

**REGULAR SESSION
TIFT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2012 (6:00 P.M.)**

The scheduled Regular Session of the Tift County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman on Monday, November 12, 2012, at 6:00 P.M. in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Administrative Building. Member of the Commission present including Chairman Thompson were Vice Chairman Robert Setters and Commissioners Donnie Hester, Melissa Chevers, Sherry Miley and Mike Jones.

Chairman Thompson asked Commissioner Hester to give the invocation followed by the pledge to the flag.

Minutes: Motion approving the minutes of October 2, 2012 Workshop Session; October 8, 2012 Regular Session, was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments: Commissioner Miley stated that if there were any veterans in the audience tonight, we salute you.

PUBLIC HEARING: None

REGULAR AGENDA:

Commissioners agreed to move Item "I" Hospital Bonds to the beginning of the Agenda.

I. Hospital Bonds: Jimmy Allen spoke on behalf of Tift Regional Medical Center concerning the Bond Issue. After long consideration and deliberation TRMC decided that the best way to finance their current situation for us to go is through a bond issue. Hospitals are currently in a real turf war in our region and in our area there are 11 hospitals competing with us to acquire turf. The reason all of this is super important to TRMC is because we are a regional hospital. TRMC gets 52% of their patients and referrals from outside the County. Only 48 cents on the dollar we received comes from Tift County so we are truly a regional hospital. Tift County has 130 doctors. He compared numbers and doctors as well as population to Colquitt County and stated they (Colquitt) are being squeezed and we don't want to see this happen to TRMC. We are working and trying to protect referral turf.

Why borrow now? We can refinance our 2002 Bond Issue and our 2010 debt at a time when we have all time low interest rates. It will save us 7 to 8 hundred thousand dollars a year. We can do that whether or not the County agrees to the 7 mil levy. We can do it on our own but if we get this pledge, we get a better interest rate and that helps the citizens of the County because the savings goes back into the TRMC general funds to be spent on medical care. TRMC provides over \$60 Million in indigent care to the citizens of Tift County and the region. We are protecting our specialty doctors at our hospital. The Tift County Board of Commissioners has always supported TRMC Bonds and we have always paid. In 2002, Tift County Commissioners backed a \$64 Million bond with a 7 mil pledge; that issue is being paid off with this refinance so we are only asking you to increase by \$24M with the 7 mil pledge. TRMC now has the repayment ability seven (7) times more since 2002.

Economic impact from TRMC – We increase the employment in Tift County. In 2008 we employed about 1600 in Tift County, now it has grown to 2000 in Tift County. For those reason is why we justify support from the Commission.

Why borrow now instead of using existing dollars? Because of the low interest rates we have and we have generated 5% off our investments, we can borrow at 3.4 which is a 2% margin and on \$90 M that is a \$1.8 gain that we can make which go back into the funds to provide better health care for the citizens of Tift County. Health care reform is going to put extreme pressure on TRMC so we need to hold cash reserves for the future to enhance our balance sheet, to keep us strong so other people cannot take our turf and to keep our technology up to date.

TRMC has \$441 M in insurance on buildings, equipment and loss of business, we have cash reserves and investments of \$238 M and other collateral in accounts receivable of \$35 M, and so we have over \$700 M in collateral to back this \$88 M bond issue.

After saying all of this to the Board, he respectfully asked the Board to approve the 7 mil pledge to back this bond issue.

Commissioner Hester had a question about the true dollar amount of the bond issue. The document that would be signed by the Board says not to exceed \$89.5 M however the total amount could be lower.

Commissioner Chevers asked how it would affect the County's borrowing power. It was explained that the County has a 10% borrowing cap on the total digest. The County Attorney stated that the law looks at the bond issue differently because the County would be underwriting the Bonds and it falls outside that 10% figure. This question was raised last week and nobody knew for sure but it has been researched and found the above answer. The County Attorney stated that the component to that is that it is contract debt and should the County have to go borrow money the hospital stability in whether they were sound to repay the bond issue would have to be looked at so we might have scrutiny by the lender which might affect our interest rates.

Commissioner Miley stated everybody understands the vital importance of TRCM. It is crucial to our community and for Tift County's workforce however that is not the question we are deciding. We are looking at whether or not Tift County should go on the line and back the bonds. She still needs to be convinced that Tift county citizens should back these bonds since it is a Regional facility. Her second question is to have a recommendation from the County Manager on backing the bonds.

The County Manager stated that staff has looked at this issue for many days; net with hospital people, bond council, finance officers and attorneys. The question he wanted answered was the affect on the County's ability to borrow in the future. If we back the bond issue and as long as the County is never called on for the debt we are fine. The other part we looked at was the legality of the issue. He stated he could find no legal reason not to do this. Is there a reason for Tift County not to back the bonds, as he sees it, "no."

Mr. Crum explained that the hospital has over \$400 M of insurance coverage which covers all of their facilities.

Mr. Carter stated that you cannot say there is no risk. We are saying that the County believes in the financial stability of the hospital enough that they could pay the bonds. There is always a risk however the County Manager feels in this case the risk is minuscule.

Commissioner Jones inquired about the Internal Agreement that was mentioned last week. Mr. Allen explained that the IRS takes the position that if a sum of money is pledged that any arbutus profit made off of that has to be paid directly to the IRS so it would defeat the idea of the 7 mil pledge. Mr. Allen also stated that TRMC is one of the strongest hospitals in the state of its size.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hester to approve the Bond Issue for Tift Regional Medical Center and authorize the Chairman to endorse the Resolution as outlined and other documents necessary that were provided to the Board for this bond issue not to exceed \$89.5M, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

A. Preliminary Plat approval for MegHan Subdivision located on River Run Road: Carl Fortson advised that this is a proposed expansion of MegHan Subdivision consisting of 9 lots with Manufactured Housing for each lot with the exception of Lot # 9 which is designated as Greenspace. Lots 1 through 8 are located in the floodplain of which Flood Elevation Certificates will be required on each lot prior to the issuance of building permits. The SDRC has reviewed and recommends approval of the Preliminary Plat. Mr. Fortson advised the Board that because there was not a quorum at the October Planning and Zoning Meeting this comes has to come to the Commissioners for approval of the preliminary plat. Once the Final Plat has been completed that will also come to the Commissioners for approval. Motion was made by Commissioner Chevers to approve the Preliminary Plat for MegHan Subdivision located on River Run Road, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Surplus Vehicles: The Board was advised that nine (9) vehicles have been turned in from the Sheriff's Department for surplus and staff recommends the Board consider to surplus these vehicles and allow staff to place them on GovDeals.com for disposal. Motion was made by Commissioner Hester to surplus the nine (9) vehicles and dispose of them in our normal process, seconded by Commissioner Rigdon. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of new Public Works Facility: Jason Jordan stated that the plans for the new Public Works Facility have been made available for the Commissioners review. Staff recommends approval so that the required bid advertisement for a Construction Manager can get underway. Once the advertisement has run the proper amount of time and the bid opening has taken place staff would like to set up a committee consisting of two (2) Commissioners to go over all the bids and make a recommendation to the Board for the selection. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Setters to approve the plans and allow staff to move forward with the project, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Amendment to the Tift County's Retirement Plan: This amendment continues to keep the County's Retirement Plan in compliance with IRS Rules and Regulations. Motion authorizing the Chairman to endorse the necessary documents for this compliance was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Appointments to the Department of Family and Children Services Board: Two persons have been sent in as a recommendation from the Department of Family and Children Service Board for consideration of appointment which are Rodney Griffin and Hal Baxley. The Chairman opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Hester nominated Rodney Griffin and Hal Baxley. There were no further nominations and the Chairman closed the nominations. Motion was made by Commissioner Hester to appoint Rodney Griffin and Hal Baxley to fill the two vacant seats on this Board for a five year term extending through June 30, 2017, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

F. Reappointment to the South Georgia Community Service Board: Recommendation from the Community Service Board is to consider reappointing Liz Carson Keith for another three year term. The Chairman opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Jones nominated Liz Carson Keith. There were no further nominations and the Chairman closed the nominations. Motion was made by Commissioner Jones to reappoint Liz Carson Keith to the South Georgia Community Service Board to serve another three year term extending through 2015, seconded by Commissioner Hester. Motion carried unanimously.

G. Appointment to the Board of Assessors: A letter has been received from the Board of Assessors with a recommendation to reappoint C. Wade Clark to serve on the Board of Assessors for another six year term. Chairman Thompson opened the floor for nominations. Vice Chairman Setters nominated C. Wade Clark. There were no further nominations and the Chairman closed the nominations. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Setters to reappoint C. Wade Clark to serve another six year term on the Board of Assessors, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

H. Appointments and reappointments to the Human Resources Appeals Board: Per the Tift County Personnel Policy a Human Resource Appeals Board must be appointed to hear any appeals dealing with adverse action taken against an employee by the County. Staff recommends the reappointment of Steve Hyman, Ellen Eaton and Kevin Dobard. Currently there are two other vacancies on the Board that needs to be filled and staff recommends the appointment of Dr. Homer Day and Paula Avila. The Chairman opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Jones nominated Steve Hyman, Ellen Eaton and Kevin Dobard for reappointments. There were no further nominations and the Chairman closed the nomination process. Motion was made by Commissioner Jones to reappoint Steve Hyman, Ellen Eaton and Kevin Dobard to serve another three year term on the Human Resources Appeals Board, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously. The Chairman opened the floor for nominations for the other two seats on this Board. Commissioner Hester nominated Dr. Homer Day and Paula Avila. There were no further nominations and the Chairman closed the nominations. Motion was made by Commissioner Hester to appoint Dr. Homer Day and Paula Avila to serve a three year term on the Human Resources Appeals Board, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

J. Resolution naming Tift County after Henry Harding Tift instead of Nelson Tift: A letter has been received from a family member requesting the Board's consideration to make this change. Commissioner Rigdon stated that he has also received some verbal comments from family members for the Board to consider adopting this Resolution to have the change made. Motion was made by Commissioner Rigdon to authorize the Chairman to endorse the Resolution for naming Tift County for Henry Harding Tift instead of Nelson Tift, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session: None

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Rigdon. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Grady Thompson, District 7

Vice Chairman Robert Setters, District 3

Commissioner Donnie Hester, District 1

Commissioner Melissa Chevers, District 2

Commissioner Sherry Miley, Dist. 4

Commissioner F. W. (Buck) Rigdon, District 5

Commissioner C. Michael Jones, District 6

Attest: _____
Glynda Hemby, County Clerk
11/12/2012