

**HEARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
DECEMBER 19, 2017 - 6:30 P.M.**

The Heard County Board of Commissioners held a Commissioners Meeting on December 19, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the Commission Chamber of the Heard County Administration Building. In attendance at the meeting were Chairman Lee Boone, District 1 Commissioner Larry Hooks, District 2 Commissioners Keri Denney, District 3 Commissioner Gwen Caldwell, District 4 Commissioner Larry Hammond, District 5 Commissioner Joe Adams and County Attorney Jerry Ann Conner. Chairman Boone called the meeting to order, gave the invocation and welcomed everyone present.

**Agenda Item # 3 – Presentation of Service Award – Ms. Jane Olinger** - Chairman Boone and the Board presented a service award plaque to Jane Olinger for 25 years of continuous service to Heard County. The entire Board, as well as Sheriff Henry, thanked Ms. Olinger for her loyal and dedicated service to Heard County.

**Agenda Item # 4 – Public Hearing – Proposed Text Amendment to the Official Zoning**

**Ordinance to add Solar Panel Ordinance** – Chairman Boone opened the public hearing. County Attorney Jerry Ann Conner explained to the Board that there was no specific zoning for solar panels in Heard County’s current zoning ordinance. She presented the Board with an ordinance that if approved, will lift the current moratorium on solar panels in Heard County. There being no public comments or comments from the Board, the public hearing was closed.

**Agenda Item # 5 – Approval of Minutes – November 27, 2017 (2 sets; Regular and Work**

**Session)** – On motion (Hammond) and second (Hooks), the Board voted 4 to 1 to approve the work session minutes from November 27, 2017. Commissioner Hooks, Caldwell, Hammond and Adams voted for the motion. Commissioner Denney abstained. On motion (Hammond) and second (Adams),

the Board voted 4 to 1 to approve the regular minutes from November 27, 2017. Commissioner Hooks, Caldwell, Hammond and Adams voted for the motion. Commissioner Denney abstained.

**Agenda Item # 6 – Amend Agenda** – Chairman Boone asked for New Business to be amended to add Item - c – To Discuss Contract with Department of Natural Resources Regarding Bush Head Shoals Park. On motion (Hooks) and second (Caldwell), the Board unanimously approved this request.

**Agenda Item # 7 – New Business – a. Decision on Text Amendment to the Official Zoning Ordinance to add Solar Panel Ordinance** – On motion (Hammond) and second (Denney), the Board unanimously approved the solar panel ordinance.

**b. – Request from Heard County Water Authority** – Chairman Boone stated that he recently received a letter from The Heard County Water Authority requesting a draw of \$3,000,000 for the water treatment plant project. Chairman Boone read the letter into the minutes (attached). Laurie Cook, Executive Director of the Water Authority stated that in January of 2017 she spoke with the Board regarding the needs of the Water Authority and stated that the water plant was a top priority. Water Authority Board Members, Mr. Loy Howard, Mr. Alvin Ginn and Mr. James Ray Gosdin all spoke to the Board regarding this request. Commissioner Denney asked Ms. Cook for a timeline on when they would need this money. A representative from Carter & Sloope engineering firm spoke and stated the Authority would need this money within the next 15 months. Mr. Howard expressed to the Board that the Water Authority needs a firm commitment from the Board for this money before they can move forward with any project(s). After further discussion, on motion (Denney) and second (Adams), the Board unanimously voted to commit \$3,000,000 to the Water Authority over the next 15 months. Chairman Boone explained there are 17 months left in the current SPLOST.

**c. - To Discuss Contract with Department of Natural Resources Regarding Bush Head**

**Shoals Park** – Executive Director Kathy Knowles with the Development Authority of Heard County explained the Development Authority’s request regarding Bush Head Shoals Park. She asked the Board to review a preliminary intergovernmental agreement prepared by Georgia DNR to convey control of Bushhead Shoals State Park to Heard County Board of Commissioners. She stated the initial question is whether the county is willing to accept the terms of the agreement and to assume responsibility for the property and its upkeep and maintenance.

She stated she did ask if the preclusion of fees could be removed from the agreement in order to offset some maintenance costs and that there be an option for renewal added. She stated the State's legal department is checking to see if these sections can be amended. She also stated this would be pending the County Attorney’s review.

She further explained that the Development Authority has met with a kayaking outfitter located in Whitesburg who is interested in providing services to the park. They already serve Chatt Bend and are excited at the prospect of opening up the shoals. Their proposal includes providing staff to open and close the park daily and is enclosed here, too. (Some of the items they've included were ideas for future expansions and are not in the initial plans.) Initially, only the kayak ramp, roadway, parking area, host site at the main gate, and walking trails utilizing the existing logging roads are planned. There are several details on this proposal yet to be finalized and there may be other outfitters interested in providing the services on site. I've included the proposal for informational purposes only.

She also presented a rudimentary site plan for the location of the parking area and ramp. The initial location will be the northern one nearest Bushhead Shoals so that kayakers don't have to paddle upstream to play in the shoals. She and Public Works Director Darold Wiggins are

working with DNR to develop final estimates for the installation of a road to access the parking area and steps to access the river. She stated the Development Authority is working on funding for these costs. She stated the proposal is to utilize the roads department to scrape and gravel the existing logging road that accesses the parking area with the Development Authority reimbursing the labor and materials.

She explained that DNR also advises there might be fisheries who may stock the river and develop the southernmost access point at their own cost. There are also potential grant funds available to add archery somewhere on the property at some point in the future. Whitewater Outfitters suggested mountain bikes which would be acceptable under the contract since they are non-motorized, off-road bikes. DNR also says from the time we authorize the engineering fees for the location of the ramp with EPD it will take about three months to get all approvals, do the work, and be ready to open for visitors. An additional thought, provided by several kayakers, is to revitalize the river bottoms restrooms for those taking out there and to allow primitive camping there as well as on the 'island' at Bushhead Shoals. County Attorney Conner explained that the Development Authority will be responsible for the initial project and then an intergovernmental agreement would be needed between the County and the Development Authority for the bush hogging and upkeep of the roads. Commissioner Denney asked what would be the cost of the general liability insurance to the County for a new park and the cost of the upkeep for the roads. After further discussion, on motion (Adams) and second (Hammond) the Board voted unanimously for Chairman Boone to gather information on this project and come back to the Board with an update and a price on the insurance and upkeep costs to the County.

**Agenda Item # 8 – Old Business – None.**

**Agenda Item # 9 – Public Comments** – None.

**Agenda Item # 10 – Executive Session** – Chairman Boone asked for an Executive Session to discuss possible litigation and real estate. On motion (Hammond) and second (Denney), the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session. On motion (Hammond) and second (Denney), the Board unanimously voted to return to Open Session. Chairman Boone stated that in Executive Session possible litigation and real estate was discussed with no decisions made. There being no further business, on motion (Caldwell) and second (Hooks), the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

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County Clerk

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Chairman

Date \_\_\_\_\_