



Lawrence County
COMMITTEE AS A WHOLE

Date: March 10, 2025 | **Time:** 5:00-5:52 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners: Shane Eaton, Delano Benefield, Rick Skillington, Scott Franks, Dave Ray, Steve Hagan, Chris Sutherland, Barry Luffman, Phillip Heatherly, Randy Brewer, and Denny Gillespie. **County EMA Director** Shelton Barnett, and **TEMA Representative** Jeremy Holley.

Chairman Eaton called the meeting to order.

1. Historical Context:

A resolution for floodplain zoning was passed in 1988, which was amended in 2017 to include updated maps.

2. National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP):

Holley noted that not everyone realizes that Lawrence County is under the NFIP. Building permits are required for any construction in flood zones, as per the ordinance passed.

Commissioner Brewer asked about the coverage of homes versus property. **Holley** clarified that only structures require permits.

3. Floodplain Administration:

Holley emphasized the importance of having a floodplain administrator to manage permitting and compliance. He referenced his previous experience in Giles County, highlighting the significance of proper documentation for disaster relief funding.

Commissioner Eaton questioned the necessity of permits and how to enforce them.

4. Current Challenges:

Barnett pointed out and discussed the increase of Airbnbs being built in floodplains. **Holley** explained that during a declared disaster, there are two funding options available: Public Assistance and Individual

Assistance. He emphasized that individuals can only apply for Individual Assistance if the county is enrolled in the NFIP.

5. Permitting and Compliance:

Commissioner Skillington inquired about FEMA aid eligibility for properties not in designated flood zones but affected by flooding. **Holley** confirmed eligibility but noted that most had building codes in place.

Commissioner Franks emphasized the need to appoint an administrator to assess existing structures. **Commissioner Eaton** reiterated the need for someone certified in floodplain management.

6. Permit Fees:

Commissioner Ray asked about permit charges. **Holley** explained that while Giles County does not charge for permits, they do charge for appeals to support the cost of Commissioners meeting for the Regional Planning Commission to review the appeal.

7. Administrative Suggestions:

Commissioner Eaton suggested that EMA Director Shelton Barnett could fulfill the floodplain administrator role temporarily until a replacement is hired under his purview.

8. Future Steps:

Barnett indicated a need for better maps and data regarding low water bridge crossings.

Commissioner Ray asserted that EMA should fully function as a county department if we are adding more county responsibilities onto the director.

Conclusion:

Commissioner Eaton proposed that the Utilities Committee should take on further discussions regarding these matters.

Adjournment:

Motion: Ray, **Second:** Benefield.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes Submitted By: Christian Tyree