

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, September 23, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans and Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker were not in attendance.

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 September 8, 2025, and the regular session of September 9, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Opioid Litigation - Secondary Manufacturers

Assistant Finance Director, Rachel Bowen, presented the item. Mrs. Bowen stated a settlement agreement has been reached by several secondary opioid providers and manufacturers to provide financial resources to combat the opioid epidemic across the United States. To participate and receive funds, Lowndes County must agree to the terms outlined in the State of Georgia and Local Governments Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Secondary Manufacturers and execute the Secondary Manufacturers' Combined Subdivision Participation and Release Form. Commissioner Smith requested updates on the implementation of the funds. Mrs. Bowen confirmed that the Commission will have to approve an allocation of the funds before they are used. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, second by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Update of Budget and Equity Reserve Policy

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented a request to update the county's financial policy, specifically regarding the timeframe for hurricane reimbursement funds. Ms. Black explained that the proposed update extends the allowable reimbursement window from 60 days to 150 days to better

accommodate delays in receiving funds, particularly those related to Hurricane Helene. She also noted a minor wording correction from the original 2008 policy. Commissioner Smith inquired whether the remaining Hurricane Helene reimbursement funds would be received by the end of the calendar year, Ms. Black answered no. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adopt the item as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

Chairman Slaughter recognized Leadership Lowndes class members.

Chairman Slaughter noted that County Manager, Paige Dukes was not in attendance due to travel to Washington, D.C. in support of Moody Air Force Base.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

Janice Strickland, 2105 Pin Oak Circle, addressed the Commission with concerns regarding the absence of Commissioner, Joyce Evans. Chairman Slaughter responded by informing everyone that Commissioner Evans is currently recovering from a health issue, but remains actively involved in Lowndes County business. Chairman Slaughter assured Ms. Strickland that he, along with the other Commissioners, are filling in as needed during her absence.

India Bell, 205 Perkins Lane, addressed the Commission with concerns for her mother, who resides in Ashton Meadows. Ms. Bell noted that they have recently lost a housing grant and inquired about any available resources for assistance. Chairman Slaughter responded that he would speak with Ms. Bell after the meeting. He mentioned that while there are resources available within the community, there are none specifically offered by Lowndes County at this time.

Kelley Saxon, 8 Baldwin Place, addressed the Commission with concerns regarding the conclusion of the GEMA Housing Program, which has provided temporary accommodations for families displaced by Hurricane Helene. Ms. Saxon emphasized the urgent need for action as many affected families are currently residing in hotels and face uncertainty once the program ends. Ms. Saxon asked the following questions to the Commission: Where will the displaced families go once GEMA housing assistance concludes? What immediate plans does the county have to address this emerging housing crisis? Will the Commission collaborate with state and federal agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations and housing developers, to expand access to affordable housing?

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Marshall responded to Ms. Strickland's earlier comments by noting that each district is represented by two County Commissioners and citizens are not without representation.

Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, second by Commissioner Orenstein. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.