

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
Monday, October 14, 2024

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 September 9, 2024 and the regular session meeting of September 10, 2024. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**TXT-2024-03 ULDC Text Amendments**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the proposed update to the Unified Land Development Code. Mr. Dillard stated the proposed revisions include the maximum number of lots accessible for ingress/egress, the creation, implementation and enforcement of a tree bank and administrative and/or clerical changes. Staff is recommending to table this item until the November 12, 2024 meeting to allow additional time for stakeholders to review.

**REZ-2024-15 Loch Winn LTD, Loch Laurel Rd & Carroll Ulmer Rd, ~62ac, R-A to R-1 & R-A, Well and Septic**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this item is being requested to be tabled in order to be reviewed by the Planning Commission at their October 28, 2024 meeting. Staff is asking that this rezoning request be tabled to the November 12, 2024 commission meeting.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Adoption of Millage Rate for 2024**

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated there is a rescheduled Millage Hearing at 5:00 p.m. tomorrow night and this is the third public hearing and the adoption will be held at the regular session meeting.

**Adoption of Fire District Millage Rate for 2024**

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated this is the fire district millage which will be adopted at the regular session meeting being held tomorrow night.

### **Joint Funding Agreement with USGS for Stream Gauge Maintenance**

EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the agreement in the amount of \$27,850.00. The stream gauge for the Little River site is \$17,000.00, and the Withlacoochee River site is \$10,850.00. Mr. Tye stated there is an increase in cost due to USGS charging for the maintenance of the rain gauges which are attached to each stream gauge. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked to verify the cost increase? Mr. Tye responded the maintenance of the rain gauges is being charged now, which is \$3,025.00.

### **BID**

#### **Sprayfield Expansion Phase I**

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated an expansion plan was submitted to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to expand the sprayfield to accommodate increased flow due to growth. Mr. Stalvey mentioned currently, the county is permitted for two million gallons per day and Georgia EPD has approved up to three million gallons per day. This additional capacity requires approximately 150 acres of additional field for spraying. Mr. Stalvey stated four bids were received, ranging from \$3,369,213.71 - \$4,053,303.00. Southeast Connections, LLC from Conyers, Georgia submitted the low bid in the amount of \$3,369,213.71. Vice Chairman Marshall asked if ARPA funding could be used for a disaster relief? County Manager, Paige Dukes responded the ARPA funds have already been obligated. Vice Chairman Marshall asked for the balance of the ARPA funding. Mrs. Dukes responded that balance would be available this afternoon. Chairman Slaughter stated the ARPA funding has already been obligated or utilized. Vice Chairman Marshall asked for the SPLOST balance for Utilities, Mrs. Dukes responded Finance Director, Stephanie Black, will get that updated list. Commissioner Griner asked how many more gallons per day could be obtained? Mr. Stalvey responded four million gallons. Chairman Slaughter stated the sprayfield expansion capacity is four million. Chairman Slaughter stated discussions have been had at retreats and meetings with the direction moving forward being a treatment facility, not a Land Application System (LAS).

#### **Grove Pointe Nelson Hill Watermain Interconnection**

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated staff recommends installing an 8" interconnection between Grove Pointe Subdivision and Nelson Hill Subdivision to create a second feed and looping of the water system. Easements have been acquired and the interconnection will be installed from the southwest corner of Nelson Hill Place to the northeast corner of Hatfield Circle. Mr. Stalvey stated three bids were received ranging from \$78,392.60 - \$187,565.40. Mr. Stalvey stated RPI, Inc. submitted the low bid in the amount of \$78,392.60.

### **REPORTS - County Manager**

County Manager, Paige Dukes asked EMA Director, Ashley Tye to update the commission regarding Hurricane Helene. Mr. Tye stated we are in the recovery process with debris being the largest part of the operation with contractors being active for a week. As of Saturday, 200,000 cubic yards of debris had been picked up. There is a Disaster Recovery Center located at one of the churches on Forrest Street Extension with 150+ people being seen daily. In addition to this location, there is also a DSA, Disaster Surveyor Assistance, team going out setting up mobile sites for people to be able to meet with FEMA within their community. The shelter is still open with four people and we're hopeful that in working with the Red Cross, those people can be transitioned. Commissioner Orenstein asked to clarify about contaminated debris? Mr. Tye answered if there is mixed debris, the citizen will be notified as to why it is not being picked up. The goal is to be finished within ninety (90) days. In the unincorporated areas, there are one hundred trucks hauling to remove the debris. Mrs. Dukes stated

regarding contamination in the debris, Code Enforcement will leave door hangers to notify citizens why the debris wasn't removed. Mrs. Dukes stated that if citizens had permits which were 'in process' and the permit(s) are no longer needed, there will be a refund issued. Chairman Slaughter mentioned regarding the contractors removing the debris, they cannot go onto private property, the debris has to be on the right of way. Mr. Tye stated there are volunteer groups here in town, Crisis Clean Up and Samaritans Purse. Mr. Tye gave the example of Samaritans Purse, with Hurricane Idalia 686 people called in for help and with Hurricane Helene currently 2,030 people have asked for assistance. Vice Chairman Marshall asked about private haulers dumping on private property in Cherry Creek and asked the number of citations written. Mrs. Dukes answered she would get that information from Code Enforcement and Permits/Inspections. Vice Chairman Marshall asked regarding errors or mistakes made on the FEMA application, how would the citizens correct this matter? Mr. Tye responded by going to FEMA at the Disaster Recovery Center to speak with someone.

Mrs. Dukes mentioned that Austin Scott is in Homerville this morning at 10:00 a.m. at the Train Depot meeting with the farmers in Clinch County.

### **Georgia Forestry Presentation (Work Session)**

Chief Ranger Ken Wells presented the Commission with an annual report for the 2023-2024 year detailing forestry operations in the region. Mr. Wells also mentioned that staff from Forestry also has been helping with the clean up process after Hurricane Helene. Chairman Slaughter thanked Mr. Wells for the information and for Forestry's service to the community of Lowndes County especially during the cleanup process after Hurricane Helene.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, Commissioner Evans seconded. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 9:22 a.m.