

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, December 12, 2023

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

Commissioner Clay Griner was not present.

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

County Manager, Paige Dukes, introduced Mr. Matt Gierden, Senior Vice President with Ashbritt, a national rapid-response emergency management company which Lowndes County contracted with for our debris pickup, after Hurricane Idalia. Mr. Gierden stated he was thankful for the opportunity to serve the community and to work with Lowndes County staff. Mr. Gierden gave an update and stated 677 thousand cubic yards have been hauled and hopefully this project will be completed by the holidays. Ms. Sara Perkins with Ashbritt, representing the Corporate Foundation, stated at the end of this project they would like to give back to the community. In January, a national partnership with the Boys and Girls Club will be launched and in anticipation Ms. Perkins discovered that the local Boys and Girls Club here in Valdosta had their gymnasium destroyed by the hurricane. Ms. Kristin Hanna with the Boys and Girls Club of Valdosta addressed the commission. Ms. Hanna stated there was one inch of standing water in their gymnasium after Hurricane Idalia and the amount to repair was \$83,000.00. The Ashbritt Foundation has partnered with them and will replace the flooring over the Christmas break in the amount of \$50,000.00. Ms. Hanna thanked the Ashbritt Foundation for their support and giving back to our community.

County Manager, Paige Dukes introduced, Lt. Joey Herndon, with Lowndes County Fire Rescue who addressed the commission. Lt. Herndon stated the Heroes for Tots Charity Softball Tournament is hosted by the Dirty South FOOLS, a professional organization of firefighters who come together on their own time to conduct training and community development projects. Lt. Herndon stated the recent tournament was held Saturday, December 9th with twelve teams that participated. The Lowndes County Fire Rescue team won the tournament. 201 toys were donated with an average value of \$4,516.88 with \$1,086.00 cash donations, totaling \$5,602.88. Hosting this tournament was made possible through the efforts of Lt. Herndon's wife, Chief Young and his wife, the SGMC Trauma Commission, local public safety agencies, and community sponsors of Dirty Dozen Coffee Company, Titletown Insurance and Valdosta Lowndes Parks and Recreation (VLPR) and staff. Lastly, Lt. Herndon stated FOOLS, is the Fraternal Order of Letherheads Society.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of November 13, 2023 and the regular session of November 14, 2023. No revisions were requested. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, one opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Slaughter stated if there were no objections, staff would like to add two items to the agenda, a Utility Access Easement-Loch Winn Farms, L.L.L.P. and 4251 Whitewater Road Property Purchase. There being no objections, Chairman Slaughter asked that the items be added as requested.

APPOINTMENTS

Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center and Tourism Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item stating the seats currently held by Commissioner Joyce Evans and Mr. Michael Smith will expire December 31, 2023. Mrs. Dukes further stated Commissioner Evans and Mr. Smith have both expressed a desire to continue to serve. Commissioner Marshall nominated Commissioner Joyce Evans and Mr. Michael Smith for reappointment. There being no other nominations, Commissioner Evans and Mr. Smith were reappointed by acclamation.

Lowndes County Public Facilities Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated the terms of Mr. Scott Purvis and Mr. Crawford Powell have expired, with Mr. Purvis expressing a desire to continue to serve and Mr. Powell no longer resides in Lowndes County. Chairman Slaughter nominated Mr. Scott Purvis. Commissioner Evans asked if Mr. Scott Purvis is reappointed could Mr. Crawford Powell's seat be tabled for a later date? Chairman Slaughter answered yes and also mentioned the term expires May 31, 2026. There being no other nominations, Mr. Scott Purvis was reappointed by acclamation. Commissioner Orenstein asked if this item would be on the next agenda? Chairman Slaughter answered yes.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Beer and Wine License - Mohammad Warraich of Bahagaywalia Corporation DBA Citgo - 4460 Shiloh Rd., Valdosta, GA

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated this business currently holds a license for beer and is asking to add wine. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Beer and Wine License - Neel Patel of Neel Om Ent LLC, DBA One Stop #4 - 5112 Clyattville Lake Park Rd., Valdosta, GA

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated this business currently holds a license for beer and is asking to add wine. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker made a motion to approve

the license as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Set Qualifying Fees for the 2024 Elections

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the state statute requires the governing authority of any county or municipality to fix and publish a qualifying fee for each county or municipality office to be filled in the upcoming primary or election. Commissioner Orenstein asked where do the fees go, Mrs. Dukes answered to the Board of Elections. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the resolution as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

2024 Holiday Schedule

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated Lowndes County observes ten holidays, spanning twelve working days and the 2024 Holiday Schedule is being presented for the Commission's consideration. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the holiday schedule, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Section 125 Plan Document Renewal for 2024

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. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approval the renewal as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

2024 ACCG Workers' Compensation Insurance Renewal

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the renewal in the amount of \$190,006.00 to include discounts and safety credits that reduce the annual premium to \$171,593.00. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the renewal as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

2024 Stop Loss Insurance Coverage Renewal

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the annual renewal in the amount of \$1,458,537.00 with HM Insurance Group. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the annual renewal as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

2024 Commission Meeting Calendar

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated staff took into consideration the annual holidays and the ACCG Annual Training Conference when preparing the 2024 commission meeting calendar for your consideration. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the calendar as presented, Commissioners Orenstein and Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Adoption of FY 2024 - 2025 Budget Calendar

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated the Commission is required to adopt a balanced budget by June 30, 2024, adding the other dates are presented as guidelines for the process. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the budget calendar, Commissioners Evans and Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Lowndes County Juvenile Accountability Court (LCJAC) FY24 Enhancement and Innovation Award

Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from Judge Tunison during the work session. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the enhancement and innovation award, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

UPS Replacement at the Naylor and Hahira Public Safety Radio System Tower Sites

911 Director, Tonya Davis, presented the request in the amount of \$70,500.00. Mrs. Davis stated this request is to replace two of the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) units, which are over twenty years old. Additionally, Mrs. Davis stated this is a budgeted item. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Expanding Board of Tax Assessors

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated in 2020 when the assessors were established that resolution provided for three members. The resolution before the commission tonight would add an additional two members, for a total of five, with three members required for quorum. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the resolution as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Loan to Valdosta Housing Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the commission committed to a loan with the housing authority which would expire in December and the housing authority is asking for an additional twelve (12) months. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Marshall second. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker, Commissioners Orenstein and Marshall voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Evans recused herself from the matter and did not vote. Motion carried.

Utility and Access Easement – Loch Winn Farms, L.L.L.P. *Agenda Item Added*

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated staff has negotiated a utility easement and access easement from Loch Winn Farms, L.L.L.P. to the county. It relates to the exit 13-exit 16 water main extension. Mr. Stalvey stated in addition to being a utility easement, it allows vehicles access from James Road Extension to an existing county utility easement to the east and to the property to the west. Mr. Stalvey stated the negotiated compensation from the County to the Grantor is \$5,496.00. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the item as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

4251 Whitewater Road Property Purchase *Agenda Item Added*

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated 4251 Whitewater Road is a .51 acre parcel adjacent to a county lift station. Mr. Charles Cowart contacted the county to purchase this lot, if interested. The property was appraised at \$18,000.00. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the purchase as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

BID

Bid on 3 Roll-Up Doors for County Buildings

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the bid for a quantity of three new roll-up doors. Ms. Black stated due to the damages caused by Hurricane Idalia at the Utilities LAS, Twin Lakes Fire Station and the Public Works Maintenance Shop. One bid was received from AllStar Garage Door in the amount of \$41,582.00. Additionally, Ms. Black stated this amount will be reimbursed by FEMA. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve AllStar Garage Door in the amount of \$41,582.00, Commissioner Evans and Vice Chairman Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Bid for Security Services at the Human Resources Building

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item for security guard services at the Human Resources Building. Ms. Black stated this is a year-long contract with the option to renew for four additional years. American Professional Investigators, Inc. (API) was the sole bidder in the amount of \$13.75 per hour, or \$63,580.00, for one year. Ms. Black stated American Professional Investigators, Inc. has held this contract for the past five years. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the agreement with American Professional Investigators, Inc. in the amount of \$63,580.00, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Moody AFB Emergency Backup Water Connection

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Lowndes County, in conjunction with Moody Air Force Base, was awarded a grant for an emergency backup water connection for the base water system. This project will include an extension of the water main along Bemiss Road, boring under the railroad and Moody's perimeter fence and tying into the 10" water main on Georgia Street. There will be a small building on the base that will house the matter pressure actuated valve and SCADA inputs. Mr. Stalvey stated two bids were received from Standard Contractors in the amount of \$886,352.50 and RPI, Inc. in the amount of \$944,289.50. Commissioner Marshall asked when the project would be completed? Mr. Stalvey answered by June 2024. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve Standard Contractors in the amount of \$886,352.50, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

New Elevated Water Tower located at 2650 James Road Extension

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated due to growth and expansion, a new water tower, located at 2650 James Road Extension, is needed to supply adequate pressure and capacity to the exit 13 and exit 16 corridor. Staff and Lovell Engineering Associates, PC (LEA) agree a 500,000 gallon pedestal elevated tank would be the best option. Three bids were received with Phoenix Fabricators and Erectors submitting the low bid in the amount of \$3,551,666.00. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker made a motion to approve Phoenix Fabricators & Erectors in the amount of \$3,551,666.00, Commissioner Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, thanked Commissioner Marshall for his leadership on the Workers Compensation Board. Staff will be participating in Lowndes High School's work based learning reverse career fair tomorrow. Thursday the Employee Christmas Luncheon will be held at the civic center beginning at 11:30 a.m. Ms. Black has distributed budget packages and the audit will be filed by December 31, 2023. The ACCG Intern program will begin this summer and will be utilized by Community Development

Director, Rachel Thrasher and Probation Director, Ferlisha Rountree. Regarding Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) we have reached out to our lobbyist and we are waiting on a contractual update to cover conversations at the state level. Mrs. Dukes stated 2023 has been an epic year with a great team and we are excited about 2024. Chairman Slaughter thanked the Commissioners for their hard work and dedication to Lowndes County. Chairman Slaughter stated he was proud to be a part of this Commission and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD - There were no citizens wishing to be heard.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.