

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, August 12, 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. and recognized Leadership Lowndes class members.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of July 21, 2025, the regular session of July 22, 2025 and the special called meeting of August 4, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commission Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Slaughter stated if there were no objections staff would like to add an item to the agenda, an Appointment for an Alternate for the Dangerous Dog Board. There being no objections, Chairman Slaughter asked that the item be added.

APPOINTMENT

Animal Control Board

Agenda Item Added

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated that due to a recusal for an upcoming Animal Control Board hearing, an alternate is required. Mrs. Dukes stated Ms. Amy Martin has expressed an interest in serving as an alternate and there will be a hearing coming up next Monday. Chairman Slaughter mentioned Ms. Martin was in the audience and thanked her for interest in serving on this board. Commissioner Marshall nominated Ms. Amy Martin. There being no other nominations, Ms. Amy Martin was appointed by acclamation.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

REZ-2025-12 Adair Estate, 4146 HWY 122, ~1.5ac, E-A to R-1, Well & Septic

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this rezoning request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) to R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning, in order to bring the lot and its allowable uses into conformity. The subject property possesses road frontage on GA Hwy 122 East, a State Route and is within the Urban Service Area and Agricultural Forestry Character Area. Wetlands are at the rear of the property but do not affect the well and septic. The plan from the buyer is to demolish the mobile home and accessory building to build a 2,200-square-foot site built home. The TRC and Planning Commission recommended approval. Commissioner Marshall thanked Chairman Slaughter for the history/background of this request. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve with the condition of a minimum 2,200 square foot-home being built on the property, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2025-13 ENCC, LLC, 9353 GA HWY 135 & October Ln, ~1ac, E-A to C-C, 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-C (Crossroads Commercial) zoning, in order to bring the property into compliance for commercial use. The subject property was previously a part of 9369 Hwy 135 and was created by deed in 2017, but has historically been used for various commercial purposes for many years under different owners. Mr. Dillard stated this property is currently owned and operated by ENCC, Eric Newsome Custom Cabinets, and is requesting commercial zoning to bring this property into compliance. There are no wetlands on this property and the low density pattern for residential is primarily used by family. There is a 6,000-square-foot metal shop on the property and the Riley residence to the north. The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land uses and lot sizes, the viability of a Well & Septic system, the historic and proposed use, and therefore recommends approval of the request for C-C zoning with the following conditions: 1. Alcohol Package Stores, Cemeteries, Funeral Homes, Mini-storage, Kennels with Outdoor Runs, and Vehicle Sales shall not be allowed. 2. Any vehicular ingress/egress off of October Lane shall require the property owner/developer to pave the street from that ingress/egress to the nearest paved street. The property owner/developer will be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and construction costs for the paving of the section mentioned above. Additionally, although the TRC does not believe that conditions of approval are necessary for the following information, it should be noted for future reference: the minimum buffer area between Commercial and Residential zonings is 30 feet, which may be decreased by 50% and the buffer landscaping decreased by 25% with the installation of a 6' to 8' opaque fence. The Planning Commission recommended approval with conditions. Commissioner Smith asked regarding the paving of the private drive, Mr. Dillard stated only if the applicant is proposing access off of October Lane. Chairman Slaughter asked to verify that October Lane is private, Mr. Dillard answered yes. No one spoke against this request. Jack Langdale, 701 North Patterson Street, spoke in favor of this request on behalf of the applicant, Eric Newsome; the owner of the property. Mr. Langdale stated Mr. Newsome is a small business owner and continues to do the same type of work as previous owners of this property. Commissioner Orenstein asked if there were any intentions of making any improvements to the property. Mr. Langdale responded currently, the owner is asking to have the recommendations granted regarding this rezoning. J.C. Riley, 9369 GA Hwy 135, spoke in favor of this request. Mr. Riley stated he has no issues with Mr. Newsome and

his business. Mr. Riley mentioned this property was zoned for the type of business he previously had, which was Riley Church Pews. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the request with the conditions, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. Commissioner Orenstein asked that Commissioner Marshall consider amending the conditions to exclude the second condition. Commissioner Marshall amended his motion to exclude the second condition, which states any vehicular ingress/egress off of October Lane shall require the property owner/developer to pave the street from that ingress/egress to the nearest paved street. The property owner/developer will be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and construction costs for the paving of the section mentioned above, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

2026 Comprehensive Plan Kickoff

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this is the first required public hearing under the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the process to be used to develop the plan, opportunities for public participation in the development of the plan and to obtain input on the proposed planning process. Mr. Dillard introduced James Horton, the Planning Director with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) Office and Mykaela Brown, a Planner with SGRC as well. Mr. Horton gave a presentation to the commission related to the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Kickoff. Commissioner Smith asked if the comprehensive plan could be emailed, Mr. Horton answered yes. Commissioner Smith asked regarding the locations of these meetings and Mr. Horton responded the meeting times and locations have not been scheduled yet. Commissioner Marshall asked the time frame the comprehensive plan needs to be completed. Mr. Horton answered a formal draft is due in June 2026 and July 14, 2026, is the transmittal date. Chairman Slaughter commended the Southern Georgia Regional Commission staff for their outstanding management of the comprehensive plan.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) permanent easement at 503 W. Main St. Hahira, GA 31632

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has a project in Hahira that is labeled SR 7/SR 122 from SR 7 to CS 38/Union Road in Hahira Sidewalks Lowndes. GDOT is requesting a permanent easement from Lowndes County for sidewalk construction and to maintain slopes on a parcel that Lowndes County owns, which is the Parrott Health Clinic at 503 W. Main Street, Hahira, GA 31632. The easement consists of 733.73 square feet. GDOT has had the easement appraised and has offered Lowndes County \$2,600.00 for the easement. Staff has reviewed the easement drawing and does not see any negative impact. Mr. McLeod stated this is the health department facility in Hahira. Chairman Slaughter stated this is a TIA project with extension of the sidewalk in downtown Hahira to Union Road. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, second by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FY2026 Joint Funding Agreement with USGS

EMA Director, Ashley Tye, presented the agreement in the amount of \$29,750.00. Mr. Tye stated the stream gauge for the Little River site is \$18,300.00, and the Withlacoochee River site is \$11,450.00. Mr. Tye stated there is an increase in cost due to USGS including the cost of maintaining the precipitation gauges associated with each stream gauge separately from the cost of the actual stream monitoring equipment, and that amount is \$1,900.00. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to

approve the joint funding agreement in the amount of \$29, 750.00, second by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Moody AFB Emergency Water Connection Easement Supplemental Agreement

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated this easement no. USAF-ACC-QSEU-23-2-0186 was granted by the United States Air Force in 2023 for the emergency backup water connection from Lowndes County to Moody AFB. Due to unforeseen conflicts after construction began, it was agreed upon by all parties to slightly shift the path to avoid conflicts with the railroad and electric duct bank. This easement is located at Moody Air Force Base just south of Florida Road near the water plant. The United States Air Force has provided a Supplemental Agreement No. 1 for acceptance and signature adjusting the easement to include the final location of the water main. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the agreement as presented, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Shiloh Road Resurfacing and Bridge Replacement, P.I. 0016272 Supplemental Agreement No. 1

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the agreement. Mr. McLeod stated the original agreement dated March 10, 2021, with the Georgia Department of Transportation has a "not to exceed amount" of \$5,600,000.00 for the Shiloh Road Resurfacing and Bridge Replacement. Staff asked the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) office for an additional funding request to cover the difference between the actual cost of the project and the agreement amount, of which is \$1,600,000.00. After reviewing the initial TIA budget, bid amount, and projected tax collections for TIA, the TIA office has agreed to provide additional funds of \$1,600,000.00 to cover the total cost of the project. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the Supplemental Agreement No. 1 as presented, second by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

BID

Shiloh Road Resurfacing and Bridge Replacement, P.I. 0016272 Bids

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Shiloh Road Resurfacing and Bridge Replacement is a TSPLOST 1 approved project. The project consists of a detour bridge, removal of the existing bridge, construction of the new bridge, relocation of the existing pump station, grading, and resurfacing of 0.53 miles. The new bridge will be constructed at an elevation 11.6 feet higher than the existing bridge. Bids were opened on July 31, 2025 and two (2) bids were received. The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$6,400,444.98 and Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$6,494,433.42. The TIA office has reviewed the bids and given Lowndes County a Construction Notice to Proceed based on their review of the bids. Commissioner Smith asked if this is over Franks Creek, Mr. McLeod responded yes, past Val Tech Road intersection. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the Scruggs Company as the low bidder in the amount of \$6,400,444.98, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. Chairman Slaughter thanked Mr. McLeod for his work on this project and for getting the detour route shortened with the addition of a bypass bridge.

Lowndes County Civic Center-Hurricane Helene Repairs Bid

The Lowndes County Civic Center sustained substantial damage during Hurricane Helene. Staff worked with Crews Engineering to inspect damage, review structural analysis, and complete and develop a plan and bid package. The bid includes removing the existing roof panels that remain, removing the wood purlins and installing metal purlins, installing a new metal roof, removing the drop

ceiling that remains, installing insulation beneath the new roof, and repairing the damaged lights. The project was advertised for bids, a pre-bid was conducted on June 15, 2025, and bids were opened July 30, 2025. Staff received three (3) bids from Kellerman Construction in the amount of \$318,030.00, 3D Construction Services in the amount of \$381,565.00, and Standard Contractors in the amount of \$440,481.00. Commissioner Marshall asked to verify if insurance was paying, Mr. McLeod answered yes. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve Kellerman Construction as the low bidder in the amount of \$318,030.00, second by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, mentioned the following items:

- Staff has a meeting tomorrow at Second Harvest to understand more about the impact that current federal changes may have on our local non-profits.
- On Saturday, August 16th, from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, one of the bicentennial events will be a 'Made in Lowndes Open Air Market' with thirty vendors selling goods made or sourced here in Lowndes County. This event will be held at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse.
- The millage rate will be ready to be set at the next commission meeting being held on Tuesday, August 26, 2025.
- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program has released the criteria and eligibility requirements for this program.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

Mr. Jamie Parks, 3367 Cedar Road, addressed the commission regarding why the Board of Equalization cannot change a decision made by the Lowndes County Board of Assessors Office.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, second by Commissioner Orenstein. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.