

in 2023, the board adopted "a not to exceed" amount of \$25.00 per month, currently the rate is set at \$21.62. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Deep South Sanitation, LLC, Residential Solid Waste Franchise Renewal

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated this is the annual renewal process for non-exclusive residential solid waste collection services in the unincorporated areas of Lowndes County. The current term ends March 31, 2026, with the new term beginning April 1, 2026. Deep South Sanitation, LLC has submitted their application to continue providing service. Deep South Sanitation, LLC currently serves 8,637 households at a monthly rate of \$22.00. Mr. Beals mentioned a question from the work session meeting, regarding a second container, with the additional fee of \$5.00. There are 8,637 households served and there are over 10,000 trash containers in the field for people requesting additional containers. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated that as of March 2026, the entire state of Georgia is subject to the Water Stewardship Act, which prohibits landscape irrigation between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Mrs. Dukes asked EMA Director, Ashley Tye, to provide an update on the drought outlook based on information from the National Weather Service. Mr. Tye stated that while current drought conditions persist, the National Weather Service issues a weekly drought information statement. As of last Thursday, drought conditions in the area are the most severe since 2012, with no short-term relief anticipated. He further stated that a significant change in the most recent update is that most of Lowndes County is now classified as D4 (Exceptional Drought), an increase from the prior D3 (Extreme Drought) classification. Mr. Tye mentioned that, based on historical averages, Lowndes County is experiencing below-normal rainfall. He added that while increased rainfall is typically expected in the spring, it may not be until late May or June before any improvement in drought conditions occur. Over the past 90 days, the area has received approximately six (6) inches of rainfall, which is about half of the normal amount for this region. Mrs. Dukes asked Fire Rescue Chief, Billy Young, to address the Commission regarding wildfire response efforts and the prioritization of brush trucks. Chief Young reported that there have been 54 wildfire response calls during the current month, with a total of 206 calls year-to-date. He stated that many of these fires have been caused by residents burning yard debris and losing control of the fires. Chief Young added that brush trucks are heavily utilized during this period and are being maintained accordingly. Commissioner Wisenbaker inquired about the number of structure fires to date. Chief Young responded he did not have that information available at this time. Mrs. Dukes concluded by thanking the Commissioners for attending the ribbon cutting held yesterday at the Lowndes County Sheriff's Office for the new mental health wing at the jail.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

Chairman Slaughter recognized the presence of Leadership Lowndes class members.

Mary Roe, 4515 Jones Lane, addressed the commission regarding the paving of Green Road. Ms. Roe asked that the road be paved instead of being repaired.