Smith Roofing & Construction, LLC and Union County to replace the roof on the SAFE House in the amount of \$34,176.11. The contract has an effective date of July 30, 2020.

Commissioner Paris accepted an Agreement between DirecTV and Union County for the installation of sixteen satellite receivers at the Union County Fire Station with an effective date of August 12, 2020. The total cost is \$3,150 for the initial installation and products. The total monthly cost for service is \$180.99.

The Commissioner accepted four Accountability Court Grants for the Enotah Judicial Circuit with the grant period being from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The accepted grants are as follows:

Enotah Adult Felony Drug Courts North in the amount of \$225,622.00.
Enotah Adult Felony Drug Courts South in the amount of \$308,847.00.
Enotah Mental Health Court in the amount of \$108,702.00.
Enotah Family Treatment Court in the amount of \$161,706.00.

Commissioner Paris accepted a Settlement Statement and a Limited Warranty Deed between Union County and BLK, LLC for the purchase of 3.382 acres, more or less, located in Land Lot 22, 10th District, 1st Section of Union County in the amount of \$748,361.03.

The Commissioner approved a Purchase and Sale Agreement between Blairsville Motel Properties, Inc. and Union County for the purchase of 8.972 acres, more or less, located in Land Lot 305, 9th District, 1st Section of Union County in the amount of \$800,000 with \$400,000 being due at closing and the additional \$400,000 being due 6 months from the date of closing.

Commissioner Paris accepted a Quitclaim Deed from Randolph C. Willingham to Union County for all that tract or parcel of land lying in Land Lot 182, 9th District, 1st Section of Union County containing 1.24 acres more or less. This is for the road known as Cove Lane. Back in 1995 Glen Gooch and Mr. Willingham signed a Right of Way Deed for the road that led into Greystone Point subdivision and the main road within the subdivision to be county-maintained. The process was never finished, and the road has not been maintained by the county. This Quitclaim Deed finishes the process that was not completed back in 1995.

The Commissioner then accepted Cove Lane into the county-maintained road system.

Commissioner Paris then accepted the following two Business Licenses.

Choestoe Cabin located at 258 Litton Lane
Nottley Island Retreat located at 49 Notla Island Drive

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:



Jennifer Mahan, County Clerk

Approved this 17th day of September, 2020



Lamar Paris, Commissioner