

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, June 23, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Commissioner Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall
Commissioner Michael Smith

Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans was not in attendance.

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

PROCLAMATION PRESENTATION TO MR. JOHN HANSEN (Work Session)

The Chairman and Commissioners presented Mr. John Hansen with a proclamation recognizing his achievements over the past fifty years as the tennis coach at Valdosta State University, and for being one of the most victorious coaches in collegiate tennis history at all levels.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of June 9, 2025 and the regular session of June 10, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

APPOINTMENT

Lowndes County Library Board

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated the second term of Dr. J. Eleveta Miller will expire June 30, 2025, leaving a vacant seat. Mr. Malcolm Warren has been recommended and has shown an interest in serving.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Lowndes County Juvenile Accountability Court (LCJAC) FY26 Budget & Grant Award

Lowndes County Accountability Court Representative, Geoffrey Martin, presented the item. Mr. Martin stated Lowndes County Juvenile Accountability Court is funded through a reimbursable state grant. In order to receive this funding, a cash match from Lowndes County must be secured in the amount of \$12,100.00. Mr. Martin presented a flyer to the Chairman regarding a new treatment group at Legacy Behavioral Health Services. Commissioner Smith asked regarding any issues or changes from the federal/state level regarding this grant, Mr. Martin answered not yet. County Manager, Paige Dukes stated she, along with Vice Chairperson Evans, had lunch with Judge Bradley, who spoke very favorably about Judge Tunison, his team and the impact of the program.

ACCG IRMA Property & Liability Insurance Renewal

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated this request is the ACCG Interlocal Risk Management Agency Program renewal for 2026. The renewal provides comprehensive blanket coverage for property and liability insurance. The annual renewal amount is \$1,177,284.00; the renewal includes a safety credit discount of \$61,962.00. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked about the safety credits, Mr. Beals answered the safety credit is received due to different programs, such as defensive driving, being offered to staff.

Axon Renewal Contract for Animal Services

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this is a five-year contract renewal with Axon in the amount of \$37,141.49 for the body cameras currently being used by animal control. Mrs. Dukes noted that since implementing these cameras, there has been a significant improvement in court outcomes related to compliance, as well as enhanced officer safety. Commissioner Marshall asked if the Sheriff's Office also uses these body cameras, Mrs. Dukes confirmed that they do.

Lowndes County Accountability Court Grant Approval and Cash Match

Lowndes County Accountability Court Representative, Geoffrey Martin, presented the item on behalf of Jennifer Fabbri, Director of Southern Circuit Accountability Courts. Mr. Martin stated the Lowndes County Accountability Court is funded through a reimbursable state grant. The Lowndes County Accountability Court must secure a cash match for Lowndes County in the amount of \$35,437.44, which is fifteen percent for fiscal year 2026. Commissioner Marshall inquired about the personnel line item, specifically regarding the mention of fringe benefits. Mr. Martin clarified that this refers to health insurance benefits. Commissioner Marshall suggested that the wording be revised from fringe benefits to health benefits for clarity. Commissioner Smith asked how long it takes for someone to graduate. Mr. Martin answered the shortest amount of time is eighteen months.

Lowndes County DUI Court FY 26 Grant Award

State Court Judge, Ellen Golden, presented a request to renew the State Court's DUI Accountability Court Grant. Judge Golden stated her office has received a grant in the amount of \$156,033.00, for the upcoming fiscal year that requires a fifteen percent match in the amount of \$27,535.00. Judge Golden further stated Lowndes County DUI Court is requesting a total amount of \$42,404.00 for the 2025-2026 grant period. This additional amount is needed for a portion of the surveillance officer's salary as well as a portion of the treatment costs, transportation and drug testing supplies and Reconnect, the call-in service used for random drug screens or weekend drug testing incurred annually. Judge Golden stated there have been a total of 109 graduates since 2017 with 24 currently enrolled in the program. Commissioner Smith asked about the capacity of this program. Judge Golden answered 30. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if there were reentries into this program; Judge Golden answered yes. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked the percentage. Judge Golden answered she was unsure, but stated Lowndes County has been recertified by the Council of Accountability Court Judges.

Valdosta Housing Authority Request for Loan

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the Valdosta Housing Authority has renewed and revised its prior request for the County to make a loan to the Authority in the amount of \$1,000,000.00. Mrs. Dukes stated this is not a new request, this is a renewal of the request. The terms of the Authority's revised request are set forth in the attached proposed Promissory Note. The

Georgia Housing Cooperation Law provides that a county shall have the power to lend or donate money to a housing authority and to agree to take such action. This law also provides for the exercise of the powers granted by it to be by resolution of the governing authority of the county. Mrs. Dukes stated the resolution is before you and if anyone has questions, the County Attorney remains ready to answer.

REPORTS - County Manager

There was no additional information to report.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, second by Commissioner Smith. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:52 a.m.