

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
Monday, June 21, 2021

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall was not in attendance.

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Chairman Slaughter stated the Vice Chairman for the upcoming rotation would be Commissioner Joyce Evans.

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of June 7, 2021 and the regular session of June 8, 2021. County Attorney, Walter Elliott, requested in writing, that the regular session minutes be revised to reflect a change on the motion made related to the acceptance of quitclaim deeds for a portion of Gaines Lane.

**APPOINTMENT**

**Lowndes County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) Board**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated the seat held by Raymond Conner will expire June 30, 2021, adding Mr. Conner would like to continue to serve.

**South Georgia Regional Library Board**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated Mr. Gene Toffolo has resigned from his seat and his term will expire June 30, 2023. Mrs. Dukes stated Mr. Steve Boatner has been recommended to fill the unexpired term.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Beer License - Jayagauri Patel of Gauri & Ekta LLC, DBA Quick Stop #1 - 1255 Lakes Blvd., Lake Park, GA**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented a request for a license for the sale of beer off premise. Ms. Black stated the request is a new location previously operated as Palak Corp., but has been closed since 2019.

**Office of the Governor Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Accountability Court Lowndes County DUI Court Grant Award - State Court**, State Court Judge, Ellen Golden, presented a request to renew State Court's DUI Accountability Court. Judge Golden stated her office has received a grant in the amount of \$109,888.00, for the upcoming fiscal year that requires a ten percent match

(\$12,210.00). Judge Golden further stated that in addition to the ten percent match, there is a shortfall in the salary and benefits of the surveillance officer's contract salary since it cannot be fully funded by the grant, which brings the total request to \$39,135.00. Judge Golden stated there has been a total of 29 active participants since the program began in 2017. Chairman Slaughter asked Mrs. Dukes if the \$39,135.00, was included in the budget, Mrs. Dukes responded yes.

**Echols County 9-1-1 Agreement**, 911 Operations Manager, Tonya Davis, presented the item. Mrs. Davis stated this agreement between Lowndes County 911 and Echols County is to provide the dispatching and 911 calls also to include receiving wireless 911 calls. Mrs. Davis also stated Echols County would be required to submit 911 fees collected to Lowndes County.

**Whitewater Lift Station Control Panel Emergency Repair**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the Whitewater Lift Station is in need of repair due to sewer gas damage. Mrs. Dukes stated not only will there be a repair, but this control panel will be relocated. Mrs. Dukes stated Cowart Electric submitted the low bid for \$53,140.00.

**Bemiss Low Pressure Sewer Main Replacement Change Order**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the commission approved this project to take care of low pressure at this location. During the process, it was identified that the new pipe will not fit in the existing casing. The change order submitted by RPI is in the amount of \$33,989.00. Commissioner Orenstein asked the original cost, Mrs. Dukes stated she could get that information for him.

**GEFA Loan - Sewer System Rehabilitation Project**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated staff requested permission to apply for \$2,500,000.00, from Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) to take care of sewer collection improvements. Mrs. Dukes stated staff is requesting to approve the loan agreement and authorize the Chairman to sign the loan agreement, resolution and promissory note.

**GEFA Loan - Lake Park Bellville Road Utility Relocation**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this is \$1,904,500.00, in Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) funds to take care of relocation of utilities due to Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) widening of Lake Park Bellville Road. Mrs. Dukes stated GEFA approved this request and staff recommends that the loan agreement be approved and authorize the Chairman to sign the loan agreement, resolution and promissory note.

**Lowndes County Accountability Court Adult Drug Court Program - Grant (Cash Match)**, Superior Court Accountability Court Administrator, Jennifer Fabbri, presented a request in the amount of \$23,557.16, for the county's required match related to the grant that operates the accountability court programs. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked how is the program working, Mrs. Fabbri responded three participants have graduated. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked when this program started, Mrs. Fabbri stated 2016 with the total number graduated being between 40-45. Chairman Slaughter asked if this request was included in the budget, Mrs. Dukes answered yes.

**Lowndes County Juvenile Accountability Court - Drug Court Program - Grant (Cash Match)**, Juvenile Court Judge, Jim Tunison, presented a request in the amount of \$10,000.00, for the county's required match related to the grant that operates the juvenile accountability court programs. Judge Tunison stated last budget year funds were allotted to this program. Judge Tunison stated this

program started in September of last year with the first court appearance and eleven are currently in the program. Vice Chairman Evans commended Judge Tunison on this program. Chairman Slaughter stated he appreciates the efforts of Judge Tunison and staff regarding this program. Commissioner Orenstein asked if information could be emailed to the commission regarding adult and juvenile accountability court.

**Compute and Storage for South Lowndes Data Center**, IT Director, Aaron Kostyu, presented the item. Mr. Kostyu stated in the past, servers would have been used to run individual services on the network; now this is ran virtually, and this is why the wording is compute and storage. Compute and storage for South Lowndes Data Center includes supporting telephony, network services and other services for the animal shelter, Sheriff's Department, the jail, public works and back up for 911 and North Lowndes Data Center. County Manager, Paige Dukes, commented she's had discussions with Mr. Kostyu regarding this request and it is a necessary need.

## **BID**

**Bid for Pest Control Service**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the bid with Astro Exterminating Services presenting the low bid, in the amount of \$6,734.40. Ms. Black stated this is for all county facilities to include volunteer fire stations.

**Purchase of a Truck for Public Works**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented a request to purchase a truck for the Public Works Department. Ms. Black stated this truck would replace a truck which was totaled last month. Additionally, Ms. Black stated a local vendor, Langdale Ford, agreed to meet the state contract price. Commissioner Wisenbaker, asked what caused the vehicle to be totaled, Public Works Director, Mrs. Robin Cumbus responded an employee had a medical issue, which caused him to temporarily black out, causing the accident.

**Purchase of Fire Turnout Gear**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented a request to purchase new sets of turnout gear for fifteen new employees, for Lowndes County Fire Rescue. Ms. Black explained that state contract prices were obtained for the new gear with Municipal Equipment Company submitting the bid in the amount of \$46,777.50. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked which new station would be fully manned first, Mrs. Dukes responded Clyattville. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked how many would be assigned to that station, Mrs. Dukes responded twelve.

**Bid for Grounds Maintenance for County Buildings**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated bids were received for grounds maintenance services for county buildings and only one proposal received met all specifications. Commissioner Orenstein asked if other proposals were received, Ms. Black answered yes. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked how long has the County outsourced this service, Mrs. Dukes responded five years.

## **REPORTS - County Manager**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, asked Senior Projects Manager, Chad McLeod, to give the commission an update on the restoration of the historic courthouse and audio/visual in the commission chambers. Mr. McLeod stated since the commission selected Allstate Cauthan as the construction manager for the historic courthouse project, the design development and a budget for the design development has been completed. Mr. McLeod further stated fifty percent of the construction documents should be completed by August 1st and fifty percent of the budget back up by August 25th.

Mr. McLeod stated staff is recommending an early demolition project to do demo work inside the courthouse to be bid in July. Mr. McLeod stated the plans are in the executive conference room for the commission's review. Mr. McLeod also stated regarding the audio/visual in the commission chambers, all but four pieces have arrived and the delivery is scheduled for August.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Griner made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chairman Evans second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:54 a.m.

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, June 22, 2021

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall was not in attendance.

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

**INVOCATION**

Commissioner Griner

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Commissioner Griner

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of June 7, 2021, and the regular session of June 8, 2021. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Vice Chairman Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**APPOINTMENT**

**Lowndes County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) Board**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated the seat held by Raymond Conner will expire June 30, 2021, adding Mr. Conner would like to continue to serve. Chairman Slaughter nominated Raymond Conner for reappointment. There being no other nominations, Mr. Raymond Conner was appointed by acclamation.

**South Georgia Regional Library Board**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated Mr. Gene Toffolo has resigned from his seat and his term will expire June 30, 2023. Mrs. Dukes stated Mr. Steve Boatner has been recommended to fill the remaining term expiring on June 30, 2023. Being that no additional candidates were presented, Chairman Slaughter stated Mr. Steve Boatner will be reappointed by acclamation.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Beer License - Jayagauri Patel of Gauri & Ekta LLC, DBA Quick Stop #1 - 1255 Lakes Blvd., Lake Park, GA**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated the applicant

is requesting a license for the sale of beer for consumption off premise. Ms. Black stated the request is a new location previously operated as Palak Corp., but has been closed since 2019. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Office of the Governor Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Accountability Court Lowndes County DUI Court Grant Award - State Court**, Chairman Slaughter presented the item, stating the Commission heard from Judge Golden during the work session. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve acceptance of the grant in the amount of \$109,888.00, to include a ten percent match in the amount of \$12,210.00, and \$39,135.00 in additional funding for the surveillance officer's salary, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Echols County 9-1-1 Agreement**, 911 Director, Danny Weeks, presented the item. Mr. Weeks stated this agreement between Lowndes County 911 and Echols County is to provide the dispatching and 911 call answering services, and is updated to include receiving wireless 911 calls. Mr. Weeks also stated Echols County would be required to submit 911 fees collected to Lowndes County. Commissioner Orenstein asked if this was a new agreement, Mr. Weeks stated it is not a new agreement, Lowndes County 911 has been dispatching Echols County for years and this will allow wireless 911 calls to be dispatched as well. Commissioner Orenstein asked if there was an additional cost, Mr. Weeks responded no. Commissioner Orenstein asked if there would be increased workload and Mr. Weeks answered no. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Whitewater Lift Station Control Panel Emergency Repair**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated the control panel deteriorated beyond repair due to the sewer gases coming from the lift station and staff deems this an emergency repair to prevent failure. Mr. Stalvey stated three quotes were received to rebuild and relocate the control panel with Cowart Electric submitting the low bid in the amount of \$53,140.00. Commissioner Orenstein asked if this is more than repairs since we're relocating, Mr. Stalvey responded yes, that is correct. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve emergency repair with Cowart Electric submitting the low bid for \$53,140.00 Vice Chairman Evans and Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Bemiss Low Pressure Sewer Main Replacement Change Order**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated this project was awarded to RPI at the January 12th commission meeting. Mr. Stalvey stated part of this project involves replacing a section of piping; the new pipe will not fit in the existing casing and will require a new casing. Commissioner Orenstein asked is this going under Bemiss Road, Mr. Stalvey responded under the railroad tracks near Bemiss Knights Academy Road. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the change order as presented by RPI for \$33,989.00, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**GEFA Loan - Sewer System Rehabilitation Project**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) has approved the loan request in the amount of \$2,500,000.00, for the rehabilitation of the sewer collection system. Mr. Stalvey stated the loan agreement is attached and staff recommends approval. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the loan agreement and authorize the Chairman to sign the loan agreement,

resolution and promissory note, Vice Chairman Evans and Commission Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**GEFA Loan - Lake Park Bellville Road Utility Relocation**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) has approved the loan request in the amount of \$1,904,500.00, for the relocation of water and sewer mains and related appurtenances in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) widening of Lake Park Bellville Road. Mr. Stalvey stated the loan agreement is attached and staff recommends approval. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the loan agreement and authorize the Chairman to sign the loan agreement, resolution and promissory note, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Lowndes County Accountability Court Adult Drug Court Program - Grant (Cash Match)**, Chairman Slaughter presented the item, stating the Commission heard from Superior Court Accountability Court Administrator, Jennifer Fabbri, during the work session. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve acceptance of the grant and the required match of \$23,557.16, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Lowndes County Juvenile Accountability Court - Drug Court Program - Grant (Cash Match)**, Chairman Slaughter presented the item, stating the Commission heard from Judge Jim Tunison during the work session. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve acceptance of the grant and the required match of \$10,000.00, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Compute and Storage for South Lowndes Data Center**, IT Director, Aaron Kostyu, presented the item. Mr. Kostyu stated this item represents replacement of some equipment moved from the South Lowndes Data Center to the 911 Data Center in order to accommodate the public safety software project to replace equipment in the south Lowndes data center for the purpose of serving the Sheriff's Office, Animal Shelter and Public Works as well as being a backup for the north Lowndes data center and 911 data center. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request for compute and storage for South Lowndes Data Center in the amount of \$48,307.21, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

## **BIDS**

**Bid for Pest Control Service**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item with Astro Exterminating Services presenting the low bid, in the amount of \$6,734.40. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to award the bid to the low bidder as presented, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Purchase of a Truck for Public Works**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated Public Works needs a truck to replace a truck which was totaled last month. Ms. Black stated a local vendor, Langdale Ford, agreed to meet the state contract price in the amount of \$28,074.84, for a Ford F-150 Supercab. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the purchase as presented, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Purchase of Fire Turnout Gear**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented a request to purchase new sets of turnout gear for fifteen new employees, for Lowndes County Fire Rescue. Ms. Black stated Municipal Equipment Company submitted the state contract pricing, in the total amount of \$46,777.50. Commissioner Orenstein asked how long does the turnout gear last, Fire Chief, Lloyd Green, responded usually about ten years. Commissioner Griner made the motion to approve the purchase of the protective gear from Municipal Equipment Company in the amount of \$46,777.50, Commissioners Orenstein and Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Bid for Grounds Maintenance for County Buildings**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated bids were received for the grounds maintenance services for county buildings and one proposal was received that met all specifications. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve Proficient Pool and Lawn Service, Inc. in the amount of \$158,140.00, for a one year contract, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**REPORTS - County Manager**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, congratulated Commissioner Evans on being elected Chairperson of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Board. Mrs. Dukes mentioned that there have been seventy local citizens trained through the Mental Health First Aid training partnership. Mrs. Dukes stated regarding the Griner property, Mr. McLeod is waiting on the elevations and the pipe has been ordered. Lastly, Mrs. Dukes mentioned staff will be attending a smart cities presentation, sponsored by the City of Valdosta being held tomorrow.

#### **CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD**

George Conner, 5995 Westlake Drive, addressed the commission regarding the water issues in Naylor, the speeding which takes place within the neighborhood, and the handrails, on one bridge going back into Hidden Cove, are no longer there.

Rhonda Wright, 2407 Gaines Lane, addressed the commission regarding a civil matter she's involved in with Mr. Thomas in her neighborhood. Chairman Slaughter asked Ms. Wright to wait until the meeting was over and he would speak with her.

Robert Dinkins, 6275 Southern Shore, addressed the commission regarding the borrow pit agreement which Lowndes County has with a neighbor in the subdivision. Chairman Slaughter asked County Attorney, Walter Elliott to respond, Mr. Elliott stated he had spoken to Mr. Dinkins last week and the County has discontinued digging and is currently waiting to hear from the attorney representing Mr. Sanders, the owner of the property.

Andrea Huguley, 6112 Southern Shore, addressed the commission regarding the conditions of the road, asked when the road construction would begin and also mentioned the water quality within the subdivision.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the regular session meeting at 6:03 p.m.