

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, December 13, 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 8:30 a.m.

MINUTES

There were no revisions requested to the minutes for the work session of November 8, 2021 and the regular session of November 9, 2021.

APPOINTMENT

Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center and Tourism Authority, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated the seat held by Mr. Rick Williams will expire December 31, 2021. Mrs. Dukes further stated Mr. Williams would like to be reappointed and Mr. Nicholas "Big Nick" Harden was also interested in being appointed.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2021-25 Ethridge, Parker Road, 5.6 acres, E-A, R-1 & CON to R-A, Well & Septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated the request represents a change in zoning for 5.6 acres from E-A (Estate Agricultural), R-1 (Low-Density Residential) and CON (Conservation) zoning to R-A (Residential Agricultural) zoning. Mr. Dillard stated the applicant would like to be able to subdivide and create a ULDC conforming parcel upon the recording of the parcel division. Mr. Dillard additionally stated that staff recommends any development should be mindful of the previous flood zone boundaries. Mr. Dillard further stated that both the TRC and Planning Commission recommended approval.

REZ-2021-26 Ridgecrest at Rocky Ford Road, ~37 acres, M-2 to R-10, County Utilities, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on approximately 37 acres from Heavy Manufacturing (M-2) zoning to Suburban Density Residential (R-10) zoning. Mr. Dillard stated the applicant would like the zoning change for the development of a 114 lot residential subdivision. Additionally, Mr. Dillard stated in 2020, this property was rezoned from EA to M-2. Lastly, Mr. Dillard stated the TRC had no technical objections

to the proposed layout beyond the buffering standards and while staff finds this request inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and existing land use pattern, the Planning Commission recommended denial.

REZ-2021-27 Charles Flythe, Val Tech Road, ~16 acres, C-H to R-1, County Water & Septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on approximately 16.2 acres from C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning to R-1 (Low-Density Residential) zoning, in order for an additional single family home to be constructed. Mr. Dillard stated the property was zoned A-U, F-H and C-H, and then changed to R-1, CON and C-H upon adoption of the ULDC. Mr. Dillard stated the TRC and Planning Commission recommended approval.

REZ-2021-28 Windy Hill S/D, 7532 Miller Bridge Road, ~34 acres, E-A to R-1, Community Well & Septic (WITHDRAWN), Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated that the case has been withdrawn. Commissioner Marshall questioned if a petition was submitted, since there was not a petition in the agenda packet, Chairman Slaughter stated that a petition was available for review.

REZ-2021-29 LR83 LLC, 5716 Race Track Road, ~3.6 acres, R-A to R-1, Well & Septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from Residential Agricultural (R-A) to Low-Density Residential (R-1) in order to produce two (2) ULDC conforming lots. Further, Mr. Dillard stated the TRC and Planning Commission recommended approval.

REZ-2021-30 Interstate Land Management, LLC, Briarwood Rd., ~66 acres, R-1 to R-A, Well & Septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request is an attempt by the applicant to rezone their property from R-1 (Low-Density Residential) to R-A (Residential Agricultural). Mr. Dillard stated this request stems from the applicant's desire to allow for agricultural uses on the lots. Mr. Dillard stated if approved, the multiple parcels will be combined. Mr. Dillard stated the subject properties are generally open fields in cultivation or heavily wooded and serve as a buffer between the surrounding properties. Mr. Dillard stated the TRC and Planning Commission recommended approval.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Proposed Purchase of Real Estate on Stewart Circle, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated staff seeks the Board's approval for the purchase of 1.2 acres on Stewart Circle from Stewart Properties, LLC. The proposed purchase price is \$95,000.00 based on an appraisal from Mr. Bajalia. Mr. McLeod stated this property will be used to construct a new fire station. Further, Mr. McLeod stated staff is awaiting completion of the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment. If approved, closing will not proceed until staff reviews the pending assessment to verify there are no adverse issues.

Crowder Gulf Disaster Debris Removal Contract Renewal with Updated Pricing, EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the item. Mr. Tye stated last November, Lowndes County Board of Commissioners entered into pre-event contracts with three contractors and those contracts were for a one year period with a renewal option for up to an additional four one year periods. Mr. Tye stated Crowder Gulf is a secondary awardee and is requesting a price increase equal to the increase in the Consumer Price Index since the initial award, which is 5.4%. Commissioner Marshall asked regarding the fee schedule, Mr. Tye responded the fee schedule from Ashbritt would be more competitive. Chairman Slaughter asked in the event that a disaster did occur in the county, would this be reimbursable through GEMA and FEMA, Mr. Tye responded yes.

Resolution to Adopt Updated Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan, EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the item. Mr. Tye stated every five years, the county is required to update the hazard mitigation plan. Mr. Tye explained that a multi-jurisdictional update is required by Georgia Emergency Management to maintain local eligibility for grant funds. Mr. Tye further stated all governments and stakeholder agencies participated in drafting the plan update.

Proposed Utilities Cost Adjustments, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated there has been no price increase in several years and due to recent cost increases, with meters, pumps and related components, staff recommends the proposed price increases be approved and become effective January 1, 2022. Commissioner Wisnebaker asked if this was a percentage-based increase, Mr. Stalvey answered no.

Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Application, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated that as a result of the Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program, Lowndes County has been allocated \$1,211,881.49 for FY2022. Additionally, Mr. McLeod stated Lowndes County would be responsible for a minimum 10% match in local funding.

Resolution Authorizing Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosures, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this resolution is before the Commission at the request of the Lowndes County Tax Commissioner and this is a formality that officially covers the Tax Commissioner with the process of being able to foreclose on property based on delinquent taxes. Mrs. Dukes stated this resolution has been approved by the Commission in the past for former Tax Commissioners and the current Tax Commissioner would like the resolution in his name.

Section 125 Plan Document Renewal for 2022, Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated approval of the plan will allow qualifying employee deductions to be withheld pretax and in accordance with IRS guidelines.

2022 ACGG Workers' Compensation Insurance Renewal, Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the renewal in the amount of \$201,681.00 to include discounts and safety credits that reduce the annual premium to \$183,428.00.

2022 Holiday Schedule, Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the holiday schedule. Mr. Beals stated the holidays have been prepared in accordance with Lowndes County's Personnel Policy.

2022 Commission Meeting Calendar, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the calendar. Mrs. Dukes stated staff took into consideration annual holidays and the ACCG Annual Training Conference when preparing the calendar.

Supporting Reform to Georgia's Annexation Dispute Resolution Law, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this resolution comes as a request from the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) with annexation and deannexation being the topic of conversation with both cities and counties within the last year. ACCG expects this to come up during the upcoming session and would like a resolution from Georgia counties if the Board agrees to move forward with approving this resolution.

Extension of Agreement for ULDC Updates, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, stated this request is to extend the current contract between Lowndes County and the consulting firm Goodwin Mills Cawood for updates to the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) and additional technical assistance throughout the course of the extension. Mr. Dillard stated the contract is proposed to have the same rates, terms and conditions as in the original agreement. The agreement date would be December 22, 2021 - December 31, 2022.

Approval of the District Attorney's Federal VOCA Grant Application Renewal, District Attorney, Brad Shealy, presented the item. Mr. Shealy stated his office has received the grant since 1997, adding it benefits all five counties in the Southern Judicial Circuit. Mr. Shealy stated the funds benefit victims of crimes that are handled by Superior Court.

Approval of Solicitor General's VOCA Continuation Grant Award for 2021-2022, Solicitor General's Office Representative, Karen Hayes, presented the item. Ms. Hayes stated the grant provides for additional staff assigned to assisting victims. Ms. Hayes further stated the requested \$6,000.00, will offset the funding required to provide health benefits to the employees funded by this grant.

Approval of Solicitor General's VAWA Continuation Grant for 2022, Solicitor General's Office Representative, Karen Hayes, presented the item. Ms. Hayes stated the Solicitor's office is requesting \$14,834.00 in federal funds. Ms. Hayes stated the cash match required by Lowndes County is \$21,611.00. Further, Ms. Hayes explained if not approved, the County would need to pay a total cash match of \$36,266.00 as discussed at the November commission meeting.

Opioid Litigation, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated as a follow up to the last update the Commission received in November from Mrs. Haynes Studstill, there are two forms that need to be approved for the County to continue to move forward. Commissioner Marshall asked for additional information regarding this litigation, Mrs. Dukes responded this is a collective initiative nationwide that went after the distributors of opioids. Further, Mrs. Dukes stated a settlement has been reached and it is our understanding that a cash award will be received.

Land Bank Authority Coordinator, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated a recommendation has been made that the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County jointly fund a part time person for the Land Bank Authority with Lowndes County contributing a not to exceed amount of \$30,000.00. Commissioner Marshall asked if \$30,000.00 was the amount being asked for the City of Valdosta to contribute, Mrs. Dukes replied yes.

BID

Bid for Qty-4 Custom Cab Pumpers for the Fire Department, Purchasing Agent, Amy Woods, presented a bid to purchase a quantity of four new 2022 custom cab pumpers for Lowndes County Fire Rescue. Mrs. Woods stated the Sutphen Corporation submitted the low bid, in the amount of \$2,192,388.00 for a total price of four new custom cab pumpers. Mrs. Woods stated two new pumpers will be purchased upon order and the other two upon delivery.

REPORTS- County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, had additional comments related to the fire trucks. Mrs. Dukes stated staff worked with the Battalion Chiefs, not all the trucks are similar or the same and Lowndes County Fire Rescue is working to standardized that with a smaller more efficient truck that will be more manageable. Mrs. Dukes stated if any questions should arise, to please let her know. Mrs. Dukes additionally stated late Friday an email was received from reapportionment on our numbers based on the census and moving district lines.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the work session at 9:11 a.m.