

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, June 26, 2023

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

Commissioner Scott Orenstein was not present.

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of June 12, 2023, the Special Called Meeting of June 12, 2023, the regular session of June 13, 2023, and the Budget Public Hearing of June 20, 2023. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

Fire Officer of the Year & Fire Fighter of the Year Recognition (Work Session)

Fire Chief, Lloyd Green presented the item, recognizing Captain Jeff Talley as Fire Officer of the Year and Sergeant Owen Brooks as Fire Fighter of the Year. Mr. Green stated Captain Talley was recently nominated by his supervisor, Bill Young, and awarded Fire Officer of the Year for the Valdosta Elks Lodge for Lowndes County. Chief Green stated Sergeant Owen Brooks was nominated by his supervisor, Ben Amiot, for Fire Fighter of the Year for the Valdosta Exchange Club of Lowndes County. Chief Green also stated Sergeant Brooks recently made Sergeant. In addition, Chief Green stated he is proud of both gentlemen for their accomplishments, service, and dedication to the community and Lowndes County Fire Rescue. Before getting a picture with the Commissioners and Mr. Brooks, County Manager, Paige Dukes stated Sergeant Brooks was a part of our expansion. Mrs. Dukes went on to say he came in as a brand new fire fighter and has done a phenomenal job. She stated EMS has been extremely busy and we have been mitigating some of that with our fire departments. Mrs. Dukes stated Captain Talley ran EMS calls recently and does not mind jumping in the truck to run a call if he needs to; to take pressure off of one of our apparatus or if EMS is overwhelmed in general. She stated that is just one example of Captain Talley's abilities and his commitment to go above and beyond where our community is concerned. She went on to say she is grateful to both of them and thanked them for what they do.

APPOINTMENTS

Lowndes County Division of Family and Children Services

County Manager, Paige Dukes presented the item stating the seat currently held by Mrs. Elsie Napier will expire on June 30th and Mrs. Napier has expressed a desire to continue to serve.

Valdosta-Lowndes Parks and Recreation Authority

County Manager Paige Dukes presented the item stating Mrs. Suzan Garnett's term on the VLPRA expires on June 30th and she has expressed a desire to continue to serve. Mrs. Dukes stated Mrs. Garnett is currently Chair of the VLPRA Board and is a tremendous part of that initiative. Mrs. Dukes also stated staff is in favor of her consideration.

Valdosta Lowndes County Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals

County Manager, Paige Dukes presented the item stating Mr. Tripp Howell's seat will expire June 30th and he has expressed a desire to continue to serve. She also stated Commissioner Evans is part of this initiative. Once we complete bringing Permits and Inspections in house as of July 1, 2023 we will come to you later in July for an appointment for the Construction Board of Appeals for Lowndes County, stating we cannot use the same one, but if you all choose to appoint the same members that currently serve on the existing board so that there are not two groups of people there, that can be done. Mrs. Dukes stated we are in the process of reaching out to them now to see if they would be interested. That is a board that meets once per quarter, so there is no large time commitment. Chairman Slaughter asked Mrs. Dukes to help him understand the reason why we could not use the same Board, to which Mrs. Dukes responded it is Valdosta-Lowndes County because we have the agreement. Further stating, the agreement is tied to that and once we split out of that, it will no longer be Valdosta-Lowndes County, there will be a Valdosta Board and a Lowndes County Board.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Lowndes County Accountability Court Grant Approval and Cash Match

Program Director, Jennifer Fabbri presented the item. Mrs. Fabbri stated she is happy to report that they did receive a state grant to continue them through Fiscal Year 2024. She stated, as always, that grant provides 88% of the total budget and they are asking the County for a 12% cash match. The actual amount requested this year is a little lower than last year. She also wanted to point out that the program was recognized by CACJ for adhering to best practices state standards. Mrs. Fabbri also stated she is happy to say that at last year's annual conference she was awarded the Star Coordinator Award for the State of Georgia. Mrs. Fabbri also mentioned that she provided a savings analysis print out for the Commissioners. Commissioner Evans thanked Mrs. Fabbri for the work that she does. Mrs. Fabbri stated the next graduation is August 9, 2023. She also invited the Commissioners to a special recognition for Judge Voyles, stating he has stepped in and done an amazing job. Chairman Slaughter thanked Mrs. Fabbri.

Annual Contract Renewal with the State of Georgia Department of Corrections

Public Works Director, Robin Cumbus presented the item. Mrs. Cumbus stated this item is for three prison work details, one for the Engineering Department to meet state requirements for storm water and two for Public Works for the maintenance of easements. Mrs. Cumbus also stated this contract does not come with a cost increase like previous years. Chairman Slaughter asked if this contract is only if the County needs the details, to which Mrs. Cumbus responded, that is correct. In addition, Mrs. Cumbus stated if the County does not use the details, the County is not charged.

Budget Plan for Hotel Motel Proceeds for Fiscal Year 2024

County Manager, Paige Dukes presented the item stating, Georgia Statute requires the Commission to adopt prior to each fiscal year a budget plan for the use of hotel/motel tax proceeds for the upcoming fiscal year. Mrs. Dukes stated the same statute also requires the Commission to obtain from the Conference Center and Tourism Authority a budget plan. In addition, Mrs. Dukes stated, the Authority

plan has been made a part of the County budget plan and all of those things have been incorporated as required. Both plans are scheduled to be adopted by the authority board on June 27, 2023.

Adoption of Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget

County Manager, Paige Dukes presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the changes to the budget have been made and over the weekend the Commission received a copy of the draft budget plan. Mrs. Dukes stated they are still available to make any adjustments that the Commission would like to make before tomorrow evening's consideration. Mrs. Dukes also stated she would encourage the Commission to allow them to make adjustments if the Commission has any and not delay the adoption of the budget. If it is delayed, additional hearings and advertisements are required. She also asked the Commission to let them know today or tomorrow before the meeting if there are any changes they would like to make. Commissioner Marshall asked if \$146 million is the approximate amount for the total budget, to which Mrs. Dukes responded yes, that is the total budget amount.

Resolution Making Designations Required by OCGA 36-66-5.1(c)

County Planner, JD Dillard presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated changes in State Law regarding appeals of certain land use decisions take effect on July 1, 2023. Mr. Dillard further stated staff plans to address the newer ULDC Text amendments. Mr. Dillard also stated the resolution serves as a stop gap between July 1 and July 11. In addition, Mr. Dillard stated the resolution has been prepared by the County Attorney's Office and staff recommends adopting the resolution making designations required by OCGA.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated on Wednesday at 12:30 pm and again at 2:00 pm we have stakeholder meetings scheduled to help our development community become familiar with software for permits and inspections. Homebuilders are coming at 2:00pm and all other general stakeholders are scheduled for 12:30 pm. Mrs. Dukes invited the Commission to attend either or both of those sessions. Mrs. Dukes also stated the software will go live July 1, but we are in a test phase right now so that they can go in and put in information for a permit and create accounts and see how all of it works. In addition, Mrs. Dukes stated, the evening before July 1, the training system will be wiped and the new process will begin. Mrs. Dukes further stated, we are on board and moving forward, and she believes all the technology will go in today if it is not already on the second floor, adding, the desks are in, the staff is hired, and we are ready. She also mentioned that they have talked to homebuilders and other stakeholders and let them know this is a fluid process, we are here to meet their needs, and we will make changes if need be and there is still plenty of time to make changes as we make sure that this is a service that meets their needs.

Mrs. Dukes introduced Mrs. Mary Beth Brownlee, the Director of the One Valdosta - Lowndes Initiative and recognized Ms. Christy Moore, the Chamber Director, who was in the audience. Mrs. Dukes stated we have been going through the One Valdosta-Lowndes Initiative for several years, and are very blessed to get to a point where the Chamber could hire a director and they had their first committee meeting last week and Mrs. Dukes asked Mrs. Brownlee to come in and give the Commission an update. Mrs. Brownlee introduced herself, shared a little about her background, thanked the Commission for their investment that they made to the initiative, and updated the Commission on the One Valdosta-Lowndes Initiative. Chairman Slaughter thanked Mrs. Brownlee.

Mrs. Dukes stated the groundbreaking for Second Harvest has been cancelled. Mrs. Dukes also mentioned that we will be feeding our employees Chick Fil A for employee appreciation on Thursday,

ahead of the July fourth holiday. She further stated if any of the Commissioners would like to help deliver, please let her know before noon today so that she can provide them with the information. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked for the date of the event and Mrs. Dukes replied, this Thursday.

Chairman Slaughter requested an executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel. At 8:58 a.m. Commissioner Griner made a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel, Vice Chairman Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.06 a.m. Chairman Slaughter reconvened the work session with no additional information being discussed. Commissioner Griner made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, Commissioner Marshall second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting.