

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
Monday, August 24, 2020

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 8:30 a.m.

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of August 10, 2020, Millage Hearing of August 11, 2020, and the regular session of August 11, 2020. No changes to the minutes were requested.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Beer and Wine License - Carlo Felice Sacco of Uncle Carlo's Gelato, LLC, DBA Uncle Carlo's Italian Ristorante - 1024 Lakes Blvd., Lake Park, GA**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item stating this is a new establishment in Lake Park, Georgia requesting a beer and wine license for consumption on premises.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Contract/Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Regents of the University System of GA on behalf of the University System of GA Extension and the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the Memorandum of Understanding outlining Lowndes County's responsibilities as well as the University of Georgia's Extension Office's. Mrs. Dukes stated the Extension office supports 4-H and our agricultural community. Vice Chairman Marshall asked regarding assistance to the Future Farmers of America program, if that is supported, and Mrs. Dukes responded those programs are supported through the Board of Education.

**Contract for Extension Agents and Staff**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated this is the funding agreement related to the Memo of Understanding between the Board of

Regents of the University System of Georgia and the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners. Mrs. Dukes stated the contract amount is below last fiscal year's budgeted amount and Lowndes County Extension Agent/Coordinator, Jake Price, has asked that additional hours be given to one of the part-time employees. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked who was the part-time employee, Mrs. Dukes responded Grace Chauncey.

**Annual Contract Renewal, Georgia Department of Corrections - Prison Work Details**, Public Works Director, Robin Cumbus, presented the annual renewal in the amount of \$147,954.00, with the Georgia Department of Corrections for three prison work details. Mrs. Cumbus stated two of the details will be used by the Public Works Department and one will be used for storm water. Mrs. Cumbus stated prison details aren't being used currently due to COVID-19, if no work is being performed, no payment is due.

**Architectural Services for Lowndes County Fire Station #5 - Bemiss Road Fire Station Alterations and Additions**, Chad McLeod, Project Manager, presented the item stating the Bemiss Road Fire Station alterations and additions project was approved on the SPLOST VIII referendum for \$550,000.00. The project will include expansion of the existing building for use by emergency medical services. James D. Cone, was the architect for the existing building.

**USDA Building Lease Amendment No. 4**, Chad McLeod, Project Manager, presented the lease amendment with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This building is located at 2108 East Hill Avenue and the lease expires December 31, 2020. Mr. McLeod stated the Lease Amendment No. 4 will extend the current lease from January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2023. Mr. McLeod stated the annual rent will remain the same, \$32,000.00, paid in monthly installments of \$2,666.67. Vice Chairman Marshall asked if this group was located in the former Bank of America building on South Patterson Street, Mr. McLeod answered no.

**Nelson Hill Discharge Manhole**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the request for a discharge manhole at the Nelson Hill lift station. Mr. Stalvey stated the county received two bids, RPI Underground, Inc. submitted a bid for \$44,177.00, and JWA submitted the low bid of \$41,840.00.

**Peterson Road Lift Station Emergency Repair**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the emergency repair of the Peterson Road lift station. Mr. Stalvey stated two manholes and 120 feet of pipe would have to be replaced. A "not to exceed" price of \$110,000.00 from RPI Underground, Inc. was received.

**Tax Commissioner's Back Wage Settlement with Department of Labor**, Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated the Department

of Labor initiated and completed a back wage investigation of the Lowndes County Tax Commissioner's Office. The Department of Labor has determined twenty employees (past and present) of the Tax Commissioner's office are due back wages in the amount of \$5,294.33, plus additional social security and Medicare taxes of \$405.02, which totals \$5,699.35. Mr. Beals further stated the back wages need to be paid on or before September 1, 2020 with preliminary pay evidence being provided by September 8, 2020 to the Georgia Department of Labor. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if these employees were on a time clock, Mr. Beals responded yes, that the focus was the overtime being paid. Vice Chairman Marshall asked if the employees were not getting paid for overtime, Mr. Beals responded compensation was being paid hourly, not time and a half. Vice Chairman Marshall asked if the Tax Commissioner was notified, Mr. Beals responded he wasn't sure.

**Resolution Repealing Approvals Authorizing the Tax Commissioner to Waive Penalties and Interest**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the resolution at the request of the Tax Commissioner and the Board of Commissioners for clarification for your consideration. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if he could receive another copy of the resolution, Mrs. Dukes responded yes. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if Tax Commissioner Cain was working under the same resolution as former Tax Commissioner, Mary Nell Robertson, Mrs. Dukes responded no, he was using the resolution from former Tax Commissioner, Paul Sumner. Commissioner Orenstein asked if the resolutions took the place of the 1995 resolution, Mrs. Dukes stated this resolution is recommended to use to clean up any confusion with past resolutions. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if Tax Commissioner Cain presented this resolution or the county attorney, Mrs. Dukes responded the county attorney at the direction of the Chairman. Chairman Slaughter stated this resolution would repeal any previous resolutions. Vice Chairman Marshall asked if this would be effective immediately, Mrs. Dukes responded yes.

**Resolution Authorizing the Lowndes County Tax Commissioner to Receive Checks and Money Orders in Payment of Taxes and Licenses**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item stating Tax Commissioner Cain has requested this resolution for protection for him personally in the event someone writes a bad check, this would allow that process to go through the normal collection procedures of the county, instead of him being liable personally. Commissioner Wisenbaker questioned if the Tax Commissioner requested this resolution, Chairman Slaughter stated when it was brought to Tax Commissioner Cain's attention, he agreed he needed this resolution.

**Resolution Regarding the Number and Terms of Members of the Board of Tax Assessors**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the resolution stating the voters of Lowndes County voted in favor of having appointed tax assessors beginning 2021. Mrs. Dukes further stated this resolution is before you at the advice of the county attorney and is needed to approve prior to appointing new assessors. Chairman Slaughter stated there is mandatory training needed so candidates need to be submitted soon. Mrs. Dukes

stated staff recommends candidates be appointed no later than the second meeting of September.

**Appointment of County Clerk,** County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated Mrs. Belinda Lovern has served in this capacity in the absence of former County Clerks, Phyllis Waters and herself, Paige Dukes since 2006. Furthermore, Mrs. Dukes stated Deputy Clerk duties have been established and responsibilities will be assigned to Mrs. Sabrina Denson. Vice Chairman Marshall inquired regarding the Public Information Officer vacancy, Mrs. Dukes responded that position was approved in the current budget as a new position and advertising will begin within the next few weeks.

**Release of Lien for 2009 CHIP Grant,** Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item stating Lowndes County needs to release its lien relating to its 2009 CHIP Program Grant to Russell and Amanda Yates. The five year affordability period expired in 2016 and they are no longer required to pay the promissory note to Lowndes County. Mr. and Mrs. Yates are selling their property and are requiring a quit claim deed and release from Lowndes County.

#### **REPORTS - County Manager**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated Ms. Celine Gladwin, with Gladwin Vaughn Architects, was unable to attend the work session this morning due to her mother passing away last week. Vice Chairman Marshall asked regarding the construction process of the courthouse, when renovations begin will citizens be able to reserve and use the front lawn, Mrs. Dukes responded the site will be turned over to the construction manager at that time and if needed events can be relocated.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the work session at 8:53 a.m.

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, August 25, 2020

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**

Commissioner Wisenbaker

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Commissioner Wisenbaker

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of August 10, 2020, the millage hearing of August 11, 2020 and the regular session of August 11, 2020. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Beer and Wine License - Carlo Felice Sacco of Uncle Carlo's Gelato, LLC, DBA Uncle Carlo's Italian Ristorante - 1024 Lakes Blvd., Lake Park, GA**, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item stating this is a new establishment in Lake Park, Georgia requesting a beer and wine license for consumption on premises. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the beer and wine license, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Contract/Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Regents of the University System of GA on behalf of the University System of GA Extension and**

**the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item stating Lowndes County utilizes the services of the extension service with the University of Georgia for various agricultural programs in our community as well as 4-H and this is the agreement, for this purpose 'option B' is before you tonight. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the item, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Contract for Extension Agents and Staff**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item stating this is the funding agreement related to Memorandum of Understanding which was considered. Mrs. Dukes also mentioned the budget amount for the current fiscal year is below the amount from last year. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked the difference in the amount budgeted last year versus this year, Mrs. Dukes stated she would have to verify that information. Commissioner Griner asked if this was for part-time salaries, Mrs. Dukes responded yes. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the contract, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Annual Contract Renewal, Georgia Department of Corrections - Prison Work Details**, Public Works Director, Robin Cumbus, presented an annual contract renewal between Lowndes County and the Georgia Department of Corrections in the amount of \$147,954.00, for three prison work details. Mrs. Cumbus stated two of the details will be used by the Public Works Department and one will be used for storm water. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the contract as presented, Commissioners Orenstein and Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Architectural Services for Lowndes County Fire Station #5 - Bemiss Road Fire Station Alterations and Additions**, Project Manager, Chad McLeod, presented the item stating the Bemiss Road Fire Station alterations and additions project was approved on the SPLOST VIII referendum for \$550,000.00. The project will include expansion of the existing building for use by emergency medical services. James D. Cone was the architect for the existing building. Vice Chairman Marshall made a motion to approve this item, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**USDA Building Lease Amendment No. 4**, Project Manager, Chad McLeod, presented the lease amendment with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This building is located at 2108 East Hill Avenue and the lease expires December 31, 2020. Mr. McLeod stated the Lease Amendment No. 4 will extend the current lease from January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2023. Mr. McLeod stated the annual rent will remain the same, \$32,000.00, paid in monthly installments of \$2,666.67. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the lease amendment, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Nelson Hill Discharge Manhole**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the request for a discharge manhole at the Nelson Hill lift station. Mr. Stalvey stated the county received two bids, RPI Underground, Inc. submitted a bid for \$44,177.00, and JWA submitted the low bid of \$41,840.00. Commissioner Griner made the motion to accept the low bid from JAW for \$41,840.00, for the Nelson Hill Discharge Manhole, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Peterson Road Lift Station Emergency Repair**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the emergency repair of the Peterson Road lift station. Mr. Stalvey stated two manholes and 120 feet of pipe would have to be replaced. A "not to exceed" price of \$110,00.00 from RPI Underground, Inc. was received. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the repair with RPI Underground, Inc., for a "not to exceed" price of \$110,000.00, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Tax Commissioner's Back Wage Settlement with Department of Labor**, Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated the Department of Labor initiated and completed a back wage investigation of the Lowndes County Tax Commissioner's Office. The Department of Labor has determined twenty employees (past and present) of the Tax Commissioner's office are due back wages in the amount of \$5,294.33, plus additional social security and Medicare taxes of \$405.02, which totals \$5,699.35. Mr. Beals further stated the back wages need to be paid on or before September 1, 2020, with preliminary pay evidence being provided by September 8, 2020 to the Georgia Department of Labor. Vice Chairman Marshall asked when the checks would be processed to which Mr. Beals stated this Friday. Vice Chairman Marshall asked what is preliminary evidence, Mr. Beals responded a special form to be returned to the Georgia Department of Labor. Commissioner Orenstein asked if there were any penalties incurred, Mr. Beals stated no. Vice Chairman Marshall asked if there was anything to stop this from happening again in the future, Mr. Beals stated there was guidance provided by the Georgia Department of Labor's office. Vice Chairman Marshall made a motion to approve this request, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Resolution Repealing Approvals Authorizing the Tax Commissioner to Waive Penalties and Interest**, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item for consideration to clean up any confusion with past resolutions. Vice Chairman Marshall asked regarding names on previous resolutions, Mrs. Dukes responded some came with cover letters, some generally stated Tax Commissioner. Vice Chairman Marshall made the motion to approve the resolution, Commissioners Wisenbaker and Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Resolution Authorizing the Lowndes County Tax Commissioner to Receive Checks and Money Orders in Payment of Taxes and Licenses,** County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the resolution which will provide protection for the Tax Commissioner in the event he receives a bad money order or a bad check. Mrs. Dukes stated this item was prepared and submitted to you at the request of the Tax Commissioner. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the resolution, Commissioners Orenstein and Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Resolution Regarding the Number and Terms of Members of the Board of Tax Assessors,** County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the resolution, at the direction of Lowndes County voters, the Board of Tax Assessors will be appointed. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked what information was needed to submit a name, Chairman Slaughter stated a name, short resume and the Lowndes County Board/Agency Appointment Information Sheet. Commissioner Griner asked how many times do they meet, Chairman Slaughter stated once a month, lasting one-two hours. Vice Chairman Marshall asked if more than three people should be considered, Chairman Slaughter answered three people would be enough and previously it was three elected individuals on the board. Vice Chairman Marshall stated Lowndes County's population is more now and it seems five members would be needed, Chairman Slaughter stated three members would be appointed and if more are needed, two additional members can be added. Commissioner Orenstein asked what was the compensation, Mrs. Dukes responded currently it's budgeted for \$6,000 per year. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the resolution, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Appointment of County Clerk, County Manager,** Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated Mrs. Belinda Lovern has served in this capacity in the absence of former County Clerks since 2006 and is capable of taking over the duties associated. Chairman Slaughter concurred with Mrs. Dukes. Commissioner Griner made a motion to appoint Mrs. Belinda Lovern as County Clerk, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**Release of Lien for 2009 CHIP Grant,** Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item stating Lowndes County needs to release its lien relating to its 2009 CHIP Program Grant to Russell and Amanda Yates. The five year affordability period expired in 2016 and they are no longer required to pay the promissory note to Lowndes County. Mr. and Mrs. Yates are selling their property and are requiring a quit claim deed and release from Lowndes County. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the item, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.



## **REPORTS - County Manager**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated yesterday evening Interim Fire Chief, Lloyd Green, Fire Training Officer, Gary Williams, herself and Commissioner Scott Orenstein went to visit a station within the fire department. The visit went very well and due to the storm, they were able to see the firefighters in action. Mrs. Dukes stated Monday night they will be meeting at the Fire Station Headquarters at 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Orenstein stated he appreciated the opportunity to visit the station and this is another case of dedicated people committed to our community. Mrs. Dukes further stated Lowndes County Fire Rescue, 911 and Public Works were also working during the storm, with six locations with trees across the road. Mrs. Dukes mentioned a two story house on Cat Creek Road that has been an eyesore for two years and the Lowndes County Code Enforcement Department notified her that the house has been demolished. Mrs. Dukes additionally stated that in the near future, Kevin Beals, Human Resources Director, will have information regarding flu shots and the locations/times available to receive a flu shot.

## **CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD**

Reverend J.D. Martin, 1408 East Park Avenue, addressed the commission related to the group he's been involved with for the past five years, Citizens Against Violence Ministry. Reverend Martin requested a letter of support from the commission.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Evans second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the regular session at 6:01 p.m.