

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Monday, January 12, 2026 - 5:30 PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

Chairman Bill Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and recognized the presence of Leadership Lowndes class members.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Smith

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Smith

Acknowledgement of Lowndes County Probation's Annual Audit (Work Session)

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated that there is a tremendous amount of accountability within the misdemeanor probation program led by Probation Director Ferlisha Rountree. Mrs. Dukes stated that the program is subject to extensive state oversight and must adhere to specific required policies. Mrs. Dukes further stated that job fairs and counseling services will be held at the Leila Ellis building. Mrs. Dukes asked Probation Director, Ferlisha Rountree to address the commission. Mrs. Rountree provided an overview of the Annual Misdemeanor Probation Oversight Unit (MPOU) Audit, explaining that it was a comprehensive audit that included random review of 150 cases. The review examined payment postings, compliance with OCGA rules and adherence to applicable policies and procedures. Mrs. Rountree stated that the audit resulted in no findings and no recommendations. Additionally, Mrs. Rountree stated that the audit process involves numerous policies and procedures and praised her staff for their tremendous work, describing the results as a perfect audit. She further explained that with two consecutive successful audits, the department is eligible to skip an audit year. Chairman Slaughter and the Commission acknowledged the Probation Department staff. Chairman Slaughter stated that the audit process is a difficult task and commended the department for performing its duties in a professional manner. Chairman Slaughter expressed the commission's gratitude for the probation department's work with the citizens and the court system.

Dr. Lucy Greene - Moody Support (Regular Session)

Chairman Slaughter introduced Dr. Lucy Greene and highlighted her contributions to Moody Air Force Base. Chairman stated there was a time when the base was on the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) list and at risk of being closed. Thanks to the leadership and efforts of local city and county officials, the base was able to remain open.

Chairman Slaughter emphasized that two individuals, Mr. Parker Green and Dr. Lucy Greene, were particularly instrumental in supporting Moody Air Force Base. Chairman Slaughter emphasized that the foundation laid by these two cannot be thanked enough for their dedication and hard work. He has personally seen the respect they earned during visits to the Pentagon, which stemmed from their sincere commitment to

the base and its personnel. He also highlighted that there is no other community in the military realm that treats enlisted Airmen as well as Lowndes County does. He concluded by recognizing that both Parker Greene and Dr. Lucy Greene have demonstrated a deep and lasting commitment to the welfare of the Airmen, and their efforts have been greatly appreciated by the community.

Dr. Lucy Greene addressed the commission and stated that there must be a cheer, stating that Moody Air Force Base is a lead wing in the Air Force's latest organizational structure, Agile Combat Employment. As host to the legendary Flying Tigers, she asked to begin the cheer with, "Who leads? Tigers lead."

Dr. Greene thanked Chairman Slaughter and County Manager Paige Dukes for the opportunity to appear before the Commission, emphasizing that the influence of Moody Air Force Base extends throughout the world. She stated it is an honor and a privilege for the community to host an Air Force base.

Dr. Greene shared that her husband, Parker Greene, served as Chairman of Military Affairs for fourteen years, including involvement with Red Carpet, and maintained a close relationship with Moody Air Force Base. In 1991, when Moody was placed on the base closure list, local business leaders and city and county governments formed an organization solely dedicated to supporting the base, known as Moody Support. Dr. Greene assisted her husband administratively while he focused on outreach and advocacy.

Following Mr. Greene's passing in 2018, the city and county requested that Dr. Lucy Greene remain involved as a consultant, rather than serving as executive director as her husband had. She mentioned that the Air Force projects power from its bases and stated that Moody Air Force Base is currently in a strong condition, with ongoing construction. She added that the only remaining facilities from World War II are the Heritage Hall and the water tower. Dr. Greene highlighted that Moody Air Force Base and Lowndes County have recently led the Air Force in joint base-community projects. She then asked County Manager Paige Dukes to respond.

Mrs. Dukes outlined several agreements, including the Water and Wastewater Agreement, the Intergovernmental Service Agreement for the Operation of Quiet Pines, and a blanket agreement covering Infrastructure Support such as vehicle maintenance and repair. Dr. Greene stated that Lowndes County is leading the nation with these types of collaborative projects.

Dr. Greene stated that she is an Ameritas member of the Air Force Chief of Staff Civic Leader Group and the ACC Commanders Group—honorary, nontransferable titles she will hold as long as she is able to serve the community. Dr. Greene explained that she decided this past summer to transition from her leadership role with Moody Support. She announced that John Eunice, who has retired from his civil service position at Moody Air Force Base, has accepted the role of the Executive Director of Moody Support, following her husband, Parker Greene as the first.

Dr. Greene asked the Commission to review the handout she previously distributed and provided an overview. She concluded by expressing her deep appreciation for the opportunity to serve and presented the commission members with military challenge coins.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of December 8, 2025, and the regular session of December 9, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT

Lowndes County Board of Health

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the appointment, stating the term of Dr. Frances Brown expired December 31, 2025. Dr. Brown has expressed a desire to continue to serve. Commissioner Marshall nominated

Dr. Frances Brown for reappointment. There being no other nominations, Dr. Frances Brown was reappointed by acclamation.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Set Qualifying Fees

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented a resolution to set the qualifying fees for the 2026 election cycle. Mrs. Dukes stated it was verified there is only one seat on the upcoming election. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker and Vice Chairman Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Appointment of Felicia Williams to Board of Tax Assessors

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item stating at the Board's December 9, 2025 meeting, the Board voted to reappoint Felicia Williams to the Board of Tax Assessors. A proposed order that Ms. Williams has been and is appointed is attached. This order also specifies that Ms. Williams is appointed for a three year term beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2028. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the proposed order as presented, seconded by Commissioner Evans. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Acceptance of FY2026 Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Grant

Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from EMA Director, Ashley Tye during the work session. No further discussion took place. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the grant as presented, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Approval of the Solicitor General's FY26 VOCA Grant Award AW-VOCA-25-071-012

Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from Ms. Karen Hayes with the Solicitor General's Office during the work session. No further discussion took place. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the FY2026 VOCA Grant Award AW-VOCA-25-071-012 in the federal award amount of \$75,020.00, seconded by Commissioner Evans and Vice Chairman Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Approval of DA's FY 2026 VOCA Grant Application Renewal Sub-Grant Number: AW-VOCA-25-071-012 Federal Amount: \$137,368

Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from Mr. Brad Shealy with the District Attorney's Office during the work session. No further discussion took place. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the FY2026 VOCA Grant Application Renewal Sub-Grant Number: AW-VOCA-25-071-012 in the federal award amount of \$137,368.00, seconded by Commissioner Evans and Vice Chairman Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Infrastructure for Knights Landing Phase IV Section I

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Knights Landing Phase IV, Section I is located off Bemiss Knights Academy Road at the end of Duchess Court and includes 39 residential lots. All construction and paperwork have been completed. Engineering and Utilities staff have conducted the final inspection of the construction. The developer has requested Lowndes County to accept the infrastructure, which includes the roads and right of ways, easements, stormwater infrastructure, and utilities infrastructure. Mr. McLeod stated there is one item of construction remaining to be completed, which should be completed tomorrow. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adopt the resolution as presented, seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Infrastructure for Colbie Place Subdivision

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Colbie Place Subdivision is located off of River Road and includes 54 residential lots. All construction and paperwork have been completed. Engineering and Utilities staff have conducted the final inspection of the construction. The

developer has requested Lowndes County to accept the infrastructure, which includes the roads and right of ways, stormwater infrastructure, and utilities infrastructure. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Commissioner Evans. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FY 2026 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Application

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated as a part of the Georgia Department of Transportation LMIG Grant Program, Lowndes County has been allocated \$1,546,704.65 for FY 2026. As a part of this grant program, Lowndes County will be responsible for a minimum 10% match in local funding, which is allocated in SPLOST VIII. The grant money is being proposed to be used for drainage improvements on Lake Alapaha Boulevard and resurfacing/restriping the roads listed in the attachment in the board packet. Commissioner Marshall asked a timeline on the Lake Alapaha drainage improvements. Mr. McLeod stated if this is approved tonight, the application will be submitted tomorrow. The money is received within one month and then goes to bid. The plans are 99% complete. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Commissioner Evans and Vice Chairman Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Transportation Investment Act (TIA) - Hickory Grove Road Widening and Skipper Bridge Road Widening

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Board approved submitting the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Local Government Application for project delivery at the December 9, 2025 commission meeting. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) approved the application and sent staff the Local Delivery Agreement to be approved. The Local Delivery Agreement is required to be executed prior to beginning work. Once the agreement has been executed, a written Notice to Proceed from GDOT is also required prior to beginning any project phase. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Commissioners Evans and Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Transportation Investment Act (TIA) - Val Del Road Widening Local Agreement

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Board approved submitting the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Local Government Application for project delivery at the December 9, 2025 commission meeting. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) approved the application and sent staff the Local Delivery Agreement to be approved. The Local Delivery Agreement is required to be executed prior to beginning work. Once the agreement has been executed, a written Notice to Proceed from GDOT is also required prior to beginning any project phase. Commissioner Marshall asked for clarification regarding the widening of additional lanes. Mr. McLeod stated from North Valdosta Road to McMillian Road and realign that intersection, where it ends. A part of this project also includes resurfacing the remainder to the county line of Val Del Road. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Vice Chairman Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

PI 0016280, Just Compensation, Twin Lakes Road Right of Way Parcel 3

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated that for purposes of the Twin Lakes TSPLOST project, the County needs to acquire from the owners of Parcel 3 (i.e., tax parcel 0171 090) certain areas of fee simple ROW totaling 0.15 +/- acres in the aggregate, plus 0.07 +/- acres for a drainage easement. Parcel 3 is owned by Virginia G. Tyson, Charles F. Hobby, and Nancy G. Hobby. Staff has attempted to negotiate the purchase of the Right of Way and Drainage Easement from the owners, but no agreement has been reached. To avoid delays with the underlying project, staff has determined that acquisition by condemnation may be required. An initial step in the condemnation process is the determination of just compensation for the property being acquired. Kristen Johnson with Kunes Real Estate & Appraisals has prepared an appraisal that values the proposed taking at \$12,400.00, consisting of \$1,200.00 for the right of way areas, \$280.00 for the drainage easement, \$2,851.00 for the loss of existing fencing within the right of way areas, and \$8,040.00 for installation of new fencing. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adopt the resolution as presented, seconded by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Abandonment of Grice Road

Chairman Slaughter stated staff is requesting this item to be tabled with no set meeting date to be given. Commissioner Evans made a motion to table this item, seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

BID

Lakes Blvd Water Meter Relocation

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Lowndes County is expanding its water service area on Lakes Blvd in order to meet commercial development needs in the area. This will require the water meter between the City of Lake Park and Lowndes County to be relocated approximately 1,100 feet to the east. Staff advertised the project and three bids were received by James Warren & Associates \$63,801.00, Killeen Construction Company \$66,737.00, and RPI, Inc. \$76,100.00. Staff recommends approval and to authorize the Chairman to sign the contract with James Warren & Associates in the amount of \$63,801.00. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the low bidder, James Warren & Associates in the amount of \$63,801.00, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes mentioned the items below for review:

- o The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Annual Report.
- o A list of board and agency appointee information to be considered for the next calendar year.
- o Public Information's Visitor Recap for the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

Mary Roe, 4515 Jones Lane, addressed the commission and requested that the commission consider the paving of Green Road. Ms. Roe stated that she has spoken to property owners in the area regarding this matter. Ms. Roe mentioned two property owners were present, Mr. Melton Henry and Mr. Willie Jones. Ms. Roe further stated that Mr. Junior Richardson and Mr. Bob Langdale were unable to attend.

Dr. Amanda Hall, 2102 North Sherwood Drive, addressed the commission regarding pet overpopulation. Dr. Hall stated that Brooks County has recently revised its animal control ordinance, which is stricter than Lowndes County's Animal Control Ordinance. Dr. Hall expressed a desire for solutions to address the issue of pet overpopulation.

Susan Wehling, 2410 Georgia Avenue, addressed the commission regarding the homeless individuals being unable to use public restrooms in downtown Valdosta and instead attempting to use facilities at local businesses. Additionally, Ms. Wehling stated she is opposed to the approval of the rezoning of Mr. Pope Langdale's property for data centers. She expressed concerns regarding the amount of water used by data centers, estimating usage between 300,000 - 1,000,000 gallons per day, as well as concerns about increased power costs.

Leigh Touchton, 610 Mack Drive, addressed the commission regarding data centers. Ms. Touchton stated that data centers are significant contributors to carbon dioxide emitters and expressed concern about their impact on climate change. Ms. Touchton also mentioned that a member of the commission has endorsed a Republican candidate running against U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff and requested that the Commission stop endorsing political candidates.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.