

November 19, 2003

Honorable Rusell Bennett, Chairperson  
Jasper County Board of Commissioners  
Jasper County Courthouse  
126 W. Green Street  
Monticello, Georgia 31064

Dear Commissioner Bennett:

I am writing on behalf of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation. We are an organization that seeks to advance the cause of open government and monitors freedom of information issues throughout this state.

It has been brought to our attention that at its meetings, the Commission appears to withdraw into executive session for allegedly improper reasons. Additionally, it appears that the Commission routinely adds items to its agenda after the meeting has begun. Despite inquiries by citizens, we understand that this practice continues. We are concerned that these activities are contrary to public policy and urge you to review O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et seq.* which sets forth the requirements for properly held public meetings.

To that end, I have enclosed six copies of our publication, *Georgia's Sunshine Laws: A Citizen's Guide to Open Government in Georgia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition for distribution to your commission members as well as the county administrator.

We would appreciate an explanation as to why the Commission's practices appear to contravene the public interest. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hollie Manheimer  
Executive Director

Enclosures

Cc: GFAF Board

