

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, December 11, 2023

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

Commissioner Scott Orenstein was not in attendance.

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

Introduction of the CASA Executive Director (Work Session)

Community Development Director, Rachel Thrasher introduced Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Executive Director, Elaine Grice. Mrs. Grice stated she was honored to serve in this position and gave the Commission an update. Mrs. Grice stated classes and training had started as well as the CASA house being furnished. Additionally, Mrs. Grice mentioned there would be a swearing-in of volunteers and the board members in January.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of November 13, 2023 and the regular session of November 14, 2023. There were no revisions requested.

APPOINTMENTS

Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center and Tourism Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the seats of Commissioner Joyce Evans and Mr. Michael Smith will expire December 31, 2023. Both have expressed a desire to continue to serve.

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. Powell no longer residing in Lowndes County. Commissioner Griner asked regarding the appointments to the Board of Assessors, when would the vote be taken? Chairman Slaughter responded those would be on the agenda next month.

FOR CONSIDERATION

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

Finance Accounts Receivable Technician, Lorraine Taylor, presented the item. Mrs. Taylor stated this business currently has a beer license and is requesting to add wine.

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

Finance Accounts Receivable Technician, Lorraine Taylor, presented the item. Mrs. Taylor stated this business currently has a beer license and is requesting to add wine.

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 municipal office to be filled in the upcoming primary or election.

2024 Holiday Schedule

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated Lowndes County observes ten (10) holidays spanning twelve (12) working days and the 2024 Holiday Schedule is being presented for the Commission's consideration.

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 the IRS guidelines.

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. Mr. Beals stated due to the County's safety/loss control program there was a 7.5% reduction added as well.

2024 Stop Loss Insurance Coverage Renewal

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the annual Stop Loss coverage related to Lowndes County's self-insured employee insurance plan, in the amount of \$1,458,537.00. Mr. Beals stated that after EPIC shopped rates for the new year, HM Insurance Group offered the lowest available rates.

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 calendar.

Adoption of FY 2024 - 2025 Budget Calendar

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the budget calendar. 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.

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

Judge James G. Tunison, Jr. presented the item. Judge Tunison stated the Lowndes County Juvenile Accountability Court (LCJAC) is funded through a reimbursable state grant. In order to receive this funding through this grant, a cash match of \$1,473.00 is needed. Commissioner Marshall asked if there were options for seventeen year olds in this program? Judge Tunison answered through the court, the options end with their seventeenth birthday and the challenge would be if they are seventeen, it takes more than six (6) months to complete the program. Commissioner Marshall asked if there was help available for these seventeen year olds? Judge Tunison mentioned that our community has many non-profit organizations that might be able to help.

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

911 Director, Tonya Davis, presented the request in the amount \$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. Mrs. Davis stated this is a budgeted item.

Expanding Board of Tax Assessors

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated, based on conversations that staff was given regarding the current challenge with the Board of Assessors, direction was given to expand the board by two additional members. Commissioner Marshall asked if the appointment would be in January, Mrs. Dukes responded yes, Mr. Puckett's seat expires in December and also two additional members would be appointed.

Loan to Valdosta Housing Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the County signed and adopted a resolution agreeing to make a loan to the Valdosta Housing Authority. Mrs. Dukes stated the Valdosta Housing Authority has asked the County to extend this deadline one year, to December 31, 2024.

BID

Bid on 3 Roll-Up Doors for County Buildings

Purchasing Agent, Amy Woods, presented the bid for a quantity of three roll-up doors. Mrs. Woods stated one bid was received from AllStar Garage Door in the amount of \$41,582.00. Additionally, Mrs. Woods stated this amount will be reimbursed by FEMA.

Bid for Security Services at the Human Resources Building

Purchasing Agent, Amy Woods, presented the item for security guard services at the Human Resources Building. Mrs. Woods stated one bid was received from American Professional Investigators, Inc. in the amount of \$63,580.00, for one year. Mrs. Woods stated American Professional Investigators, Inc. has held this contract for the past five years. Commissioner Marshall asked if the security guards were unarmed? Chairman Slaughter answered yes, the guards are there to make sure the citizens are going through the metal detectors, to prevent someone with a weapon. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker asked if there were issues with security? Mrs. Woods answered not to my knowledge. Chairman Slaughter mentioned there were issues during COVID, due to the increase of citizens being seen. County Manager, Mrs. Dukes, stated off duty deputies were used in the past and the decision was made to use private security.

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 meter, 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 what is the estimate on the pipe run, Mr. Stalvey answered 1,700 feet on Bemiss Road and approximately 3,000 feet total.

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 LEA agree a 500,000 gallon pedestal elevated tank was 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 asked if this location was on the northside of US Highway 84? Mr. Stalvey answered it is south of US Highway 84.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, requested an executive session for the purpose of privileged attorney-client communication regarding the acquisition of real estate. At 9:01 a.m. Commissioner Griner made a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of privileged attorney-client communication regarding the purchase of real estate, Commissioner Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:14 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.