

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, April 21, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

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

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of April 7, 2025 and the regular session of April 8, 2025. No revisions were requested.

APPOINTMENT

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated this is a regional board appointment and Ms. Kelley Saxon's term expired March 8, 2025. Ms. Saxon has reached the maximum amount of time a member can serve on this board. Additionally, Mr. Carlton Richard's term will expire May 28, 2025, and he has not expressed an interest in being reappointed. Mrs. Dukes stated Mrs. Juliana Powell and Commissioner Michael Smith have both expressed an interest in serving.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Acceptance of the VAWA Continuation Grant Award for 2025

Solicitor General's Office Representative, Karen Hayes, presented the grant. Ms. Hayes stated that on January 28th, the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners approved this application for Continuation Funding available through the VAWA Grant Program. This grant funds budgeted costs associated with specialized prosecutors to handle Family Violence and Violence Against Women crimes. The Solicitor's Office was recently notified that the grant application was approved with the same amounts as last year \$79,112 in federal funds and \$26,371 in matching funds by the county. This grant runs from January 1, 2025–December 31, 2025. Commissioner Marshall asked if this program would be removed by federal budget reductions. Ms. Hayes answered this should remain available at the current amount for the next two years. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked Ms. Hayes additional follow-up questions to verify whether this was a new position. Ms. Hayes responded that it is an existing VAWA position, which was filled in 2018.

FY2026 Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Application

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated since 2014, Lowndes County has received funding for this program, providing Functional Family Therapy, which is an evidence-based program to help keep juveniles out of the system long term. In the current application process, the recommendation is for \$342,493.00, through the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program to serve 54 youths and their families during fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026). Mrs. Dukes stated this grant is 100% reimbursable. Commissioner Marshall asked, as previously discussed with the VAWA Continuation Grant, if this program were to be removed by federal budget reductions, would the county be held responsible for the funding. Mrs. Dukes stated she believes the contract would terminate as a part of the grant, if the funding was no longer available. Chairman Slaughter stated that since these are reimbursable grants, and with the ongoing contracts in place, they may hopefully be grandfathered in. Mrs. Dukes mentioned this may be a possible budget conversation to have regarding being able to sustain services without depending on state and federal revenue. Commissioner Smith asked if the 54 youths were the number served, and whether this amount was received based on population, or if we applied for that set amount. Mrs. Dukes responded 54 is based on the clinical provider delivering these services.

Emergency Purchase - Naylor Tower Top Amp Replacement

911 Director, Tonya Davis, presented the item. Mrs. Davis stated on March 15, 2025, during a thunderstorm, the tower top amp at the Naylor Public Safety Radio System Tower Site was struck by lightning and damaged causing interruptions in communications. The total amount for equipment and installation is \$36,776.00. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if the tower was insured. Mrs. Davis answered yes, with liability insurance. Mrs. Davis stated this will be paid up front and a claim submitted to the Human Resources Department. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked how tall this tower is; Mrs. Davis responded 700 feet. Commissioner Smith asked if Echols County uses this tower as well, Mrs. Davis responded yes.

BID

2025 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Resurfacing Bids (Project #: ENG 2025-01)

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the 2025 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) application was approved by the Commission on January 14, 2025. The grant was approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Lowndes County received the grant funds and staff advertised the project for bids. Bids were opened April 15, 2025, and staff received two bids. Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$1,478,673.94 and the Scruggs Company in the amount of \$1,645,355.87. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked what roads would be resurfaced, Mr. McLeod answered New Statenville Highway, Johnson Road SE, Hickory Grove Road N, Oakdale Drive, Johnson Hill Drive, Eastview Drive, Hill Top Drive, Hillway Drive, Johnson Lake Drive, M. D. Guess Road, Meadowdale Drive, Beaver Run Road, Quail Nest Drive and Twin Oaks Road. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if striping was included in this project, Mr. McLeod answered the only striping included are the roads listed. Chairman Slaughter asked for clarification in the contract for resurfacing if that does include striping, Mr. McLeod responded this does include new striping after the resurfacing of these roads. Commissioner Smith asked if this was paid from SPLOST dollars which have already been collected. County Manager, Paige Dukes answered just the match. Mr. McLeod mentioned that approximately \$1.3 million dollars comes from the state under the LMIG grant. Chairman Slaughter asked if this includes the additional LMIG money which the state has

granted for local governments. Mr. McLeod responded no sir, that is called an LRA grant and that will be submitted to the board in the near future.

REPORTS - County Manager

There was no additional information to report.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Smith made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, second by Vice Chairperson Evans. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:44 a.m.