

explain. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked the value of one mill, Ms. Black answered she would verify and send that amount.

### **Adoption of Special District Millage for Fire Services for 2025**

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated following the Board's approval to expand fire services in Lowndes County beginning with the FY 2022 budget, a special fire district was created that includes the unincorporated area of Lowndes County. Fire services was moved into a special fund and is supported by a millage from the special fire district. The Board is required annually to set the millage rate for this fire district. The 2025 rate should be set at 2.50 mills which is no charge from the prior year millage.

### **Opioid Litigation - Purdue Pharma**

Assistant Finance Director, Rachel Bowen, presented the item. Ms. Bowen stated at the August 12, 2024, meeting you authorized special counsel for the County to join in a proposed statement of interest in reaching a settlement with Purdue Pharma. Purdue Pharma has now reached a settlement through the bankruptcy process to resolve all pending governmental opioid-related claims. Lowndes County has been advised by special counsel to participate in this settlement in order to receive funds aimed at addressing the opioid crisis. In order to participate, the County must agree to the terms set forth by the State of Georgia and Local Governments and authorize the Chairman to sign the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning National Settlement with Purdue and execute the Subdivision Participation and Release Form. Commissioner Orenstein asked if the Studstill firm was still handling this matter, County Attorney, Walter Elliott, answered Cale Conley's firm in Atlanta and the Studstill firm here locally are both involved in this matter. Commissioner Marshall inquired about the settlement, specifically whether different companies were managing the implementation of benefits or training, Mrs. Dukes responded that this is being handled locally by the Lowndes County Sheriff's Office.

### **Quit-Claim Deed of Abandoned Section of Hightower Road**

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item stating that on May 9, 2023 Lowndes County abandoned a section of Hightower Road. Mr. McLeod stated the United States Air Force has requested a quit claim deed for the abandoned section of right of way. The proposed quit claim deed and the plat of the abandoned section of right of way are both attached.

### **SPLOST IX**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented, the item. Mrs. Dukes stated Lowndes County approved the SPLOST IX Agreement on August 4, 2025, and all five cities have approved the SPLOST IX agreement as well. Mrs. Dukes further stated the next step requires the Commission to approve the Resolution so that information can be forwarded to the Board of Elections.

### **TREES Act Resolution**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this item provides for tax relief for those harvesting timber for the last quarter of 2024 and all of 2025. There is a formula by which any relief which is granted by Lowndes County will be reimbursed by the State of Georgia. This resolution will allow Lowndes County to move forward in the process. Chief Appraiser, Lisa Bryant will be the point of contact for coordinating the necessary forms. Additionally, Mrs. Dukes stated for Lowndes County this is approximately \$46,000.00, on average annual impact. Commissioner Marshall inquired about the reimbursement timeline, and Mrs. Dukes responded she had not yet verified that information.