

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, April 8, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans
Commissioner Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

Commissioners Mark Wisenbaker and Michael Smith were not present.

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Marshall

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Marshall

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of March 24, 2025, and the regular session of March 25, 2025. No revisions were requested. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Vice Chairperson Evans. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

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 for nineteen acres. 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 served by individual well and septic systems. The TRC and the Planning Commission recommended approval. Commissioner Orenstein asked if we comply with all regulations through Moody Air Force Base (AFB) with their staff on these types of cases involving any MAZ zoning requests, Mr. Dillard answered yes, our representative at Moody AFB is aware and recommended that the county follow county ULDC procedures when it involves development in MAZ zonings. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the zoning request as presented, second by Vice Chairperson Evans. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

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. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve this rezoning request as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

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. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve this request as presented, second by Vice Chairperson Evans. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION**Insolvent List - Tax Commissioner**

Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from the Tax Commissioner, Mr. Clay Guess during the work session. No further discussion took place. Vice Chairperson Evans made a motion to approve the request as presented, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Valdosta Junior Service League Petition for Tax Exemption

County Manager, Paige Dukes presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this property falls under the same category as the process followed for the Crescent. In 1975, there was a local amendment to the Georgia Constitution that provided for a permanent exemption of some historic properties under certain circumstances. In 1978, the Commission approved a resolution adopting the same and this property, the Converse Dalton Ferrell House, qualifies as the Crescent did and the official action is ready for your consideration. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the request as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Meacham Claim for Tax Refund

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the Meacham Properties, LLC and Meacham Farms II, LLC have filed for a refund of taxes. This has been reviewed by staff and the county attorney's office, and they are eligible for a refund. Commissioner Marshall asked whether that correction will remain in place moving forward, Mrs. Dukes responded yes. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the claim for tax refund in the amount of \$34,110.73, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

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. Mr. McLeod stated that under the emergency purchases' policy, 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 staff has issued a notice to proceed to Superior Metal Buildings and the work is fifty percent complete. Staff is asking for approval of Superior Metal Buildings in the amount of \$59,369.34 for the emergency repairs. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve Superior Metal Buildings in the amount of \$59,369.34, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

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. These wells will be approximately 7200' away from the river. This project will involve the two wells, running a water main to the existing water treatment plant and an additional 20,000-gallon storage tank. Mr. Stalvey stated three bids were received with Standard Contractors submitting the low bid, in the amount of \$1,711,265.60. Commissioner Orenstein asked when will this project begin, Mr. Stalvey responded upon approval. Commissioner Orenstein asked when will the results be available, Mr. Stalvey responded three - four months upon completion. Commissioner Marshall asked if residents have been notified, Mr. Stalvey responded yes. Vice Chairperson Evans made a motion to approve Standard Contractors in the amount of \$1,711,265.60, second by Commissioner Orenstein.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, reported the following:

- Mrs. Dukes stated on Monday that Chief Young was notified by Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council that our recent audit of all the department's training records and accountability required to remain accredited had been audited, and the department passed inspections with no negative remarks.
- Yesterday marked the end of the debris removal program related to Hurricane Helene.
- Mrs. Dukes and Mrs. Mindy Bates met with the Home Builders Association of South Georgia Governmental Affairs Committee and Mrs. Bates gave an overview of permits and inspections over the last year. Mrs. Dukes commended Mrs. Bates and her team of inspectors for doing a phenomenal job.
- Lunch on the Lawn this Friday with a special thanks to Mrs. Meghan Barwick and her team. Lunch on the Lawn begins at 11:00 a.m. kicking off the Valdosta Bluesberry Festival, Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. with an outdoor painting competition of the historic courthouse and the Quiet Pines staff with Mrs. Rachel Thrasher will be making blueberry pancakes.

- Next week is National Public Safety Telecommunications Week as well as National Animal Care and Control week.
- On Wednesday, April 16th, Valdosta Middle School will be named a Military Flagship School by the Georgia Department of Education. This ceremony will be held at 9:00 a.m. in the Valdosta Middle School's gymnasium.
- Lastly, Mrs. Dukes reminded everyone that Lowndes County Offices will be closed Friday, April 18, 2025, in observance of Good Friday.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD -

Chairman Slaughter stated Mr. Brian Cosey will be speaking on behalf of others who have completed citizens wishing to be heard forms, since it's related to the same subject. Brian Cosey, 4881 Newton Circle, addressed the commission, stating there is an ongoing issue in his neighborhood with dogs running freely and the response from Animal Control and the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Cosey mentioned one of his neighbors lets people live in campers in their yard and one of the tenants has dogs, which run freely and have bitten between four-five people. Mr. Cosey is asking regarding the leash laws and the process for deeming a dog vicious in Lowndes County. Mr. Cosey also asked, regarding Idlewood Road, if the centerline could be remarked or repainted. Chairman Slaughter asked Mr. McLeod to check on Idlewood Road.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Slaughter recognized the presence of Leadership Lowndes class members. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Commissioner Marshall. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 5:58 p.m.