LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Tuesday, October 14, 2025 - 8:30 AM

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

Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans and Commissioner Michael Smith were not in attendance.

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

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of September 22, 2025, and the regular session of September 23, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

PUBLIC HEARING

TWR-2025-01 New 260' Telecommunications Tower

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this case represents a request by the applicant to construct a new approximately 260' telecommunications tower on a 10,000 square foot leased area on Rocky Ford Road near Watkins Road. The subject property is currently zoned Estate Agricultural (EA) and is allowed to be used for the construction of a new telecommunications tower with the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission and the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners' approval. The subject property is in the Rural Service Area and depicted as Rural Residential on the Future Land Use Map. There are no wetlands on the property. Surrounding properties include a County Fire Station, Watkins Family Property and Camp Rock. Mr. Dillard stated the closest tower is 3.7 miles away to the southeast, located at Wild Adventures. The primary motivation for a new tower on the subject property is to fill a gap in the existing coverage area. Mr. Dillard stated this is to improve 5G coverage, provided by T-Mobile, and other providers such as Verizon and AT&T could rent space on the proposed tower. The TRC recommended approval of this request, noting the standards set forth in 5.05.00 and 10.02.00 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the proposed location’s ability to enhance telecommunication service, minimize adverse impacts on the community, and encourage the location of towers in non-residential areas. The Planning Commission also recommended approval. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if this was a self-supporting tower, Mr. Dillard responded yes. Commissioner Marshall asked regarding concerns about other towers in the area and possible medical conditions caused by towers. Chairman Slaughter responded he was unaware of any data. Chairman Slaughter asked regarding collocating towers to minimize the number of towers, Mr. Dillard answered the applicant hasn't found a suitable area inside the location, with the nearest tower being 3.5 miles away and a new tower is needed to meet coverage. Chairman Slaughter asked to verify these are concerns about lack of service, Mr. Dillard responded yes. Chairman Slaughter asked regarding any information related to noise coming from a tower, Mr. Dillard answered that there was no information regarding noise; there may be generator noise and monthly testing of the generator, which is minimal.

REZ-2025-15 Stewart Circle ~13.6ac, 3923, 4025 & 4051 Stewart Circle, C-C & R-1 to C-H, County Utilities

County Planner, J.D. Dillard presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from C-C (Crossroads Commercial) & R-1 (Low Density Residential) to C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning, in order to unify the zoning for the property to be developed with a mixture of commercial uses. The subject property is within the Urban Service Area and U.S. 41 Corridor Overlay, and Community Activity Center and Institutional Activity Center Character Areas, which recommend C-H zoning. Primary access is off of Stewart Circle and there are existing drives and proposed easements connecting to the Val North Commercial complex. There is a large, approximately 5.6 acres of wetlands, which will have to be further delineated before any development occurs. Mr. Dillard stated there were trees removed from Hurricane Helene as well as junk vehicles and housing issues that Code Enforcement has been dealing with and those have been mitigated, and the current property owner is fully aware and in compliance. The TRC and Planning Commission recommended approval.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Lowndes County Responsible Dog Ownership Ordinance

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated that after the last update with the Pet Shop Ordinance being approved at the September 9th meeting, the conversation has led to Responsible Dog Ownership, which addresses state statutes related to management and determination of dangerous or vicious laws. There are two processes by which "dangerous" and/or "vicious" dog classifications can be finally determined. Lowndes County has relied on an appointed citizen review committee. It can be a challenge to keep a variety of qualified citizens active on the board, which can extend the time by which cases are reviewed and decided. Further cases decided through this process may still be appealed to the courts. The law provides "dangerous" and/or "vicious" dog classifications to be heard in Probate Court. Approval of the attached ordinance will eliminate the need for the current citizen review board and move the hearing of these cases to Probate Court. Commissioner Marshall asked whether there is a timeline for euthanizing a dog that bites a person. Mrs. Dukes answered that there are provisions in the law that states if the dog bites today, there is a specific time to go through the process to get the hearing scheduled. Depending on whether the initial determination is dangerous or vicious and if the dog owner will accept a temporary designation of dangerous or vicious, the dog can stay in the home under the lock-down requirements until that hearing is held.

Purchase of Wetland Credits for Twin Lakes Road Paving Project

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented a proposal from Williams Investments, LLC, in the amount of $54,400.00 for the purchase of wetland credits required for the Twin Lakes Road Paving Project. Mr. McLeod stated the wetland credits are $20,000.00 per credit, and Lowndes County will need 2.72 wetland credits to finalize the permit. Chairman Slaughter inquired whether Williams Investments is a local company. Mr. McLeod answered that it is not local, the company's office is located in Atlanta, Georgia.

Agreement for PI No. 0015614 CR 136/Old Quitman Road @ CSX #637487Y
Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is proposing to replace the CR136/Old Quitman Bridge over the tracks of CSX Transportation. Lowndes County is part of the agreement since Old Quitman Road is a county local road. Mr. McLeod stated that GDOT will be responsible for all funding related to this project.

Acceptance of Infrastructure for The Landings Phase IV
Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated The Landings Phase IV is located off of Val Del Road and includes fifty-two (52) residential lots. The developer has requested Lowndes County to accept infrastructure, which includes the roads and right of ways, stormwater infrastructure and utilities infrastructure.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, mentioned the water main extension project from James Road Extension down to exit 13 came in under budget and there is $800,000.00, remaining that can be used for like work in the same general location. After looking at project scope and future growth, staff would recommend that these funds be utilized to begin a water main extension on Old Clyattville Road that is scheduled to begin with the road widening project. Mrs. Dukes stated this work would meet the ARPA guidelines and could be accomplished with a change order to the current contract as it has not been closed out. Mrs. Dukes asked to verify there were no objections to this change. Chairman Slaughter and the Commissioners had no objections.

County Manager, Paige Dukes, requested an executive session to discuss the purchase of real estate and an attorney-client communication regarding pending or potential litigation. At 8:49 a.m. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the purchase of real estate and an attorney-client communication regarding pending or potential litigation, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT
At 9:27 a.m. Chairman Slaughter reconvened the work session with no additional information being discussed. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adjourn the work session, second by Commissioner Orenstein. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting.