



**(07/10/18 - Regular Meeting)**

Commissioner Watters. VOTING:

YES

NO

Commissioner Bagby

" Watters

" Maxey

Vice-Chair Hancock

Motion Carried

**SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:**

~~1. Recognition of Sgt. Oncida Moreno for her retirement from the Sheriff's Office~~

**Removed during the approval of the Agenda.**

2. Recognition of Sergeant Cathryn Hyde for her retirement from the Sheriff's Office after twenty-seven (27) years of service

Sherriff Tim Burkhalter presented Sergeant Hyde with her service weapon and congratulated her on her retirement.

**FIRST READING**

**(SECOND READINGS TO BE HELD ON JULY 24, 2018 AT 6PM)**

1. FILE #Z18-07-02 REQUESTING REZONING FROM AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL (A-R) TO LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (L-I) AT FLOYD COUNTY PROPERTY ADJACENT TO JONES MILL ROAD, ROME, GEORGIA; A PORTION OF FLOYD COUNTY TAX PARCEL J10W001 AND A PORTION OF FLOYD COUNTY TAX PARCEL J10W003.

2. FILE #Z18-07-04, REQUESTING REZONING FROM SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL (S-R) TO COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL (C-C) AT 3556 MARTHA BERRY HIGHWAY, ROME, GEORGIA; FLOYD COUNTY TAX PARCELS J11Y004A, J11Y001, AND J11Y002.

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## PUBLIC HEARING

**Vice-Chair Hancock explained the procedures for the public hearing. Each person recognized to speak shall come to the podium and state his or her name and home address. No less than 10 minutes shall be provided for all those speaking in support. No less than 10 minutes shall be provided for all those speaking in opposition.**

### **1. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITY TO ISSUE BONDS TO FINANCE FACILITIES LOCATED IN FLOYD COUNTY, GEORGIA KNOWN AS THE GARDENS OF ROME.**

Vice-Chair Hancock asked County Attorney Hoyt for insight. County Attorney Hoyt stated this is funding known as private activity bonds, and funded through a public finance authority. It is not financed through the Floyd County Finance Authority, or through the Rome-Floyd Development Authority. The Floyd County Commissioners are required to, for lack of a better word, rubber stamp it, because under a particular provision of the IRS code for investors and owners of these bonds. It allows the investors and bond owners to deduct interest and income off of their income taxes, otherwise it's been determined that there will be no investment. In paragraph five of the Notice of Public Hearing it is very clear that the bonds will never constitute an indebtedness or general obligation of Floyd County. Also in the Resolution it indicates that the bonds shall not ever constitute a debt or pledge of Floyd County. Floyd County is not responsible for these bonds, and do not stand for the bonds. If the facility is to go under, Floyd County is not responsible for paying any money.

County McCord added the facility is located on Chulio Road and is a \$500,000.00-dollar project for upgrades and improvements to the facility.

**Vice-Chair Hancock asked if there was any one there to speak in support or opposition, seeing none, he closed the public hearing and asked if there was any discussion.**

### **2. 2040 ROME-FLOYD-CAVE SPRING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Vice-Chair Hancock asked County Manager McCord for insight. County Manager McCord asked if there was anyone present that wanted to speak on behalf of this, if so they would resume the public hearing afterwards.

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Artagus Newell, Rome-Floyd Planning Director stated that Ms. Laura Richter from TSW has been working with Planning to get the Comprehensive Plan together.

Ms. Richter stated they have been working on the project for the last six (6) to eight (8) months on the project and this was their culmination they were working on getting approved through DCA and the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. The planning process included three (3) phases; research and analysis, draft, and final plan phase, which they were currently on now. The Steering Committee was a committee appointed by the county and municipalities which had twenty-seven (27) individuals on the committee who represented the different cities and county. The committee helped steer the project by providing guidance regarding local preferences, making recommendations, and reviewing all the draft materials. They had a total of four (4) public meetings, two (2) kick-off meetings in March, two (2) planning workshops in March and April, and a draft plan open house. They had a final plan presentation which further tailored the ideas they heard from the community in June. The plan has a report of accomplishments from the previous comprehensive plan, analysis of the existing conditions, updated the future land use map, sample redevelopment plans for areas that could redevelop in the future, fifty-two (52) unique policies concerning land use, transportation, housing and economic development, natural and cultural resources, a five (5) year work program with fifty-seven (57) projects. The overarching goals of the plan are livability, economic finality for the future, mobility and transportation options, and preserve the historical and open spaces that are currently in the county. At the end of July on the 22<sup>nd</sup> after they collect the last of the comments they will send off the plan to the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and then to the DCA. They will then take the comments from both affiliations and refine the plan during September with it hopefully being adopted by their deadline on October 31, 2018.

Vice-Chair Hancock asked if anyone had any questions and thanked Mr. Newell and Ms. Richter for all of the hard work. He added that they looked forward to the finished project.

**Vice-Chair Hancock opened the public hearing, he asked if there was anyone there in support or opposition of the plan, seeing none he closed the public hearing and asked if there was any discussion.**

**3. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TAX LEVY FOR FLOYD COUNTY FOR 2018**

Vice-Chair Hancock asked County Manager McCord for an overview. County Manager McCord stated that they have advertised the Millage Rate to stay at the current level or less. He stated that they are not increasing the rate or recommending that they increase. However, due to a mild

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increase in the tax digest of roughly two percent (2%), if they leave the Millage Rate at the current rate they would generate additional revenue over what they have generated previously. He wanted to preface his next statement by saying that the sky was not falling and that Floyd County was not in any trouble but they did have some things that needed to be addressed currently and in the future. First of all, the county is at a \$3M deficit budget in 2018. They have an unrestricted fund balance of approximately \$13M, it takes \$12M to cash flow operations through a twelve (12) month period. As of today the county has \$1.1M in cash, so the rainy day fund, or the \$13M unrestricted general fund balance is not a cash pile of \$13M in the bank, they use that as an operating account throughout the year. As they approach property tax being due in November, the amount is lowered because they utilize that for payroll and county operations. Some other general things that had to do in the last two (2) years was an emergency general fund replacement of a major bridge in the Everett Springs area, increases for employees have been virtually non-existent for the last five (5) years. In 2016 they did a two percent (2%) COLA, in 2017 they did zero, in 2018 they did zero to two percent (0-2%) merit, while neighboring communities are doing four to six percent (4-6%). He stated that they had to pay employees a fair wage, they have had a local campaign for the last three (3) to four (4) years to pay their officers more, they have to have revenue in order to do all of that. He stated that they have implemented a \$600,000.00 public safety pay increase plan for the Sheriff's Office and the Police Department, they are doing it in phases for three years. He stated that they are currently in their first year of a Correction Officer Pay Plan that will implement over \$200,000.00 annually. They have set aside and lowered recreation fees by twenty percent (20%) in 2015, they set aside \$400,000.00 for a scholarship program, they have done \$300,000.00 worth of jail improvements, \$80,000.00 in fire system improvements, \$60,000.00 in ADA improvements at the judicial center, they eliminated energy excise tax in 2014, which the estimate to be in excess of \$1M dollars. Motor Vehicle and TAVT continue to decrease, although TAVT is increasing the old ad valorem tax is decreasing at a rate faster than the TAVT is increasing. Local government had no opportunity to adjust this, they did not create the plan, it got handed to them through state law. He stated there is uncertainty at Georgia Power Plant Hammond, he believes everyone is aware of their slow down and potential closure in the future, and the county has to prepare because they currently pay over \$2M in M&O to Floyd County and it would be a devastating loss to revenue that goes towards all the services provided. He stated that they are paving seventeen (17) miles annually but they need to be doing forty (40). At the current rate of paving they would get each road paved once every forty-five (45) years. Asphalt does not last forty-five (45) years. They have \$6.9M in capital requests this year, later tonight if the board did approve the first revision of the budget, they will recommend \$2.2M in capital improvements out of the \$6.9M requested. He stated the county has added multiple positions in multiple departments, some at the Sheriff's Office, some at the prison, he added the prison was an unfunded mandate through a federal law

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that requires a certain level of supervision in the prison that they receive no federal money for. Sales tax rates have been extremely flat for the past four (4) years, they are not decreasing so that is a good sign that things are improving, as of now they stand at two-point one percent (2.1%) increase. Health insurance rates continue to rise, two (2) years ago they had \$4M in funds, today they have \$2.6M in the health insurance fund. He stated the county has a total of \$18M in fund balance but \$5M is restricted where it cannot be utilized to compare their current percent of expenditures versus fund balance. They try to stay in the recommended range of thirty to forty percent (30-40%) but are currently slightly below at twenty-nine percent (29%). He stated staffing changes that had to be done in multiple departments, they continue to have facility improvements and expansions that require maintenance. Recommending leaving the Millage rate the same or slightly decreasing it will give the county a little bit of an increase in funds to allow them to do stuff that is needed. He stated that they have had a \$125,000.00 annual increase on the jail mental health contract because the state hospital closed in 2007. Prior to 2007 they averaged ten to twelve (10-12) mental patients daily, today there is over one hundred (100) on psychotropic medicine in their facility and not to their doing. They have done a lot of good things over the past several years, like he mentioned before he did not want anyone to think that the county is in dire straits because they are not. They rolled the Millage rate back last year from 9.6% to 9.487%, but they have bills to pay and expenses are increasing. He stated that they were not growing as a county if the number of employees, vehicles, is looked at they are not growing, they have stayed stagnant through the recession and have done the best they could possibly do with minimal layoffs and furloughs and provided acceptable level service. He stated they have a radio system that required a \$1.2M software update this year and they are in the last year of the maintenance agreement which will cost anywhere from \$400,000.00-\$600,000.00 annually. He stated they were at one-hundred percent (100%) Freeport Tax Exemption and one-hundred percent (100%) energy excise tax for economic development. These things take a lot of revenue to do. He stated multiple departments are doing a really good job with the resources that they are given but he thinks that there is not one department that if asked could use additional staff. He stated that the county has not ramped back up with the improvements in the economy since the recession has at least flattened out, and in his opinion is improving. He stated his recommendation was to leave the Millage Rate as is, or slightly decrease. He has no problem with a decrease, he is trying to prevent a catastrophe in the future, such as a power plant closure, they have a property in the north part of the county on Highway 53 and Highway 140 that has bonded debt that they did in 2007. They will have to make those debt payments starting in 2019 through 2025, the debt payment is \$750,000.00 annually. Up to this point they have had SPLOST funds eligible to make those payments for them but beginning next year they will have to allocate funds out of the general fund. He stated his recommendation is to allow minor growth in the digest to allow them to have a minor increase in what the county generates. He stated that

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the county does not collect one-hundred percent (100%) of taxes that come in, there are taxes that go unpaid every year and that is why they are recommending the 9.487% to stay the same or a slight decrease. He stated that it would be up to the Commission to make the vote and whatever they decide will be to the best of their ability of whatever it takes to manage the county the way it needs to be managed. He stated this was just a quick snapshot of what was discussed in caucus and if anyone had any questions leading up to that then they can go from there.

Vice-Chair asked if County Manager McCord could provide an overview of where the rate was in 2016 and where it is at now.

County Manager McCord stated in 2016 they did an increase in 2015 due to the Department of Revenue adjustment that affected SPLOST, sales tax, the school board and all the other entities in Floyd county. In 2016 they were at 9.6%, 2017 they were at 9.487%. Again, he recommends that they leave it at the 9.487% or slightly decrease to allow them to gain back. The full rollback would be 9.343% which would leave things the same. If the assessment does not increase and the Millage Rate stays the same, they would pay the same. If the assessed value goes up, they would be paying a little bit more. He stated there would be a balancing effect from the Assessor's Office on property whether it is sold, or a new fair market value based on that.

**Vice-Chair declared the public hearing open, he asked if there was anyone to speak in favor or opposition.**

**OPPOSE: Clint Wilder, 3585 Big Texas Valley Road, Rome, Georgia,** stated he opposed the tax levy and supported the minor decrease. He stated he is a member of the Floyd County Executive Committee GOP; he believes lowering the Millage Rate or slightly lowering it to provide a net neutral budget is a fiscally conservative thing to do. It's the Republican thing to do. He also thinks it will go a long way with voters. He encouraged the board to go for a slightly lower Millage Rate and thanked them for their time.

**OPPOSE: Betty Zane Morris, 217 Maplecrest Lane, Rome, Georgia,** she stated her assessed market value went up \$72,000.00 within the year, which is one third (1/3) of what it had been the previous year and makes her taxes go up just as much. She believes the taxes have raised because of supply and demand, the last home that sold in her neighborhood was pursued by three (3) different people who were willing to pay any price they needed to, to purchase the home. Another reason was due to amenities, her home is twenty years old and the new homes though built with the same footprint have advanced amenities and that is why the houses are selling for more. She also pointed out that the home owner's association has the responsibility of maintaining their own streets which saves the county and city money. They maintain their own

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outdoor lighting which also save the county and city money, they have one water bill and one garbage bill that also saves money. She is asking that they give their fairness in assessing homes and giving fair market values. She thanked the board.

**OPPOSE: Sammy Barkley, 1900 Wayside Road, Kingston, Georgia,** thanked the Commission for giving up their personal time to look out for what is best for the county. He stated that lately he felt like he was under attack from every taxing authority there is. Internet purchases were now taxed, SPLOST, ELOST, School Board taxes, the county raising taxes by maintaining the same Millage Rate but increasing assessments. He stated he has properties where the assessment was up 300%. He feels like the citizens are being taxed to death. He would like to see a priority made of reducing taxes in the county.

**OPPOSE: Chris Sarton, Old Polo Fields, Rome, Georgia,** stated he has a newer house in the Polo Fields Subdivision, since he built his house in 2014 his taxes have increased every year at a drastic rate. He stated he spoke with all his neighbors except one and he was there to speak on behalf of the neighborhood and himself, they all feel like they pay an extremely high rate that just keeps going up. The subdivision absorbs a lot of funds by keeping ditches clean, trees trimmed, and other things to keep the neighborhood looking good. He thinks more people would be favorable to a higher Millage Rate if they had a fair tax assessment. He stated that a lower tax rate would be an advantage and keep more people in town.

**OPPOSE: Nicholas Hand, 250 Chubb Road, Rome, Georgia,** stated that taxes were something that did not sell well. He stated his properties taxes increased ten percent (10%). He asked that the Commission take a step back and make a commitment to reduce taxes, that is what the citizens of the county want. He thanked them for their time.

**He asked if there was anyone else to speak in opposition, seeing none he closed the public hearing and asked if there was any discussion. He asked County Manager McCord if he had anything else to add.**

County Manager McCord stated that they would have two (2) more public hearings. He asked Assistant County Manager Burkhalter the times and dates.

Assistant County Manager Burkhalter stated the next public hearing would be held on July 24, 2018 at 8:00AM, and the third would be at 6:00PM on July 24, 2018 at the next commission meeting.

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County Manager McCord thanked the participants for the comments and added they would be noted.

Vice-Chair Hancock stated on behalf of the Commission they appreciated the participants for being engaged in the process and coming to the Commission face to face instead of taking to social media. He added that if they ever had any questions about anything to please feel free to call them, they encourage participation because they take feedback into consideration.

Commissioner Bagby stated he also appreciated the participants for coming out and voicing their concerns. He would also encourage them to go to the school board meetings which is double of what the county's Millage Rate is.

**RESOLUTIONS**

- 1. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITY TO ISSUE BONDS TO FINANCE FACILITIES LOCATED IN FLOYD COUNTY, GEORGIA KNOWN AS THE GARDENS OF ROME.**

Vice-Chair Hancock called for a motion. MOTION made by Commissioner Watters to approve the resolution authorizing the Public Finance Authority to issue bonds to finance facilities located in Floyd County known as the Gardens of Rome, and to authorize the Vice-Chair to sign the resolution and authorize the Assistant County Clerk to attest. SECOND by Commissioner Bagby. VOTING:

	YES	NO
Commissioner Bagby		
" Watters		
" Maxey		
Vice-Chair Hancock		

Motion Carried

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

- 1. Appointment to the Rome-Floyd Planning Commission to fill Bill Temple's post which will expire August 27, 2018**

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Vice-Chair Hancock made a MOTION to appoint Steve Miller to the Rome-Floyd Planning Commission to fill Bill Temple's post which will expire on August 27, 2018. Mr. Millers appointment will expire on August 20, 2022. SECOND by Commissioner Maxey. VOTING:

YES

NO

Commissioner Bagby

" Watters

" Maxey

Vice-Chair Hancock

Motion Carried

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

**1. Update on Everett Springs Water Project**

County Manager McCord stated Commissioner Maxey mentioned in caucus that they had someone almost at the pocket, south of the Boy Scouts, that was already connected and receiving water from the water system from gravity flow because they have not tied the tank in yet. The project is probably seventy-five percent (75%) complete, they are still looking at substantial completion in September. The concrete work on the tank is fully completed, the pump station is waiting on the final connections to be done which would happen pretty quickly. Eighty percent (80%) of the lines are complete and they are still on schedule and looking at a completion date in late September.

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

No Report

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

No Report

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice-Chair Hancock asked County Manager McCord if the Consent Agenda is in order.

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County Manager McCord stated Asked County Manager McCord if the agenda was in order, stated yes in order and all seven (7) items for consideration were discussed in caucus.

Vice-Chair Hancock called for a Motion. MOTION made by Commissioner Watters to approve and authorize execution of items submitted under the Consent Agenda as presented. SECOND by Commissioner Maxey. VOTING:

	YES	NO
Commissioner Bagby		
" Watters		
" Maxey		
Vice-Chair Hancock		

Motion Carried

- 1. Approve Quit-Claim Deed for surplus and transfer of property located on Roberts Road, Floyd County Tax Parcel G14W-012 to the Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority.**
- 2. Approve Quit-Claim Deed for surplus and transfer of property located on Roberts Road, Floyd County Tax Parcel G14W-013 to the Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority.**
- 3. Approve Quit-Claim Deed for surplus and transfer of property located on Roberts Road, Floyd County Tax Parcel G14W-051 to the Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority.**
- 4. Approve Quit-Claim Deed for surplus and transfer of property located at 208 Cherokee Street, Floyd County Tax Parcel I14-490 to the Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority.**
- 5. Approve Quit-Claim Deed for surplus and transfer of property located at 416 Harper Avenue, Floyd County Tax Parcel J14E-208 to the Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority.**

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- 6. Approve Quit-Claim Deed for surplus and transfer of property located at 375 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Floyd County Tax Parcel L10Z-036 to the Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority.**
- 7. Approve Quit-Claim Deed for surplus and transfer of property located at 455 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Floyd County Tax Parcel L10Z-196 to the Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. APPROVE 2018 MIDYEAR BUDGET REVISION.**

County Manager McCord stated he only wanted to highlight a few things. For revenues they have some minor increases in TAVT even though Ad Velorum has decreased, statistically offender rehab by the numbers coming in, Clerk of Court fees are up slightly, interest is increasing and has been a substantial change in county government the last several years. He stated on the expenditure side they had some increases in facilities management to do some additional work on the parking decks. They also improved on some things that were approved earlier in the year, through Probate court they added a position. The Chattooga County inmate revenue is being split with the Sheriff's Office for their maintenance and he feels that it has been a good partnership. Jail medical have increased by \$150,000.00. The coroner's office is on an unfortunate record pace, they were going to double their cases this year, so they had to add additional funding for those cases. The coroner's office goes out on a per call basis and are paid per call. Pauper burials are up. He stated capital has not changed significantly, they have some Police Department grants that were discussed in caucus. No general fund revenue increases. They had an increase in the morgue project which put them at \$115,000.00 for the total project. He stated they had some security upgrades at the courthouse with the camera and access system, an HVAC upgrade in IT, and a vehicle purchase in engineering that they had been short for many years and since there would be a vehicle transfer there would not be any additions to the fleet. He stated another major thing was the approved runway overlay which would be taken out of 2013 SPLOST funds. The last item that is new is the final payment for the Lock & Dam restoration project that they owe the Corps of Engineers from several years ago that he believes happened in 2001. He stated they are going from an original budget in capital of \$1.9M to \$2.237M.

Vice-Chair Hancock called for a Motion. MOTION made by Commissioner Maxey to approve the 2018 midyear budget revision. SECOND by Commissioner Watters. VOTING:

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YES

NO

Commissioner Bagby  
" Watters  
" Maxey  
Vice-Chair Hancock

**2. APPROVE REQUEST FROM SHERIFF FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PAY ADJUSTMENT.**

County Manager McCord stated this request came from Sheriff Burkhalter several months ago and they kept going back and forth on how best to do this. Sheriff Burkhalter has recommended a seven and half percent (7.5%), or fifteen (15) step increase for a list of employees they currently have. He agreed to eliminate position if need be for the increase. Looking at his payroll budget, and with the number of vacancies they currently have he did not think it would be necessary to go through that step. He stated they were three percent (3%) in midyear below budget on salary. The impact of this increase for admin staff is only going to be \$8,107.00 per year, annually would be \$16, 215.00 he recommended approval without adjusting any positions to accommodate that.

Vice-Chair Hancock called for a Motion. MOTION made by Commissioner Watters to approve the request from the Sheriff for administrative pay adjustments. SECOND by Commissioner Bagby. VOTING:

YES

NO

Commissioner Bagby  
" Watters  
" Maxey  
Vice-Chair Hancock

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**1. Donation Bins Ordinance**

Vice-Chair Hancock that they had been talking about this for a little while and discussed in

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caucus is the donation bins that are littered throughout the county. There were some issues out at the Food Lion in Armuchee that recently go cleaned up thanks to County Manager McCord. There have also been issues at some of the other location sites, so they are in the process of working on an ordinance to deal with them as a nuisance ordinance. He asked if anyone else wanted to add any comments

County Manager McCord stated County Attorney Hoyt is working on an ordinance that they can try and address as a nuisance issue. He complimented Mr. Howard Gibson, Rome-Floyd Building Inspection and his staff and public work staff that were able to find some addresses in the trash left behind. Mr. Gibson has addressed two (2) locations and a third today with illegal dumping which would go through Environmental compliance and environmental court to be dealt with. He stated they are very close to having an ordinance to bring before the board with more dialoged.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the Board, a MOTION was made by Commissioner Maxey. SECOND by Commissioner Bagby that the meeting be adjourned.

VOTING:

YES

NO

Commissioner Bagby

" Watters

" Maxey

Vice-Chair Hancock

Motion Carried

**ATTEST:**

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**ERIN ELROD, FLOYD COUNTY CLERK**

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**FLOYD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
CAUCUS  
July 10, 2018 4:00 PM**

Present: Commissioners Wright Bagby, Larry Maxey, Rhonda Wallace, Scotty Hancock, Allison Watters and, Assistant County Manager Gary Burkhalter, Assistant County Clerk Amy Dawkins, and County Attorney Wade Hoyt III.

Others Present: Artagus Newell, Rome-Floyd Planning Director, Ms. Laura Richter of TSW, and Diane Lewis of Lewis Chemicals.

Mr. Newell and Ms. Richter reviewed the Rome-Floyd, Cave Spring Comprehensive Plan. Commission and staff reviewed and discussed items on the agenda for the meeting of July 10, 2018.

**ATTEST:**

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**ERIN ELROD, FLOYD COUNTY CLERK**