

When the Macon County Legislative Body met in regular session on Monday night, June 15, the issue of finishing the dog pound and hiring a dogcatcher was up for debate.

At the previous Committee of the Whole Meeting held June 1st, a motion was made and passed on to the Legislative Body, calling for Mayor Linville to hire a dogcatcher and take care of the day-to-day operation of the dog pound.

The motion was again delivered, with two different votes held on Monday night. The first motion failed with 10 in favor including Commissioners David Crowder, Vernon Biggs, Jeff Hughes, Billy West, Phillip Snow, Jerry Ray, Larry Tucker, Mike East, Ralph Doss and Helen Hesson.

Opposed were Commissioners Scott Gammons, Tony Boles, Annette Looper, Junior Spears, Ronnie McDuffee, Phillip Spears, Grant Malo, Benton Bartley and Rosetta Driver. Commissioner Billy Bransford passed.

“Do you want to make a motion for someone else to be over the construction?” asked Mayor Linville.

When asked “Can’t you continue?” he replied, “If you don’t have enough trust in me to do that, you can get somebody else to be over the building.”

Linville told those gathered that a rumor has gotten out that he already has a dogcatcher hired.

A second motion was presented, calling for the mayor to continue with construction and to hire a dogcatcher when it is built.

The motion carried with commissioners voting same as the first vote except for Commissioner Boles who paused when asked to cast his vote and asked the mayor, “Will we get to see the applications (dogcatcher). Boles cast an in “aye” vote which passed the motion with 11 total in favor.

"I want the person who is dog catcher to know who his boss is," said Linville, and mentioned the liability issues associated with a dog pound.

Bransford spoke explaining both the passes, "As I stated before, I think when it comes to a dog pound or laying people off, I know which way I'm going to go."

In the week following the meeting I have asked several commissioners if they would share their reasoning for their aye or nay vote and also discussed with Mayor Linville some of the concerns.

Mayor Linville stated, "We're not going to lay people off to build a dog pound, that has never been a consideration, it hasn't even been mentioned."

"I'll do the right thing," he said, "and the right thing is to go ahead and spend grant money, making it go as far as it can toward the construction."

Commissioner Benton Bartley cast a no vote at the meeting and recently offered, "I think anybody that is hired as a county employee should be an asset, and I think it should be looked at by the commissioners. It is not that I don't have all kinds of confidence in Shelvy, I do." Bartley also feels that as much as the dog pound is needed, that he also wants current employees to keep their jobs.

Commissioner Vernon Biggs states, "We've got a grant to help with the construction and at one of the commissioners meetings the sheriff said he would use the inmates to help with laying the block and help us build it. That way we could do it for the amount of money we had."

Biggs remarked, "I think there is a big need, based on the calls I get."

Biggs is in favor of going ahead and getting it constructed, since they have the money, and then seeing where the budget takes them.

Commissioner Ronnie McDuffee commented, "I feel like the 20 commissioners could have picked a man just as good as the mayor can and that is how things have been handled in the past." He also stressed the importance of the people skills of the dogcatcher chosen, and the needed ability to diffuse situations and to work in the proper manner.

Commissioner Jerry Ray cast a yes vote at the meeting and remarked, "There is a dire need for this dog pound. I think if the Mayor is going to be in control of the dog pound, he ought to be in control of the hiring."

Ray commented at the meeting that "Somebody has to take responsibility."

Commissioner Annette Looper stated, "I feel like the county commissioners ought to hire whoever is over animal control. I do not feel that it is any higher responsibility than that for human life. We appointed the ambulance director."

Commissioner Junior Spears doesn't object to Mayor Linville going ahead with construction but says, "We hired everybody else, the ambulance director, codes inspector," and thinks the commissioners can make a decision or have input on a dogcatcher.

Commissioner Ralph Doss remarked, "Dogs continue to be dropped off especially in rural areas. Someone has to take care of them. I feel like we should go ahead, though we do have to watch spending."

Commissioner Phillip Spears said, "I don't want to have to raise taxes for this dog pound." He expressed a concern about getting the cart before the horse where staffing is concerned. Once built, Spears said, "Somebody has got to take the calls and dispatch."

As far as construction goes the slab, delayed due to wet weather in the spring, has now been completed and blocks are ready to be laid.