

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, July 22, 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 5:30 p.m.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Wisenbaker

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Wisenbaker

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of July 7, 2025 and the regular session of July 8, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS

Lowndes County Development Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the terms of Mr. Brooks Akins, Mr. Jerome Tucker, Mr. Gary Cannon, Mr. Barry Broome, and Mr. Clay Griner have expired. Mr. Akins, Mr. Tucker, Mr. Cannon and Mr. Broome have all expressed an interest in being reappointed. Mr. Griner is not interested in being reappointed at this time. There are now three vacant seats on the board previously held by Mr. Gary Moser, Mr. Crawford Powell and Mr. Clay Griner. Mr. Robert Green has also expressed an interest in being appointed to the board. Commissioner Smith nominated Commissioner Scott Orenstein and Mr. Joe Brownlee. Commissioner Marshall nominated Robert Green to fill the unexpired four-year term held by Mr. Gary Moser. There being no other nominations, Commissioner Scott Orenstein, Mr. Joe Brownlee and Mr. Robert Green were appointed by acclamation. Commissioner Smith made a motion to reappoint Mr. Brooks Akins, Mr. Jerome Tucker, Mr. Gary Cannon and Mr. Barry Broome, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Lowndes County Public Facilities Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the terms of Mr. J.D. Rice, Mr. Michael Walker, and Mr. Clay Griner have expired. Mr. Rice and Mr. Walker have expressed an interest in being reappointed, but Mr. Griner is not interested in being reappointed at this time. This leaves two vacant seats on the board previously held by Mr. Clay Griner and Mr. Crawford Powell. Mr. Robert Green has also expressed a desire to serve. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to reappoint Mr. J.D. Rice and Mr. Michael Walker, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. Commissioner Marshall nominated Commissioner Michael Smith to succeed Mr. Clay Griner. There being no other nominations, Commissioner Smith was appointed by acclamation. Commissioner Wisenbaker nominated Robert Green to succeed Mr. Crawford Powell. Motion died for lack of a second. Commissioner Smith nominated Andy Griffin to succeed Mr. Crawford Powell. Commissioners Smith, Marshall and Orenstein voted in favor of the appointment for Mr. Andy Griffin to succeed Mr. Crawford Powell, Commissioner Wisenbaker opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

2026 Comprehensive Plan Technical Assistance Contract

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this is an agreement for technical assistance services between the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. A scheduled kick-off meeting will be held on August 12, 2025. Mr. Dillard stated this is a fourteen-month process to update the comprehensive plan. Commissioner Orenstein asked to verify the cost, Mrs. Dukes answered, \$30,000.00. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the item as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FY 2026 Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Grant Application

EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the item. Mr. Tye stated this is a continuation of a grant that Lowndes County has received for the fifth year. Mr. Tye stated this is continuation funding of \$50,000.00 to continue the Strengthening Families Program (SFP) which is group family therapy designed for lower category offenses. All expenditures are paid by Lowndes County and reimbursed one hundred percent by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). Commissioner Orenstein commended Mr. Tye for his work. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the grant as presented, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Acceptance of FY2026 Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Award

EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the item. Mr. Tye stated in April of this year a grant application was submitted to continue the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant which provides Functional Family Therapy (FFT) services. Mr. Tye stated that with FFT the therapist goes into the home and there is one-on-one counseling with the family. This grant has been implemented since 2014. Lowndes County has been awarded \$325,000.00 for FY2026 and this will support 50 youths and their families. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the grant as presented, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Blue Lake Lift Station Pump Repair

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated the Blue Lake lift station is a duplex lift station on our main trunk line. This station is currently running on one pump. A quote was received from Xylem, Inc. with a cost of \$44,661.00 to repair and \$62,714.00 to purchase a new pump.

Commissioner Marshall asked for the turnaround time for this repair, Mr. Stalvey responded typically a month. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if the repaired pump was as good as a new pump. Mr. Stalvey answered the repaired pump will have a one-year warranty. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked for the warranty on a new pump, Mr. Stalvey answered four years. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the repair of the pump with Xylem, Inc, in the amount of \$44,661.00, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Blue Lake Lift Station Control Panel

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated the control panel at Blue Lake lift station was damaged beyond repair due to Hurricane Helene. Mr. Stalvey stated quotes were received by three vendors to replace the control panel. Cowart Electric, Applied Industrial Controls and Xylem, Inc. Staff recommends the low bidder, Cowart Electric, in the amount of \$43,615.00. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked to verify this is new equipment. Mr. Stalvey answered yes, that is correct. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve Cowart Electric as the low bidder in the amount of \$43,615.00, second by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager Paige Dukes informed the commission that informational documents from *Partnership for Health* had been distributed, detailing impact numbers and historical data. She noted that she recently attended a *Partnership for Health* meeting, where it was announced that the organization is launching a capital campaign and seeking additional space to expand services. Mrs. Dukes advised that any requests for information should be directed to Mr. David Crawford, the new director following the retirement of Mr. John Sparks.

Additionally, Mrs. Dukes recognized *National Probation Week* and acknowledged Ferlisha Rountree, Probation Director, along with her team, for their continued efforts in positively impacting recidivism rates. She extended her gratitude for their dedicated service.

Mrs. Dukes asked Fire Rescue Chief Young and Lt. Garren to address the commission regarding the Junior Summer Fire Camp. Chief Young introduced Lt. Garren who shared that becoming a firefighter has been a lifelong goal for him, making this camp especially meaningful. There were nineteen (19) campers, aged 11 to 15, who completed the week-long Junior Summer Fire Camp. Activities included a visit to the 911 center, a live vehicle fire extinguishment and extraction demonstration, CPR and basic first aid training. Georgia Forestry will be participating with both a helicopter and aerial tanker. The final day of the camp is planned as a "fun day," with water activities for the participants. Mrs. Dukes asked Lt. Garren to explain how the camp is funded, Lt. Garren explained Fire Rescue pursued community donations. Food was donated by Bojangles and Pizza Hut, with additional sponsorship from Georgia Forestry, Williams Fire, Crunch Fitness, and others. He noted the community support was overwhelming. This camp is held at Station 10 on Highway 84 and this is the first year. Chief Young added that participation in Wawa's "Hoagies for Heroes" grand opening event resulted in a \$1,000.00 grant, which will support the camp next year. The commission expressed that this camp is a valuable opportunity for the community's youth.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD -

Gretchen Quarterman, 6565 Quarterman Road, addressed the commission to say 'thank you' for having Mr. Lovell speak at the work session meeting yesterday, regarding the water and wells in the

county. Mrs. Quarterman emphasized the importance of understanding these challenges and encouraged the commission to keep the public informed on water-related issues.

Keyara Hamilton, 1000 North St. Augustine Road, addressed the commission regarding Goodwill Industries Southern Rivers, a private non-profit social enterprise, serving over fifty counties in Georgia and Alabama. She highlighted their mission of "changing lives through the power of work" and detailed the free services they provide, including job fairs onsite and offsite, interviewing, training, career coaches, resume writing and job searching for individuals aged 14 and older. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if this office was located by Hobby Lobby, Ms. Hamilton answered yes.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Slaughter encouraged the commissioners to get a list of all the boards, with the times and dates of meetings, and try to attend to gain knowledge regarding the boards. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, second by Commissioner Smith. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.