

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
Monday, June 9, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans  
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker  
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall  
Commissioner Michael Smith

Chairman Bill Slaughter and Commissioner Scott Orenstein were not present.

Vice Chairperson Evans called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of May 27, 2025 and the regular session of May 27, 2025. No revisions were requested.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the term of Mr. Vincent Miller will expire June 30, 2025. Mr. Miller has expressed a desire to continue to serve. Mr. Samuel Clemons has also expressed an interest in serving on this board. Mrs. Dukes stated she has served for the past five years with Mr. Miller and he has been a valuable asset. Commissioner Smith asked if Mr. Miller is the Dean of Student Affairs at Valdosta State University, Mrs. Dukes responded yes.

**Lowndes County Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) Board**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated Mrs. Lynn Orenstein's term will expire June 30, 2025 and she has expressed a desire to continue to serve. Mr. Samuel Clemons has also expressed a desire to serve on this board.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**REZ-2025-08 Joseph Williams, 7219 Good Hope Rd., 2.5ac, E-A to E-A and R-A, Well and Septic**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this is a request by the applicant to subdivide the subject property of ten acres to a 2.5 acre tract and 7.5 acre tract. The 2.5 acre tract being subdivided as proposed to rezone to R-A zoning. This does stay within the agricultural character area and there are no wetlands on the property. The Planning Commission and the TRC recommended approval of this request.

**REZ-2025-09 All Metal Buildings, 2515 Madison Hwy, ~2 acres, C-G to C-H, Well and Septic**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from C-G (General Commercial) zoning to C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to unify the commercial zoning on the properties for their expanding business. Mr. Dillard stated this property is within the Urban Service Area, Community

Activity Center Character Area, the Valdosta Airport Overlay and a drastic groundwater recharge area. The TRC reviewed this request and recommends the following two conditions:

1. Any vehicular ingress/egress off of Poole Street or the unimproved portion of Cannon Avenue shall require the property owner/developer to pave the street from that ingress/egress to the nearest paved street. The property owner/developer will also be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and construction costs for the paving of those sections mentioned above.
2. The eastern property line along Poole Street shall be required to have a landscaped buffer that meets or exceeds ULDC Section 4.07.06.

The Planning Commission recommended approval with the conditions as stated above. Commissioner Marshall asked in regards to the property owner paving the roads, were these roads on the list to be paved. Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, answered yes sir, they have been on the paving list, but there is no funding source allocated to pave those roads. Commissioner Smith asked regarding any drainage issues with the property, Mr. Dillard answered no, sir. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked what is going to be paved, Mr. McLeod responded the developer has not acknowledged the exact ingress/egress and the roads are not known yet, but it will be the entrance to the nearest paved road.

## **FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Service Agreement with SGRC to Perform Hazard Mitigation Plan Update**

EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the agreement. Mr. Tye stated Lowndes County was recently awarded funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the purpose of updating the Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The current plan expires February 8, 2027. The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) has agreed to perform the update as they have done for the past two update cycles, while conducting all necessary meetings. Mr. Tye stated the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will cover the full cost of the SGRC services, which is \$21,000.00.

### **Purchase of one (1) Sutphen Heavy Duty Custom Pumper**

Fire Chief, Billy Young, presented the item. Chief Young stated the Lowndes County Fire Department requests approval to proceed with the purchase of one Sutphen Heavy Duty Pumper. This apparatus will be placed in service at Station #9 (Westside) in the amount of \$1,063,876.64. This apparatus and equipment will be completed within approximately 36-38 months. Commissioner Marshall asked what is the funding source, Mrs. Dukes responded that it takes three years to build and there is not a funding source identified yet; the commission has the flexibility to decide in three years. Commissioner Smith asked to verify that there is no payment up front, Mrs. Dukes responded that is correct. Commissioner Marshall asked regarding the equipment being purchased, Mrs. Dukes responded that this is the equipment which goes on the truck. Commissioner Smith asked if this will be a similar truck to what we are currently using. Chief Young responded identical.

### **Highway 94 East Property**

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the County owns a 0.86-acre parcel of property located on Georgia State Highway 94 East. It is surrounded by property owned by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority. The County is not using the parcel and has no plans to use it. If the County conveys it to the Industrial Authority, it will be combined with the adjoining Industrial Authority property and used for the Authority's purposes for the benefit of

the public. The conveyance is authorized by Georgia law. A proposed quit claim deed of the property to the Industrial Authority is attached in the packet.

## **BID**

### **A New Facility for Lowndes County Fire Rescue No. 4**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, recognized the leadership present from Fire Rescue who were involved with working with the design of the station. Mrs. Dukes stated the plans are available for review if the commission would like to review. Mrs. Dukes asked Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, to present the item. Mr. McLeod stated a new facility for Lowndes County Fire Rescue Station No. 4 is a 13,296 sq. ft. building that is proposed to be constructed at 4111 Stewart Circle. The new facility includes Fire Rescue living quarters, EMS living quarters, four truck bays, and all site work. Lowndes County Fire Rescue currently operates out of the older volunteer station located at 4007 Old US 41 North with this location being temporary and not intended for long-term use. The new station is the next step in the previously approved expansion plan for Lowndes County Fire Rescue. Staff received five bids on May 23, 2025 and Kellerman Construction was the low bidder in the amount of \$4,767,660.00 in 270 days.

Mrs. Dukes asked Chief Billy Young to speak about what this station will mean for operations. Chief Young stated that with the new fire station, Lowndes County will be able to provide Fire and EMS services to the northern part of the community. He also commended his leadership staff for assisting with the station's design. Chief Young mentioned Fire Rescue is ready and excited. This moves us toward the future and helps meet the needs of our fire service. He added that the partnership with SGMC, which includes another squad at Station Four, demonstrates how they will be able to provide not only fire protection but also EMS services. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if the living quarters were for both Fire and EMS personnel. Chief Young responded yes, there is a separate wing designated for EMS. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if EMS employees were employed by Lowndes County. Chief Young clarified that they are employees of South Georgia Medical Center. Commissioner Marshall inquired about the staffing at the facility. Chief Young responded that there would be two engine companies operating from the station, totaling eight personnel. Commissioner Smith asked whether the station is being built with future growth in mind. Chief Young replied yes. Commissioner Wisenbaker then asked whether the proposed Lake Park fire facility would follow the same design. Mrs. Dukes stated that, for budgetary reasons, they are hoping to retrofit the Rascals building into a fire station. However, if architects and engineers recommend that the structure needs to be leveled and rebuilt, this current station would serve as the model. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if Lake Park would include living quarters for both Fire and EMS. Chief Young responded yes. Commissioner Marshall asked whether the new fire station would be completed and operational by this time next year. Mrs. Dukes responded yes. Lastly, Commissioner Smith asked if the project is being funded through SPLOST VIII. Mrs. Dukes confirmed, yes.

## **REPORTS - County Manager**

There was no additional information to report.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:51 a.m.