

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, November 9, 2021

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

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 October 25, 2021, the regular session of October 25, 2021 and the update of the Comprehensive Plan Submittal on October 26, 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

Hospital Authority of Valdosta and Lowndes County, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated the seat held by Mr. Ben Copeland will expire December 31, 2021. Mrs. Dukes further stated the Hospital Authority has submitted Mr. Ben Copeland, Mr. Norman "Bo" Lovein and Mrs. Suzanne Mathis. Chairman Slaughter nominated Mr. Ben Copeland for this appointment. There being no other nominations, Mr. Ben Copeland was reappointed by acclamation.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2021-22 John Sineath, 3895 US HWY 41 North, 0.63 acres R-1 to C-G, County Utilities, Planning Representative, Molly Stevenson, presented the item. Mrs. Stevenson stated this request represents a rezoning from Low Density Residential (R-1) to General Commercial (C-G) located at a portion of US Highway 41 North around the Stewart Circle area. Mrs. Stevenson stated the TRC had no objectionable comments and the Planning Commission recommended approval. No one spoke for

or against this request. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the request, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2021-23 Cotton Property, 3986 Wilkerson Road, 5 acres, E-A to R-A, Well & Septic,

Planning Representative, Molly Stevenson, presented item. Mrs. Stevenson stated the applicant would like to rezone five acres located on the corner of Hickory Grove Road North and Wilkerson Road from E-A (Estate Agricultural) to R-A (Residential Agricultural) in order to subdivide. Mrs. Stevenson stated the TRC had no objectionable comments and the Planning Commission recommended approval. No one spoke against the request. Ms. Benita Cotton, 3986 Wilkerson Road, spoke in favor of the request as the applicant. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request, Commissioner Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2021-24 Barry Godfrey, Mt. Zion Church Road, 1.5 acres, R-10 to C-H,

Planning Representative, Molly Stevenson, presented the item. Mrs. Stevenson stated this request is to change the zoning on the subject property from R-10 (Suburban Residential) to C-H (Highway Commercial). The applicant would like to semi-retire by relocating his current automotive sales business to this property, which current zoning prohibits. Mrs. Stevenson stated the character area is mixed with commercial properties to the west and north and residential properties to the east and south. The TRC recommends approval while pointing out possible hurdles to potential future development being able to coexist with the neighboring residential development and the Planning Commission recommended approval. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Orenstein asked if there was any correspondence received in opposition to this request, Mrs. Stevenson responded no. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

TWR-2021-01 CitySwitch II, LLC, Bemiss Road, New 265' Telecommunications Tower,

Planning Representative, Molly Stevenson, presented the item. Mrs. Stevenson stated this request is to construct a new 265-foot telecommunications tower on a parcel on Bemiss Road to fill a gap in their existing coverage. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) determined the potential tower to be of 'no hazard to air navigation' and neither Moody Air Force Base nor the Valdosta Airport have additional comments or objections. The TRC had no objectionable comments and the Planning Commission recommended approval. No one spoke against the request. Mr. Andy Rodenstrich spoke in favor of the request on behalf of City Switch, who is constructing this tower for AT&T, the initial tenant. Mr. Rodenstrich stated the tower will be built strong enough to accommodate other carriers in the industry, so that no additional towers in this area will be needed. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve this request, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

FY23 5311 Regional Transit Resolution, Planning Representative, Molly Stevenson, presented the item. Mrs. Stevenson stated this resolution would authorize Lowndes County to enter into an agreement with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) to operate a 5311 Rural Transit Service on behalf of Lowndes County. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adopt the resolution as presented, Vice Chairman Evans and Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Adoption of Budget Calendar for FY 2022 – 2023, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the upcoming budget calendar for consideration. Ms. Black stated while the budget must be approved by June 30, 2022, the other dates can be adjusted, if needed. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve the budget calendar as presented, Commissioners Orenstein and Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Community Development Block Grant-CV - Second Harvest, Engineering Services Director, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Second Harvest of South Georgia is seeking a Community Development Block Grant-CV related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. McLeod stated the grant will be used for a new facility for Second Harvest and to allow Second Harvest to prepare and respond to the increased demand as a result of the pandemic. Mr. McLeod stated Lowndes County has been asked to submit as the applicant and the secondary applicant will be the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority. Commissioner Marshall asked how much is the total amount of the grant, Mr. McLeod responded \$18 million. Mr. McLeod stated Second Harvest will have a match between \$4-5 million. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the grant application, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Code Red Annual Renewal, EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the agreement. Mr. Tye stated in order to continue with the Code Red services provided by OnSolve, an annual renewal fee for one-year, beginning December 10, 2021, is required in the amount of \$31,500.00. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Request for Cash Match Increase for VAWA ASG Salary Supplement, Chairman Slaughter presented the item, stating the Commission heard from Solicitor Cabral during the work session. Commissioner Orenstein asked if this request will come up every year, County Manager, Paige Dukes, responded with this grant, the state has an annual amount to allocate to requesting governments and more money may be asked for to extend the County's obligation, but it is not certain that additional funding will be increased. Mrs. Dukes stated if approved, this additional increase paid by Lowndes County would be for the life of the grant unless additional funding was available through the state. Vice Chairman Evans asked if the Solicitor's Office was fully budgeted every year, Mrs. Dukes replied yes. Vice Chairman Evans made a motion to approve the cash match increase for the VAWA Assistant Solicitor General Salary Supplement for \$17,217.00, making the total cash match \$36,266.00, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

2021 Comprehensive Plan Adoption, Planning Representative, Molly Stevenson, presented the plan for consideration. Mrs. Stevenson stated after stakeholder review, comments and updates, the plan and the required resolution are ready for adoption. Mrs. Stevenson also acknowledged the presence of Elizabeth Backe, the Planning Director with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, if the Commission had any questions. Commissioner Marshall asked for clarification regarding the plan being approved, Chairman Slaughter responded at the previous meeting, approval was given for the transmittal of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update and this is for approval of the plan and adoption of the resolution. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the plan and adopt the resolution, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Opioid Litigation, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this is an addition to the agenda from yesterday's work session. Mrs. Dukes stated the attorneys representing local governments in pending opioid litigation have reached an agreement with the Georgia Attorney General for allocation of proposed distributor settlements between local governments and the State of Georgia. As a part of that, there is consideration needed for a Memorandum of Understanding Concerning National Distributor and Johnson & Johnson Opioid Settlements. Mrs. Dukes stated special counsel for Lowndes County, Haynes Studstill and Cale Conley recommend Lowndes County approve and agree to be bound by this Memorandum of Understanding, with staff presenting for your consideration. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

BID

2021 LMIG Safety Action Plan Restriping, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) Safety Action Plan Restriping bid includes 63 linear miles of paved county roads. Mr. McLeod stated the restriping includes restriping the centerline, edgeline, stopbars and pavement markings, as well as installing raised pavement markers. Lowndes County received \$150,000.00 of LMIG funding assistance with the remaining being paid from SPLOST VIII. Mr. McLeod stated Peek Pavement submitted the low bid in the amount of \$281,529.50. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the request, Vice Chairman Evans and Commissioner Oresnstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, thanked Elizabeth Backe, with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, for her leadership and help with the comprehensive plan. Mrs. Dukes mentioned Mr. Dillard and Mrs. Barwick attended a conference in Gainesville for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Community Planning Institute. Further, Mrs. Dukes stated Ms. Stephanie Black and herself graduated from an online leadership course offered by NACO and hopefully the department heads will be able to take this class as well. Lastly, Mrs. Dukes reminded the Commission that County Offices would be closed for the Veterans Day Holiday, Thursday, November 11, 2021, being observed by Lowndes County for the first time this year.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

Catherine Grant, Greyfield Circle, addressed the commission with questions related to the Board of Elections. County Manager, Paige Dukes, responded to Ms. Grant stating the Grand Jury appoints the members to the Board of Elections and the appointed board hires staff.

ADJOURNMENT

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