

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, February 22, 2021

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2021 Comprehensive Plan Kick-off Presentation (Work Session only)

Elizabeth Backe, Planning Director with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, spoke regarding the 2021 Comprehensive Plan update for Lowndes County and all of the cities (Dasher, Lake Park, Remerton, Hahira and Valdosta). Ms. Backe stated the last update was in 2016. Commissioner Marshall asked for a copy of the presentation Ms. Backe presented, Mr. Dillard responded he would email the presentation. Commissioner Orenstein asked regarding the citizens and community who may like to attend these meetings, Ms. Backe stated there is a kick off meeting being held tomorrow, after the regular session meeting of the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners and additional meetings/workshops would be held and dates made available through social media or by contacting the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's office.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of February 8, 2021 and the regular session of February 9, 2021. No changes to the minutes were requested.

FOR CONSIDERATION

TIA Local Agreement for Briggston Road, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated the Georgia Department of Transportation has reviewed and approved the Briggston Road improvements project.

TIA Local Agreement for Shiloh Road, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated the Georgia Department of Transportation has reviewed and approved the Shiloh Road widening and bridge replacement project. Chairman Slaughter asked how far was the widening, Mr. Fletcher stated to Snake Nation Road. Commissioner Marshall asked regarding the timeline, Mr. Fletcher stated he believed it was October 2023, but would verify.

Approval of Hightower Road and Cooper Road Right of Way Purchases, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented a request in the amount of \$10,195.00, for the purchase of right of way. Mr. Fletcher stated Lowndes County has negotiated purchase of right of way related to the proposed paving projects for property numbers 13,14,15,16,17,18,19,22 and 33. Mr. Fletcher additionally stated the Commission is required to approve each of the acquisitions in a public vote.

Purchase of Wetland and Stream Credits for Old US 41 North Widening Project, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented a proposal from Williams Investments, LLC, in the amount of \$168,880.00, for the purchase of wetland and stream credits as a result of the Old US 41 North widening project.

Just Compensation - Right of Way Parcel 10 Hightower Road and Cooper Road, TSPLOST Project, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated Lowndes County needs to acquire fee simple right of way for a drainage easement on Cooper Road. Mr. Fletcher stated the Commission must approve a "just compensation" cost, which in this case has been determined to be \$339.00.

Approval of the Solicitor General's VAWA Competitive Grant Award, Solicitor-General's Office Representative, Karen Hayes, presented the item. Ms. Hayes stated the Solicitor's office has been approved to receive \$50,000.00, in federal funds, adding the grant cycle is a four-year period with continuation funding required annually. Ms. Hayes further stated the cash match required by the county is \$19,167.00.

Request for the Purchase of Motorola Radios for Public Works, Public Works Director, Robin Cumbus, presented a request in the amount of \$34,024.64, to purchase sixteen radios from Motorola. Mrs. Cumbus stated the current radios are outdated and no longer supported.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan Application for the Lake Park Bellville Road Widening Project, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented a request to apply for a Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) loan in the amount of \$1,974,139.00, to be used for the widening of Lake Park Bellville Road which requires county utilities to be relocated.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan Application for Lift Station & Manhole Rehab Project, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented a request to apply for a Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) loan in the amount of \$2,500,000.00, to be used for utility projects. Mr. Stalvey stated there is a component which allows for forgiveness up to \$625,000.00.

GMASS Rural Land Maintenance Contract, Chief Appraiser, Silas Hrobar, presented a contract in the amount of \$6,000.00, for the maintenance updates to the rural land schedule for the 2021 digest. Mr. Hrobar stated the Board of Assessors approved the contract prior to the Commission's consideration.

Approve Purchase of West Savannah Avenue and Briggs Street Properties, Senior Projects Manager, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the county has negotiated the purchase of two properties on West Savannah Avenue and one property on Briggs Street from the Southern Georgia Regional Commission for \$219,000.00.

Contract with Condrey and Associates, Inc., Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the contract in the amount of \$59,500.00. Mr. Beals stated Condrey and Associates, Inc., will conduct a complete position classification and compensation plan study. Mr. Beals stated the last review was in 2014, with job descriptions updated in 2016. Commissioner Marshall asked when this process would begin, Mr. Beals responded as soon as approved and the preliminary results would be available in May.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, introduced Mrs. Meghan Barwick, Lowndes County's Public Information Officer. Chairman Slaughter and the Commission welcomed Mrs. Barwick.

ADJOURNMENT

City of Valdosta Councilwomen, Vivian Miller Cody and Planning and Zoning Administrator, Matt Martin were in attendance and recognized by Chairman Slaughter. Commissioners Orenstein and Marshall made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chairman Griner second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the work session at 8:56 a.m.

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, February 23, 2021

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

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

INVOCATION

Vice Chairman Griner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Vice Chairman Griner

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of February 8, 2021 and the regular session of February 9, 2021. No changes to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

TIA Local Agreement for Briggston Road, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated the Georgia Department of Transportation has reviewed and approved the Briggston Road improvements project. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the request, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

TIA Local Agreement for Shiloh Road, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated the Georgia Department of Transportation has reviewed and approved the Shiloh Road widening and bridge replacement project. Mr. Fletcher did verify Commissioner Marshall's question from the work session regarding the timeline which is October 2023. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the request, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Approval of Hightower Road and Cooper Road Right of Way Purchases, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented a request in the amount of \$10,195.00, for the purchase of right of ways. Mr. Fletcher stated Lowndes County has negotiated purchase of right of way related to the proposed paving projects for property numbers 13,14,15,16,17,18,19,22 and 33 for Hightower Road and Cooper Road, TSPLOST project. Mr. Fletcher additionally stated the Commission is required to approve each of the acquisitions in a public vote. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve this request, Vice Chairman Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Purchase of Wetland and Stream Credits for Old US 41 North Widening Project, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated Lowndes County is required to purchase 4.56 wetland credits and 83 stream credits as a result of the Old US 41 North widening project. Mr. Fletcher stated staff recommends the purchase of 4.56 wetland credits for \$5,000.00, per credit and 83 stream credits, for \$1,760.00, from Williams Investments, LLC, for a total amount of \$168,880.00. Mr. Fletcher stated there was no invoice from the Corp of Engineers, but an email was received verifying the amount. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked what is a wetland/stream credit, Mr. Fletcher responded it's a unit of trade used to offset ecological losses that occur on wetlands or waters. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the purchase as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Just Compensation - Right of Way Parcel 10 Hightower Road and Cooper Road, TSPLOST Project, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated Lowndes County needs to acquire fee simple right of way for a drainage easement on Cooper Road. Mr. Fletcher stated the Commission must approve a "just compensation" cost, which in this case has been determined to be \$339.00. Vice Chairman Griner made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioners Orenstein and Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Approval of the Solicitor General's VAWA Competitive Grant Award, Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from Ms. Hayes with the Solicitor General's Office during the work session. No further discussion took place. Vice Chairman Griner made a motion to approve the grant as presented to include the \$19,167.00, cash match as required, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Request for the Purchase of Motorola Radios for Public Works, Public Works Director, Robin Cumbus, presented a request in the amount of \$34,024.64, to purchase sixteen radios from Motorola. Mrs. Cumbus stated the current radios are outdated and no longer supported. Commissioner Orenstein asked if these radios go through dispatch, Mrs. Cumbus responded yes. Vice Chairman Griner made a motion to approve the purchase as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan Application for the Lake Park Bellville Road Widening Project, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented a request to apply for a Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) loan in the amount of \$1,974,139.00, to be used for the widening of Lake Park Bellville Road which requires county utilities to be relocated. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request as presented, Vice Chairman Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan Application for Lift Station & Manhole Rehab Project, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented a request to apply for a Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) loan in the amount of \$2,500,000.00, to be used for utility projects. Mr. Stalvey stated there is a component which allows for forgiveness up to \$625,000.00. Commissioner Orenstein asked if GEFA had given an interest rate, Mr. Stalvey responded no. Vice Chairman Griner made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

GMASS Rural Land Maintenance Contract, Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the commission heard from Mr. Hrobar, with the Assessor's Office, during the work session. No further discussion took place. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the contract with GMASS Rural Land Maintenance in the amount of \$6,000.00, Commissioner Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Approve Purchase of West Savannah Avenue and Briggs Street Properties, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, presented the item. Mr. Fletcher stated the county has negotiated the purchase of two properties on West Savannah Avenue and one property on Briggs Street from the Southern Georgia Regional Commission for \$219,000.00. Commissioner Evans recused herself from the matter, as she serves as Chairwoman of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) Board. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the purchases, Vice Chairman Griner and Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed, Commissioner Evans recused. Motion carried.

Contract with Condrey and Associates, Inc., Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the contract in the amount of \$59,500.00, to provide a complete position classification and compensation plan study. Commissioner Marshall asked if any employees will not be included in this plan study, Mr. Beals responded all employees will be included. County Manager, Paige Dukes, responded there may be grant positions that the salaries are determined by those grants, that will not be included. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the contract, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Tax Assessor Appointment Resolutions and Orders (Chairman Slaughter added this item at the regular session meeting), County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated on September 22, 2020, the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners appointed Felicia Williams, Gretchen Quarterman and James Puckett to the Lowndes County Board of Assessors. Mrs. Dukes stated upon further research from our county attorney, there is a resolution and order that is required and is ready for your consideration. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request, Vice Chairman Griner and Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated there is a suicide awareness event being held Wednesday, February 24th at Martin Stadium, featuring Kevin Hines and Lowndes County is proud to sponsor this event. Mrs. Dukes introduced Mrs. Meghan Barwick, the County's Public Information Officer and

wished her a 'happy birthday'. Lastly, Mrs. Dukes thanked the department heads and staff for helping with the Lowndes County Commission Retreat being held February 25-26, 2021.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD - None

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chairman Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the regular session at 5:50 p.m.