

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, November 12, 2024 - 5:30 PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairman Demarcus Marshall
Commissioner Joyce Evans
Commissioner Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Clay Griner

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

INVOCATION

Samaritan's Purse Chaplain Mike Clark.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Vice Chairman Demarcus Marshall

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the regular session of October 22, 2024. There was no work session meeting held. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Evans seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS

Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointments. Mrs. Dukes stated the term held by Mr. Ed Hightower and Ms. Vicki Biles have expired. Mr. Hightower has expressed a desire to continue to serve. The vacant seat left by Ms. Biles is due to her moving out of the area. Mr. Calvin Graham, Mr. Brice Evans and Mr. Blake Robinson have expressed an interest in being appointed. Commissioner Wisenbaker nominated Mr. Ed Hightower for appointment. There being no other nominations, Mr. Ed Hightower was reappointed by acclamation. Commissioner Griner nominated Mr. Calvin Graham for appointment. There being no other nominations, Mr. Calvin Graham was appointed by acclamation.

PUBLIC HEARING

TXT-2024-03 ULDC Amendments

County Planner, J.D. Dillard and Projects Assistant, Jason Davenport presented this item. Mr. Dillard stated this text amendment focuses on two key areas: the maximum number of lots accessible from a single point of ingress/egress, set at 80 lots, and the creation, implementation and enforcement of a tree bank. Staff has also reviewed potable water system requirements and recommends we require new or expanding private water systems to have a permanent onsite generator-based back-up power.

Staff recommends approval of these conditions. Mr. Davenport stated this is the same draft as this morning plus highlights and is ready for your consideration. Regarding input, Mrs. Gretchen Quarterman contacted the office this afternoon and was sent a draft document. Vice Chairman Marshall asked regarding private water systems 'expansion' means including existing systems? Mr. Davenport stated if you add a tap we want to be involved to make sure that the system reflects these standards, requiring a generator and back-up. Commissioner Orenstein asked regarding a requirement on any new systems and looking at existing systems in place? County Manager, Paige Dules, answered staff is waiting on that direction from the commission. Chairman Slaughter stated the new and existing systems will need to be addressed moving forward. Chairman Slaughter and the commissioners continued to ask additional questions regarding the amendments and Mr. Davenport responded to all of their questions and comments. Commissioner Orenstein thanked staff for working on these amendments.

Chairman Slaughter asked for a brief moment to introduce a special guest from Samaritan's Purse. EMA Director, Ashley Tye, introduced Mr. Jacob Rutz with Samaritan's Purse. Mr. Tye stated we are very appreciative of his time and efforts within the community. Additionally, Mr. Tye stated this is more than tree removal, but also ministering to the citizens of our community. Mr. Rutz gave an update, stating Samaritan's Purse has been in our community since the day after the storm and there have been 210 open tarp requests, overall there are 2,830 requests for work to date, with 571 completed currently. There are 1,453 remaining open work orders and Mr. Rutz stated their work will continue here until January 25, 2024. There are 120 volunteers working Monday - Saturday. Mr. Tye asked Mr. Rutz to give the number of work orders for Hurricane Idalia versus Hurricane Helene, Mr. Rutz responded with Hurricane Idalia there were 656 work orders and currently the work orders from Hurricane Helene are 2,836. Additionally, Mr. Rutz stated there have been 34,108 hours worked in our community. Chairman Slaughter and the commission thanked Samaritan's Purse for their hard work, patience, understanding and encouragement in helping so many citizens in our community.

Chairman Slaughter resumed the discussion regarding this agenda item. Gretchen Quarterman, 6565 Quarterman Road, spoke in opposition to the request. Mrs. Quarterman has concerns with the process and timing and asked that this item be tabled. No one spoke in favor of the request. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the ULDC changes presented by staff with 80 lots per ingress/egress and to include the November 12, 2024 highlighted updates included in their packet, Vice Chairman Marshall seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2024-15 Loch Winn LTD, Loch Laurel Rd & Carroll Ulmer Rd, ~62ac, R-A to R-1 & R-A, Well and Septic

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject properties from R-A (Residential Agriculture) zoning to R-1 (Low Density Residential) and R-A zoning. The applicant would like to subdivide a portion of the properties into a residential subdivision. The subject property possesses road frontage on Loch Laurel Road and Carroll Ulmer, both maintained county roads, with proposed access off Loch Laurel Road and is within the Urban Service Area and Rural Residential Character Area. Mr. Dillard stated on the conceptual layout the proposed sixty-two (62) acres showing approximately forty-one (41) lots, with lot 11 as an existing cemetery, which is currently being delineated and will not be suitable for development. The TRC analyzed the request including the neighboring land use, lot sizes and zoning pattern, the lack of utilities and the groundwater recharge area and recommends the sixty-two acres (62) be rezoned to R-1 zoning with the remaining one hundred acres remaining R-A. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Commissioner Orenstein asked regarding the potential for trespassing

concerns, Mr. Dillard stated that is correct. Bruce Smith, 2941 Loch Laurel Road, spoke against this request. Mr. Smith stated he would ask to consider two conditions, if approved, to require an environment impact study and to ask the developer to add a fence to the property line on the Loch Laurel Road. Nick Burns, 3101 Loch Laurel Road, spoke against this request and asked if approved, to require an environmental impact study as a condition. David Adams, 2826 Arrowleaf Drive, spoke against this request and his concern is regarding the road coming from Buckeye Drive and safety concerns. Mr. Adams stated his second concern is the water that may come back on his property, due to this development. Caleb Reed, 2910 Buckeye Drive, spoke against this request with concerns regarding the increased traffic. Mr. Reed stated his second concern is the water issue which varies on the level and pushes into the ditches and yard area. No one spoke in favor of the request. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked Mr. Dillard on a development this size with water issues, is there an EPA impact study? Mr. Dillard stated there is an analysis that has to be done by the developer's engineer. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve this request excluding Buckeye Drive as a point of ingress/egress and to approve as presented, Vice Chairman Marshall seconded. Commissioners Evans, Wisenbaker, Vice Chairman Marshall and Commissioner Griner voted in favor of the request, Commissioner Orenstein opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2024-17 Evans Property, 4836 Bemiss Rd, ~1.4ac, R-1 to C-H, County Utilities

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject properties from R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning. The general motivation for the rezoning is to allow the property to be used at its highest and best potential. Mr. Dillard stated the property is within the Urban Service Area, Bemiss Corridor Overlay and Neighborhood Activity Center Character Area with no wetlands. There is an existing mobile home on the southern end of the property; the one to the north has been removed. The Planning Commission and TRC recommended approval. No one spoke for or against this request. Vice Chairman Marshall made a motion to approve the request, Commissioner Evans seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Basic Decorative Street Lighting Districts – Val Del Estates, Phases 1-3, Quarterman Estates, Phase 5, Hamilton Green, and Bemiss Springs

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request has been advertised as required and staff recommends approval of adding the seventy-one (71) lots of phases 1-3 of the Val Del Estate Subdivision, twenty-nine (29) of phase 5 of the Quarterman Estates Subdivision, eighty-one (81) lots of the Hamilton Green Townhomes Development and ninety-seven (97) lots of the Bemiss Springs Townhomes Development into Lowndes County's basic decorative street lighting district under the Street Lighting Ordinance. Mr. Dillard stated the current charge for the basic decorative street lighting is \$61.50 per lot, per year. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Wisenbaker made motion to approve, Commissioner Orenstein seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Beer and Wine License - Dominic Joseph Socco of Uncle Carlo's Gelato, LLC - 1024 Lakes Blvd., Lake Park, GA

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated this request is for the sale of beer and wine for consumption on premises due to a change of ownership. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the license, Commissioner Orenstein seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Beer, Wine & Liquor License - Tony Taylor of Taylor Entertainment of GA, LLC, DBA Twin Lakes Club and Grill, 1068 Lakes Blvd., Lake Park, GA

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated this request is for a new business for the sale of beer, wine and liquor for consumption on premises. Ms. Black stated as of this afternoon all requirements for the license have not been met, if you choose to move forward, make it contingent on all requirements being completed. No one spoke in opposition. Mr. Tony Taylor spoke in favor of the request as the owner. Mr. Taylor stated this will be a family-oriented restaurant and everything is very close to being finished and will be approved by the inspections department. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve this license contingent on the issuance of a certificate of occupancy (C/O) being issued, Commissioner Orenstein seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

UPS Replacement at the Valdosta and Clyattville Public Safety Radio System Tower Sites

911 Director, Tonya Davis, presented the request in the amount of \$72,103.12. Mrs. Davis stated this request is to replace two Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) units which are located in Valdosta and Clyattville and are also over twenty-two years old. Mrs. Davis stated this is a budgeted item. Mrs. Davis stated she was able to confirm that the life expectancy is between 15-20 years with proper maintenance. Vice Chairman Marshall and Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commission Wisenbaker seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Infrastructure for Quarterman Estates Phase V

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Quarterman Estates Subdivision, phase V is located in the southern portion of Lowndes County off of White Water Road and includes twenty-nine (29) lots. The subdivision was developed by Quarterman Estates, LLC (William and Brian Touchton). Mr. McLeod stated all infrastructure, to include the road, drainage pipe, utility easements, water and sewer lines, all construction and paperwork have been completed. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Orenstein seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FY26 5311 Regional Transit Resolution

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated the Southern Georgia Regional Commission voted at their August 22, 2024 meeting to apply for the FY2026 5311 Rural Transportation Program Grant Funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation in order to continue operating the regional transit system on behalf of the participating municipalities, including Lowndes County. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the resolution as presented, Commissioner Orenstein seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Infrastructure for an additional 0.29 miles of Hunt Road

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Hunt Road is an existing county road that intersects with Inner Perimeter Road in the eastern portion of Lowndes County. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority developed an additional 0.29 miles onto the west end of Hunt Road to accommodate industrial growth. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority made a request for Lowndes County to accept the 0.29 miles of infrastructure which includes the road and drainage pipe. All construction and documents have been completed.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Orenstein seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Georgia Power Utility Easement (5333 Mill Store Road)

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Georgia Power needs to run a new underground power line to feed the Francis Lake office and lift station. In order to complete the project, Georgia Power has provided documents for a utility easement that is needed from Lowndes County. Vice Chairman Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Wisenbaker seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Purchase of VSU South Campus Property

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this is the next step in the process to consider the agreement to purchase and sale real property between the Board of Regents and Lowndes County and includes the lease back of the 6,600 square feet of space on the first floor of building "b" back to the university to continue counseling services. This has been negotiated by staff for the purchase of an approximate 4.728 acre tract known as Valdosta State University South located on North Patterson Street with the negotiated purchase price of \$2,156,000.00. The purpose of this purchase is to relocate the Board of Elections and provide relocation space for state agencies. Vice Chairman Marshall asked regarding the rental agreement as far as what the monthly utilities would run, Mrs. Dukes stated the amount for the monthly utilities has not been received yet. Chairman Slaughter stated the need is for the Board of Elections Office with more emphasis on early voting and their current facility and parking is not conducive to the amount of traffic. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the attached purchase and sale agreement and the attached lease agreement as presented, Commissioner Evans seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

BID

LMIG Supplemental Local Road Assistance (LRA) 2024 Restriping Bids

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the commission approved the 2024 Local Road Assistance application at the May 28, 2024, regular session meeting. The restriping bid includes restriping 32 linear miles of paved county road. The work includes restriping the centerline, edgeline, stopbars, pavement markings and installing raised pavement markers. Mr. McLeod stated two bids were received with Peek Pavement Marking, LLC being the low bidder in the amount of \$111,223.17. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve Peek Pavement Marking, LLC as the low bidder, in the amount of \$111,223.17, Commissioner Wisenbaker seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Bid for 60 SCBA Cylinders for the Fire Department

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented a request to purchase a quantity of sixty (60) SCBA Cylinders for the Fire Department, with Municipal Emergency Service submitting the low bid, in the amount of \$85,097.40. Commissioner Griner asked what was the bid amount for last year, Mrs. Black answered she believed that amount was approximately \$79,000.00. Vice Chairman Marshall made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Evans seconded. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes mentioned the below items:

- On Saturday, November 9th, The Girls on the Run held their 5K Run beginning at the historic courthouse and the community turn out was great. Mrs. Dukes and Commissioner Evans were in attendance.
- Lowndes County will be hosting a Leadership Lowndes Wrap-Up Day at the EOC on Thursday.
- On Friday, staff will be attending a workforce housing workshop which is the beginning of the OneValdosta-Lowndes housing study with Georgia Tech.
- November 19th Leadership Lowndes Youth will be here for their local government day.
- On November 21st, One Valdosta-Lowndes will be having a College and Career Steering Committee meeting
- On November 21st, Judge Cowart's Retirement Reception will be held at the historic courthouse at 4:00 p.m.
- December 1st is the published date to have the debris at the right of way for removal.

Chairman Slaughter recognized the presence of Youth Leadership Lowndes class members.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD -

Burton Fletcher, 3533 Cherry Creek Road, addressed the commission regarding the election held with those commissioners that were re-elected, our newly elected commissioner and our out-going commissioner, and thanked them for their continued service. Mr. Fletcher also mentioned those that ran in the election, but were not elected. Additionally, Mr. Fletcher acknowledged Jessica Ganas, the Facilities and Marketing Coordinator at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse, and commended Mrs. Ganas for the exceptional guided tour with historical information related to Lowndes County. Lastly, Mr. Fletcher mentioned the Veterans Day Ceremony held at Lowndes High School and thanked Chairman Slaughter and Vice Chairman Marshall for their participation and thanked Vice Chairman Marshall for his service to the United States Marine Corp, as a fellow marine.

Janice Strickland, 2105 Pin Oak Circle, addressed the commission regarding flooding in her neighborhood, the Long Leaf Community. Chairman Slaughter told Mrs. Strickland that her address is within the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County has no authority on city streets.

Chairman Slaughter mentioned the other two "citizens wishing to be heard" forms submitted by Mr. Larry Waters and Ms. Hazel Edgecomb were also related to the flooding in the Long Leaf Community and would need to be addressed by the City of Valdosta.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Marshall wanted to thank those military veterans for their service as well as the volunteers helping the Board of Elections Office. Chairman Slaughter recognized Commissioner-Elect Michael Smith, District 5. County Manager, Paige Dukes, mentioned several comments she received regarding Vice Chairman Marshall at the Flag Dedication Ceremony and what a memorable speech he gave. Vice Chairman Marshall made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Wisenbaker seconded. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the regular meeting at 6:53 p.m.