



Bradley County Commission
Johnny Mull, Chairman
WORK SESSION MINUTES
August 22, 2022, at 7:00p.m.
Bradley County Courthouse

Members present: Louie Alford, Milan Blake, Vice Chairman Thomas Crye, Erica Davis, Dennis Epperson, Bobby Goins, Mike Hughes, Tim Mason, Chairman Johnny Mull, Charlotte Peak, Kevin Raper, Cindy Slater, Howard Thompson, Bill Winters

Members absent: non-voting ex officio member D. Gary Davis

Chairman Johnny Mull called the meeting to order. Following the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Erica Davis, CrossNet Baptist Network Community Impact Strategist Callie Limburg prayed the invocation.

REPORT FROM COUNTY MAYOR

Adam Lewis, Assistant to the County Mayor, presented to the Commission an interlocal agreement between the City of Cleveland and Bradley County regarding the 2022 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program award. Commissioner Cindy Slater placed on the September 6, 2022, voting session agenda a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an interlocal agreement with the City of Cleveland regarding the 2022 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND/OR DISTRICTS

1st District

Commissioner Dennis Epperson thanked the residents of the First District for the honor and privilege to represent the district. Commissioner Epperson thanked fellow Commissioners and the community for support throughout the term to accomplish many things including the PIE Center, Master Utility Study, Hopewell stacking lanes, and the razing of the old McDonald School building.

Commissioner Mike Hughes said it has been an honor to serve with this Commission.

Commissioner Hughes thanked Director of Schools Dr. Linda Cash for the new stacking lanes at Hopewell School.

2nd District

Commissioner Louie Alford thanked the Commission for their work to complete the accomplishments of the last four (4) years.

Commissioner Alford remembered the family of Bradley County sports legend Joe Adams.

Vice Chairman Thomas Crye expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve with the current Commission.

Vice Chairman Crye recognized Melanie Marshall to discuss the issues at Sunset Memorial Gardens. Marshall recounted the long history of neglect at Sunset Memorial Gardens and attested that the neglect continues today. Marshall requested assistance with ensuring perpetual care is done including mowing the grounds, repairing the leaks in the mausoleum area, unsown gravesites, broken headstones, and headstones not ordered and/or placed. Commissioners Bill Winters and Hughes committed to speaking with the District Attorney regarding the neglect. Chairman Mull noted Hillcrest Cemetery is owned by the same group and also shows signs of neglect.

3rd District

Commissioner Milan Blake placed on the September 6, 2022, voting session agenda a resolution to amend the membership of the Emergency Services Committee membership.

Commissioner Blake placed on the September 6, 2022, voting session agenda a motion to accept the Finance Committee recommendation to pay the Trustee surety bond from Commission line 599 for four (4) year coverage.

Commissioner Blake placed on the September 6, 2022, voting session agenda a motion to accept the Finance Committee recommendation to submit to the Election Commission Chairperson a letter regarding the overspending of their budget, requesting they not exceed their budget this fiscal year, and noting the importance of not working part-time employees more than twenty-nine and a half (29.5) hours per week.

Commissioner Blake announced the Finance Committee will meet at 11:30a.m. on September 6, in the Commission room.

Commissioner Blake thanked the Commission for their work this term.

4th District

Commissioner Charlotte Peak thanked Fourth District voters for allowing her to serve ten (10) years. Commissioner Peak applauded her fellow Commissioners for their work, and urged the new Commission to continue the plans formulated by the current Commission.

Commissioner Howard Thompson expressed appreciation for the work of the Commission the last four (4) years.

5th District

Commissioner Bobby Goins expressed appreciation for the new Hopewell School stacking lanes.

Commissioner Cindy Slater expressed appreciation for the current Commission.

6th District

Commissioner Tim Mason thanked U.S. Navy Signalman Petty Officer Daniel Koob for his work in Bradley County.

Commissioner Mason thanked McDonald Ruritan for a recent community event.

Commissioner Mason thanked Commissioners for their work.

Commissioner Erica Davis reported the Broadband Initiative ad hoc committee met earlier and learned two (2) of the four (4) grant applications submitted by Volunteer Energy Cooperative for the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development grant advanced to the final round. Commissioner Davis reported the grant total, if awarded next week, will be approximately seven million seven hundred ninety thousand dollars (\$7,900,000.00) and require a ten percent (10%) match from Bradley County. Commissioner Davis reported the committee voted to recommend the Commission look at opportunities to partner with all broadband providers on 50-50 match projects for the approximately three million two hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$3,220,000.00) remaining in the American Rescue Plan Act broadband bucket. Commissioner Slater placed on the September 6, 2022, voting session agenda a motion to accept the Broadband Initiative ad hoc committee recommendation to look at opportunities to partner with all broadband providers on 50-50 match projects for the approximately three million two hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$3,220,000.00) remaining in the American Rescue Plan Act broadband bucket.

Commissioner Davis thanked Commissioners for working to make Bradley County a better place and urged the new Commission to be engaged and to work together to achieve more.

7th District

Commissioner Kevin Raper thanked Seventh District residents for the opportunity to serve them and honored Commissioners with a prayer.

Commissioner Winters reminded Commissioners they are all winners having won election to serve their districts four (4) years ago. Commissioner Winters expressed appreciation to serve with the current Commission for the last four (4) years.

Prior to presenting plaques to Commissioners Davis, Epperson, Mull, Peak, and Raper honoring their service, Vice Chairman Crye read the following statement: We first formally sat together on September 4, 2018. This evening marks the culmination of a busy, productive and historic four (4) year term for this sitting Commission. Together, we have weathered many storms including the Covid pandemic and the loss of one of our own, Vice Chairman Jeff Yarber. It seems to me each Commission develops its own personality. I believe this Commission will forever be known for getting dealt an incredibly bad hand, but working closely together to overcome the challenges to better Bradley County. It is my honor and privilege to have served alongside all of you these past four years and to witness our collective flexibility and gumption. As the Vice Chairman, I get the pleasure of presenting, on behalf of all of us, plaques to five Commissioners recognizing their outstanding service to the citizens of Bradley County. These Commissioners served with tenacity for their beliefs and a keen understanding of the issues confronting Bradley County. Your colleagues appreciate your time and energy to develop and implement plans to make our community an even better place to call home. You came, you worked, you left your mark.

AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Peak opened the floor for audience members to discuss the recommendations they have for the Election Commission. Sarah Bruun requested transparency by adequate meeting notice (meetings and agendas posted on the website a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in advance), access to public records, and welcoming public input. Deborah Gleason

expressed frustration for not receiving a response to the email she submitted to the Election Commission, questioned the training given to poll workers for the last election, and requested action on the department overspending their budget. Commissioner Slater placed on the September 6, 2022, a motion to submit recommendations for the Election Commission to improve transparency by posting meetings and agendas on the website a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in advance and to improve access to minutes and other public records.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

Dr. Linda Cash thanked the Commission for their support of Bradley County Schools and efforts to make a difference in Bradley County.

Rusty Rymer, part-time Elections employee since July 2021, rebutted the claims against the Election Office. Rymer reported the office is understaffed and corrected the reported amount of budget overage from sixteen thousand dollars (\$16,000.00) to three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00). Rymer confirmed the meeting schedule is posted annually, and maintained the Election Office is more transparent with documents than any other office he has worked. Rymer confirmed a policy for individuals to request being placed on the Election Commission agenda.

Dan Rawls suggested the County Commission post on their website calendar the Election Commission meetings. Rawls noted the Elections Office requires public records request for minutes and other documents.

Chairman Mull expressed appreciation for the honor to serve the last eight (8) years and for the opportunity to serve as Chairman the last four (4) years. Chairman Mull highlighted several projects including the Spring Branch Industrial Park, Lake Forest Middle School new academic building, increases for emergency services equipment and salaries, building the PIE Center, Sheriff's Office upgrades, and energy projects at Bradley County Schools and the Courthouse. Chairman Mull encouraged the new Commission to do their homework and research, to talk to constituents, to pray, and to do the right thing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- *Next meeting – September 6, 7:00p.m., Commission room
- *Population trends ad hoc, August 24, 10:30a.m., Commission room
- *New Commissioner orientation, August 29, 3:00p.m., Commission room
- *Swearing in ceremony, September 1, 9:00a.m., Courthouse plaza
- *County Office Closed in observance of Labor Day – September 5
- *Finance Committee, September 6, 11:30a.m., Commission room

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:52p.m.