



BEDFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RULES AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2020
Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: Third Floor Courtroom, Bedford County Courthouse

Present: Chairman Biff Farrar; Commissioners Jimmy Patterson, Anita Epperson, Ed Castleman, Greg Vick

Absent: none

Others Present: Mayor Chad Graham, County Commissioners: Sylvia Pinson, Mark Thomas, Chasity Gunn, Bill Anderson, Julie Sanders, Linda Yockey, Sheriff: Austin Swing, Probation Director: Elizabeth Stejskal, EMA Assistant Director: Tammy Anderson, IT Director: Josh Carney, Assistant to the Mayor: Anna Frazier, Times-Gazette Reporter: Terry Corrigan, Denise Graham, Center for Immigration Studies Fellow: Don Barnett, Bob Moore, Brian Brenton, Brook Sanderson, Cole Kreig and others not identified

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman Biff Farrar, 5:00 PM
2. **Prayer:** Commissioner Biff Farrar
3. **Roll Call:** all present
4. **Approval of January 21, 2020 Rules and Legislative Committee minutes:** Motion made to approve, (Epperson, Castleman) unanimous
5. **Consideration of placing the approval February 11, 2020 Commission minutes on March 10, 2020, County Commission agenda:** Motion made to place items on county commission agenda, Motion made to approve without recommendation, (Epperson, Patterson), unanimous
6. **Consideration of placing the notary applicants on the March 10, 2020, County Commission agenda as requested by County Clerk, Donna Thomas:** Motion made to approve, (Vick, Castleman), unanimous
7. **Veterans Officer Report:** Fifty-one visitors. Transported forty-five veterans in January to the hospital. (Epperson, Patterson), unanimous
8. **Community Clinic Report:** FYI. No approval needed.
9. **Ag Center Report:** FYI. No approval needed.
10. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - a) **Resolution of No Consent to Refugee Resettlement** – Before introducing the resolution to the committee, Chairman Farrar opened the floor to Commissioner Brent Smith to hear his opinion regarding refugee resettlement in Bedford County, and to introduce his visitor, Mr. Don Barnett, Fellow with the Center for Immigration Studies.



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Commissioner Smith read some of the resolution and then introduced Mr. Barnett. Mr. Barnett gave a brief history of refugee resettlement in the United States and then spoke about the executive order. There were questions and comments from the public for Mr. Barnett who said that it is correct, refugees resettled elsewhere in the US are free to move to Bedford County and concluded that this is a complicated subject.

Chairman Farrar asked if there were any wishes of the committee.

Commissioner Epperson stated that the committee still needs to send it out of committee to the commission. According to Charlie Curtis, the committee is only here for recommendation, that a committee hears the recommendation, but that all commissioners should vote on whatever comes up in committee. Furthermore, the commission can pull anything from the committee to the floor and that if a committee doesn't send recommendations from committee to commission, then the commission is only allowing five commissioners to vote essentially for the other 13. You can't table items in a committee. Commissioner Epperson made a motion to put it on the commission agenda.

Chairman Farrar asked if there was a second to the motion. Being none the resolution dies for lack of a second in committee.

- b) **Food truck vendors near Judicial Center** – Chairman Farrar asked Mayor Graham to continue to look into the possibility of having vendors on government property.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Zoning Compatibility for Solar Farms** – Commissioner Vick stated that given the growing interest and conversation across the state regarding solar farms he recommends to the committee that the Planning Commission review and provide feedback regarding how solar farms are currently designated in Bedford County; if there are zoning requirements, and how to proceed should solar farms be located in the county.

Chairman Farrar asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Yockey asked if the farms would be considered utility.

Commissioner Vick said that is the question: are they utility? Is it agriculture? What is it?

Commissioner Sanders asked what constitutes a solar farm? She knows several places that have several solar panels.

Commissioner Vick said that is why the planning commission should review it. If it is viewed as a utility, the county would lose taxable benefits.

Commissioner Brent Smith stated that in West Tennessee solar farms take up 50-60 acres of solar panels.

Chairman Farrar asked if there were any other questions and stated that the committee will pass along the request to the planning commission.

- b) **Governor's Finance Package** – Commissioner Vick said that the TCAT project did not receive \$38.5MM funding out of the governor's \$44.0B budget. The governor's budget did include pay raises for teachers, from the minimum salary of \$36,000 to \$40,000. The state needs 10,000 teachers and engineers each year. There is \$4.4MM available in the governor's correctional educational investment program, plus \$984,600 for a work program. \$2.2MM was given to agriculture extension agents. \$1MM was budgeted to



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the veteran's higher education program. The education funding formula moving forward will emphasize TCAT and community colleges.

- c) **231 Industrial Park** – Commissioner Vick said this month (February) the building commission will accept the gift of twenty acres from the industrial park. The building commission has \$4.0MM in the bank and the county hopes that the building commission will start some type of construction this year. Twenty-seven people responded to inquiries with one hard look, who passed due to lack of training facilities.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 1, 2019 –December 31, 2019: Public library statistics: 30,768 visitors, 38,764 items were checked out in all formats, 13,403 users logged onto public use computers or their own devices to use the library's internet signal. Chairman Farrar said that the library does a lot of good in the community and receives the most money from the county's nonprofit fund.

Chairman Farrar also announced the Chamber Coffee: Non-profit Community Connection on March 3, 2020.

13. ADJOURN: 5:58 P.M. (Farrar, Vick)