



*Bradley County Commission*  
**Thomas Crye, Chairperson**  
**WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
March 11, 2024, at noon  
Bradley County Courthouse

Members present: Milan Blake, Denny Collins, Chairman Thomas Crye, Scott Gilbert, Bobby Goins, Mike Hughes, Tommy Ledford, Tim Mason, Josh Rogers, Cindy Slater, Howard Thompson, Vice Chairman Bill Winters, and non-voting ex officio member D. Gary Davis

Members absent: Louie Alford, Daniel Beaty

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Chairman Thomas Crye called the meeting to order. Following the invocation prayed by Tennova Chaplain Stephen Ferreira, Commissioner Tim Mason led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Thomas Crye announced per state statute, the County Commission will appoint the unexpired term of First District Constable at the March 18, 2024, voting session. Chairman Crye invited interested parties to submit their resume and request for consideration to the County Commission Office up to and including the March 18, 2024, voting session. Chairman Crye placed the appointment on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda.

#### REPORT FROM COUNTY MAYOR

County Mayor D. Gary Davis stated, "More than any time in recent memory topics like infrastructure, zoning, annexation, land use, and planning have become a part of our everyday conversations, as well as deliberations in our County.

"Our community has experienced exponential growth over the last decade, and that growth trend is expected to continue. We were number one out of all 95 counties in the state of Tennessee for announcing new jobs in 2023. Our roads are congested. Our schools are nearing or over capacity. Our real estate industry estimates we are 600 homes behind schedule for what is currently needed. Vital infrastructure like sewer, broadband, and even water is needed throughout parts of our county.

"I have said before, these are challenges we have created for ourselves. We have worked diligently to create a place where people want to live, work, and raise their families. We have done a good job of that. We can't be surprised by the challenges that have arisen out of the successes of our county.

“We are growing. Cleveland. Charleston. ALL of Bradley County.

“I know many in our community don’t want more growth. We all miss the small-town feel we once shared. While that is a very real sentiment, growth is happening. Our local governments have an obligation to plan and prepare for the future and the growth that is inevitable. The plans, tools, and resources we have used to plan for growth are nearly 15 years old.

“For this reason, I am calling on the cities of Cleveland and Charleston to sit down with us to engage in a new **Joint Strategic Plan** for growth and planning. I also propose and invite our partners in the cities of Charleston and Cleveland to reconvene the Growth Plan Coordinating Committee to review and amend the **Bradley County, Cleveland and Charleston 20-Year Growth Plan**. This process is two fold:

“First, the **Joint Strategic Plan** is a collaboration between all our local governments, under guidance from professional consultants, along with input from the community, and provides an in-depth comprehensive plan for future land use, infrastructure expansion, and growth.

“Second, the **Bradley County, Cleveland and Charleston 20-Year Growth Plan**, originally adopted in 2000, was last amended in 2010. This plan outlines the urban growth boundaries for the cities of Charleston and Cleveland. The process to amend the growth plan is outlined in state law, and involves members of the Growth Plan Coordinating Committee and final adoption of the amended plan by the Charleston City Commission, Cleveland City Council, and the Bradley County Commission.

“There will no doubt be challenging decisions ahead. I am committed to working with you to make them. Now is the time to do this. We have an opportunity to come together, to work towards a common goal: What do we want our community to look like in 15-20 years?

“I look forward to working with the cities of Charleston and Cleveland, and with each of you as we plan and tackle the challenges we face together in a vibrant and growing community.”

Mayor Davis presented to the Commission revised plans for the proposed Fire Garage which includes a larger footprint (80’ x 120’), conference room, six (6) offices, six (6) bays, large storage area, and a shower in the restroom. Mayor Davis noted the city of Cleveland will prepare the site, building the building through painting, and swap for the Inman Street Fire property. Mayor Davis requested the Commission approve a resolution authorizing the County Mayor to negotiate a written agreement with the city of Cleveland for the plan. Commissioner Howard Thompson placed the resolution on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda. Commissioner Mike Hughes announced the Fire Committee will meet at 11:00a.m. on March 18, 2024, to review the proposal. Commissioners Hughes and Thompson agreed to the Mayor’s suggestion for a joint meeting with the Fire Committee and the Building and Land Committee.

## REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND/OR DISTRICTS

### 7<sup>th</sup> District

Commissioner Josh Rogers congratulated the Bradley Central High School Bearettes on their second consecutive state championship.

Vice Chairman Bill Winters restated his support of Israel and noted the Bradley County Commission passed a resolution in the Fall of 2023 condemning the heinous Hamas attack on Israel and supported the right of Israel to respond appropriately.

Vice Chairman Winters remembered his older sister, Rose Sharon, who recently passed.

### 6<sup>th</sup> District

Commissioner Tommy Ledford congratulated the Bearettes and the victors of the recent election – Stephen Hatchett, Daren Brantley, and Rachel Ivey Goins.

Commissioner Mason congratulated the Bearettes, Cleveland High School Lady Raiders, and the victors of the recent election.

### 5<sup>th</sup> District

Commissioner Cindy Slater reported Hewitt Street property owners requested access to their property as the platted road was never built. Commissioner Slater placed on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda a motion to authorize the Mayor to execute a non-exclusive perpetual access easement across Map and Parcel No. 065 K H 022.00 for each currently landlocked property owner in Willowhill Subdivision.

Commissioner Bobby Goins congratulated the Bearettes.

### 4<sup>th</sup> District

Commissioner Thompson had no report.

Commissioner Scott Gilbert announced the Juvenile Committee will meet at 11:00a.m. on April 5, 2024, in the Commission room.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> District

Commissioner Denny Collins offered condolences to Vice Chairman Winters and get well wishes to Commissioner Louie Alford.

Commissioner Collins states, “Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to share with the commission a resolution for consideration that highlights the concerns present in legislation currently moving through the General Assembly specific to passage of universal school vouchers. It is important to note that the “tree” of school vouchers has many branches, but the root of the concern for this body the funding body of Bradley County- is not specific to education, but specific to funding and budgets. While promises have been made that state education budgets won’t be robbed to pay for vouchers, rest assured that the money MUST come from somewhere- infrastructure, public safety, roads,

and the like will suffer at the hands of private school vouchers. Current proposed legislation includes the possibility of uncapped universal vouchers, which provides public money for private school education. As we evaluate the state budgets that have experienced the political pressures of lobbyist and influential promises we must look at the following examples Florida's budget for vouchers- which allow for any family regardless of income to access \$8,000 per child- has swollen from \$300 million to an estimated \$4.2 billion. Indiana has now moved its voucher budget to over \$500 million dollars with 99% of the allocated money going to private school endowments. Arizona- a state that has experienced Republican leadership over the last 3 terms of governors- has had such a disastrous state budget as a result of yearly increases in universal vouchers that the state has now elected a democrat governor to fix its now 300 million dollar budget deficit. I am thankful that these examples exist for our lawmakers to evaluate to see the economic pitfalls of universal vouchers for state budgets which will indeed trickle down to local budgets. Our current state budget allows for limited school vouchers in Hamilton, Shelby, and Davidson Counties. These funds are available for the most at-risk students in the most failing schools. There is no current evidence that exists to demonstrate any measure of success for vouchers in these counties. We have a responsibility to our taxpayers to voice our concerns about the financial impact this unregulated private school prop up will have on not only our state, but our county's financial future. I encourage this commission to endorse this resolution and stand up for our taxpayers and our public schools. I move to place this resolution on next week's agenda." First District State Senator Adam Lowe confirmed there are currently two bills in Nashville regarding the matter and noted neither bill uses Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) funds. Senator Lowe submitted both bills would require both academic and financial accountability.

Commissioner Milan Blake expressed condolences to Vice Chairman Winters.

Commissioner Blake announced budget requests are due to the Finance Office on March 14, 2024, at noon.

Commissioner Blake wished the families and students of Bradley Central High School, Cleveland High School, and Lee University a safe and relaxing spring break.

2<sup>nd</sup> District

Chairman Crye stated, "We have a wonderful new 108 bed Tennessee State Veterans Home in Bradley County. Many of us attended the June 22, 2023, ribbon cutting and grand opening. About a month following the grand opening, there were only 4 residents at the home. I contacted State Representative Kevin Raper and State Senator Adam Lowe last fall and was told the occupancy would be 20 of 108 rooms by December. We must remember there is a waiting list of over 400 veterans awaiting admission. We must also remember that some of these veterans are potentially homeless and in poor medical condition.

"I visited the home last week and the administrator confirmed there were 21 residents. The administrator told me they are awaiting required inspections and permits, mostly federal level and possibly state.

"I believe the issue is government bureaucracy along with our elected officials and some appointees going to sleep at the wheel and failing to remember part of their responsibilities is to represent their constituents and the needs of the veterans. I place on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda a motion to send a letter to our local, state, and federal elected officials, along with our state and federal veterans administration, requesting assistance in clearing the bureaucracy and filling our veteran home with deserving veterans." Chairman Crye placed on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda a motion to send a letter to the local, state, and federal elected officials, along with state and federal veterans administration, requesting assistance in clearing the bureaucracy and filling our veterans home with deserving veterans.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> District

Commissioner Mike Hughes placed on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda a motion to confirm the Planning Commission recommendation to rezone from Forestry/Agricultural/Residential (FAR) District to Specialized Commercial District (C-3) property located at or around 7896 Dalton Pike SE and identified by tax map 097 parcel 039.00.

Commissioner Mike Hughes placed on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda a motion to confirm the Planning Commission recommendation to rezone from Forestry/Agricultural/Residential (FAR) District to Specialized Commercial (C-3) District property located at or around the 5800 block of Georgetown Road NW and identified by tax map 026 parcel 007.00.

Commissioner Mike Hughes placed on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda a motion to confirm the Planning Commission recommendation to rezone from Rural Residential (FAR) District to General Commercial (C-2) District the property located or around 2970 Dalton Pike SE and identified by tax map 066P group F parcel 003.00.

#### AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Ledford placed on the March 18, 2024, voting session agenda a resolution urging the general assembly of the state of Tennessee to enact laws to facilitate nullification of certain federal action and federal overreach to uphold state sovereignty.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

Deborah Gleason voiced opposition to public schools and opined private schools and home schools will choose not to be state controlled by the school choice funds.

Dan Rawls asked if private schools accept funding would they be required to use curriculum of the state.

Rawls voiced support for the bill presented by Commissioner Ledford to request laws to facilitate nullification of certain federal action and federal overreach to uphold state sovereignty.

David Hannah, owner of Dalton Pike property seeking rezoning, stated his belief that rezoning would be beneficial to the community and requested consideration.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*Next meeting – Voting Session, March 18, 2024, at noon, Courthouse commission room

\*Tree Day Event – March 16, 2024, 11:00a.m.-noon, Greenway Park

\*Joint Fire Committee and Building & Land Committee - March 18, 2024, at 11:00a.m., Courthouse commission room

\*Juvenile Committee – April 5, 2024, at 11:00a.m., Courthouse commission room

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.