

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
Monday, April 7, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bill Slaughter  
Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans  
Commissioner Scott Orenstein  
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker  
Commissioner Michael Smith

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall was not in attendance.

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

**Georgia 811 Safe Digging Month Proclamation**

Chairman Slaughter read the proclamation for the Lowndes County Safe Digging month, declaring the month of April 2025.

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of March 24, 2025 and the regular session of March 25, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**REZ-2025-05 Creasy Property, ~19.8ac, Cindy St. Ext. & Creasy Drive, R-A & MAZ-3 to R-10 & MAZ- 3, County Utilities**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from R-A (Residential Agriculture) and MAZ-3 (Moody Activity Zone) zoning to R-10 (Suburban Density Residential) and MAZ-3 zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to combine and then subdivide the property into conforming lots for individual residencies. This property is within the Urban Service Area and Neighborhood Activity Center Character Area and Moody Activity Zone, which recommend R-10 and MAZ zoning respectively. The property is surrounded by R-A, R-1 and R-21 zoning to its east and south. The TRC and the Planning Commission recommended approval. Mr. Dillard stated there is a conceptual layout for a neighborhood. This is not a binding site plan and the intent is for the property to be rezoned and marketed for development.

**REZ-2025-06 Bailey Property, ~4.2ac, Sumner Road, E-A & R-1 to R-1, Well & Septic**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) and R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to R-1 zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to unify the zoning across the subject property. This property is within the Rural Service Area and Agricultural Character Area. The Planning Commission and TRC recommended approval. Chairman Slaughter asked to verify this is combining two parcels and the owner owns both parcels, Mr. Dillard answered yes, that is correct.

**REZ-2025-07 JHR & LL, LLC, ~7.3ac, New Statenville Hwy, E-A to C-H, Well & Septic**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to market the property for commercial development. The property is within the Urban Service Area and Community Activity Center Character Area. Utilities are available through the city or individual well and septic systems. The Planning Commission and TRC recommended approval.

**FOR CONSIDERATION****Insolvent List - Tax Commissioner**

Tax Commissioner, Clay Guess, presented the item. Mr. Guess stated these are properties that have reached the seven-year statute of limitations for delinquent taxes. Mr. Guess stated Ad Valorem taxes that are seven years or older cannot be levied. Personal property taxes cannot be levied if the property has been moved or sold out of Lowndes County. Mr. Guess stated this will be done on an annual basis. Chairman Slaughter asked if these properties are not properties that could be utilized through the tax sales, these properties have been transferred outside of Lowndes County, Mr. Guess answered yes, regarding personal properties. Chairman Slaughter questioned a property which was on the list from the Land Bank, Mr. Guess stated he would verify that information.

**Valdosta Junior Service League Petition for Tax Exemption**

County Manager, Paige Dukes presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated that we followed the same process as the Crescent to acknowledge a permanent exemption of ad valorem taxes for that property. This action is based on a 1978 resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners provided by a 1975 amendment to the Georgia Constitution. The Valdosta Junior Service League, Inc., who is the owner and keeper of the Converse Dalton Ferrell House, has submitted their required paperwork for your consideration to permanently exempt that property from ad valorem taxes. Chairman Slaughter asked potentially are there any other properties identified that need to be considered in the future. County Attorney, Walter Elliott, answered currently no other properties have been identified.

**Meacham Claim for Tax Refund**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the Board of Assessors has reviewed the attached claim for tax refund for Meacham Properties, LLC and Meacham Farms II, LLC filed with the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Assessors has prepared the attached written report to the Board of Commissioners which concludes Meacham should be refunded \$34,110.73 taxes based on a change in value from \$6,784,960 to \$3,731,728. Commissioner Smith asked even though they thought the bill was incorrect they paid the total amount. Chairman Slaughter and Mrs. Dukes responded that is correct.

**BID****Emergency Repair Bid - Lowndes County Sheriff's Office Special Operation Division Building and Work Detail Building**

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated that on September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene damaged the Special Operation Division building and Work Detail buildings. Staff has filed the claim with insurance and followed all procurement procedures for FEMA. The insurance adjuster and insurance engineer have been to the site for their inspections.

Staff was able to procure two quotes from pre-engineered metal building companies to repair the buildings. Superior Metal Buildings in the amount of \$59,369.34 and Gary Weaver Construction in the amount of \$62,280.00. Mr. McLeod stated this project is being completed under the emergency purchases' policy.

### **Alapaha Plantation Water Treatment Plant New Wells & Water Main Extension**

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Alapaha Plantation water system continues to experience issues with disinfection by-products and is currently under a consent order with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). County staff has worked closely with Lovell Engineering, TTL geologist and Georgia EPD have determined the need to drill two new supply wells to provide water to Alapaha Plantation, running a water main to the existing water treatment plant and an additional 20,000gallon storage tank. Mr. Stalvey stated three bids were received with Standard Contractors submitting the low bid, in the amount of \$1,711,265.60. Additionally, Mr. Stalvey stated that once this project is completed, a test will be run on the system. Chairman Slaughter asked how deep these wells would be dug, will they be in the Florida aquifer, Mr. Stalvey answered yes, the design is to drill approximately six hundred feet. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked the size of the well, Mr. Stalvey answered a six inch well. Commissioner Smith asked when this project will go online, Mr. Stalvey answered in the late summer or early fall time frame.

### **REPORTS - County Manager**

There was no additional information reported.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:47 a.m.