

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, May 11, 2026

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Commissioner Joyce Evans
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Michael Smith

Vice Chairman Scott Orenstein and Commissioner Demarcus Marshall 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 April 27, 2026, and the regular session of April 28, 2026. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2026-04 Jay Ma Khodiyar, ~1ac, 5507 Central St. (Clyattville), R-10 to C-G, County Water & Septic County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item stating the case has been withdrawn by the applicant.

REZ-2026-11 Blackwater Development LLC & Webb Fish Farm, 4130 Old Bemiss Rd., ~4.8ac, R-1 & R10 to C-G, County Utilities

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject properties from R-1 (Low Density Residential) and R-10 (Suburban Density Residential) zoning to C-G (General Commercial) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to repurpose the old Webb Fish Farm buildings and allow for new commercial opportunities on approximately 4.8 acres. Mr. Dillard stated there are no wetlands on the property in question, but there are to the east. Mr. Dillard presented a conceptual layout and reviewed it with the Commission. 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, lot sizes, and zoning patterns, the availability of County Utilities, the current and proposed access, and therefore recommends approval of the request for C-G zoning with the following conditions:

1. No Alcohol Package Stores, Cemeteries, Clubs, Lodges, Meeting or Event Facilities, Car Washes, Gas Stations, Hotels, Motels, or Vehicle Sales Lots, shall be allowed; and
2. Any vehicular ingress/egress off of Old Bemiss Road shall require the property owner/developer to pave the street from that ingress/egress to the nearest paved street. The property owner/developer will also be responsible for the design, any acquisition of

necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, railroad crossing improvements, and construction costs for the paving of the section mentioned above.

At the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant's attorney spoke in favor of the request and offered an amendment to Condition #2: Prior to operation of a business on parcel 0145B 094A, the owner/developer shall provide paved access to a paved public street. In the event a developer/owner is required to use Old Bemiss Road as its primary point of ingress/egress, the road shall be paved by the owner/developer to the nearest paved street, and the property owner/developer will also be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, railroad crossing improvements, and construction costs for the paving of the section mentioned above. In the event paved ingress/egress runs through parcel 0145B 094B to provide access directly onto Bemiss Knights Academy Road as contemplated, the owner/developer shall have no obligation to improve Old Bemiss Road. It may be used as a construction entrance while the access road to the south is being paved and after business operations commence, ingress/egress may continue over Old Bemiss Road as a secondary access point.

Commissioner Smith asked whether there was an issue with increased commercial traffic crossing the railroad tracks. Mr. Dillard answered the way it is right now, it would be unacceptable, which is why staff recommended the conditions. Commissioner Smith asked to verify that the applicant did not suggest driving through the neighborhood to access the commercial property. Mr. Dillard responded that the applicant is proposing a new road extending to the south. Chairman Slaughter asked if that was Caroline Circle where it intersects. Mr. Dillard responded, yes sir. Commissioner Smith asked whether that would eliminate the railroad tracks as a factor. Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, responded that it would not remove the railroad tracks. Mr. McLeod stated that the applicant does not intend to use the crossing as a secondary access point, but also does not want to permanently close it off privately. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked who Blackwater Development was and Mr. Dillard responded that Blackwater is a local utility contractor.

REZ-2026-12 McBurrough, 4909 Bemiss Rd., ~2.4ac, R-21 & R-1 to C-G, County Utilities

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject properties from R-21 (Medium Density Residential) and R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to C-G (General Commercial) zoning to develop a child care learning facility. Mr. Dillard stated the adjoining properties are currently owned and operated as religious facilities, parsonages, or single-family homes, while new developments just beyond are zoned for higher density residential and commercial. Mr. Dillard stated there are no wetlands on the property. Mr. Dillard presented a proposed layout for the child care learning center to the Commission. The TRC recommends approval of the request for C-G zoning with the following condition:

1. No Alcohol Package Stores, Clubs, Lodges, Meeting or Event Facilities shall be allowed.

The Planning Commission recommended approval with the one condition. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked to verify that the proposed use was a learning center. Mr. Dillard responded, yes sir. Commissioner Smith asked whether the only entrance to the property would require traveling south on Bemiss Road. Mr. Dillard responded, yes sir.

FOR CONSIDERATION

2026 Local Road Assistance (LRA) Administration Funds Application

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Georgia Department of Transportation announced that the Governor and the Legislature included the Local Road Assistance (LRA) in the amended fiscal year 2026 budget. The LRA funds will be distributed using the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Application System and will require no matching funds. The fiscal year 2026 LRA formula amount for Lowndes County is \$1,668,145.32. If approved, the LRA funds will be used for resurfacing the roads attached in the agenda packet.

Acceptance of Infrastructure for Cypress Lakes Subdivision Phase V Section II

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Cypress Lakes Subdivision Phase V Section II is located at the end of Clove Drive in Cypress Lakes Subdivision. This section includes the remainder of Clove Drive and a portion of Eucalyptus Drive. 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 Smith asked if Cypress Lakes was built out at this time. Mr. McLeod responded no, there is additional room remaining for development.

Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Local Delivery Application for Old US 41 North Widening Phase 4

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Old US 41 North Widening Phase 4 is on the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) II list for letting in March 2030. The Local Delivery Application starts the process by allowing Lowndes County to manage the project at the local government level. If approved, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will send an approval letter and agreement to be approved by the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners. The project will begin at Union Road and end at the Hahira City limits.

Beer and Wine License - Vikrambhai Patel of Hari Om Narayan Inc., DBA Eagle Food Mart, 4952 Bemiss Road, Valdosta, GA 31605

Finance Representative, Shelby Clance, presented the item stating the request is due to a change in ownership and all requirements had been met.

Replacement of Three Servers

ITS Senior Systems Administrator, Clay VanArsdale, presented the item. Mr. VanArsdale stated the purchase of three new servers is requested to replace the current aging server environment. The existing hardware has reached end of support and can no longer be upgraded, making replacement necessary. This upgrade will allow for newer operating systems, providing better compatibility, improved security, and continued support. It will also improve performance, increase reliability, and better support day-to-day operations, while helping keep systems stable and prepared for future needs. Commissioner Smith asked to verify there was only one quote submitted. ITS Director, Aaron Kostyu, responded that hardware has become difficult to obtain due to increased demand related to AI technology. Commissioner Smith asked Finance Director, Stephanie Black if this purchase would be paid from the IT budget. Ms. Black answered yes.

Industrial Authority Series 2026 Bonds

County Attorney, Walter Elliott, presented the item. Mr. Elliott stated this agenda item relates to the proposed issuance and sale of the Industrial Authority's Series 2026 Bonds. Mr. Elliott stated before you is a proposed Resolution of the Board of Commissioners to approve:

1. The form of the Bond Resolution adopted by the Industrial Authority May 1, 2026
2. A contract between the Authority and the County in which the County agrees to pay amounts sufficient to pay the principal and interest on the Series 2026 Bonds
3. A Bond Purchase Agreement
4. An Answer to be filed in proceedings to validate the Series 2026 Bonds
5. The Preliminary Official Statement
6. A Deemed Final Certificate
7. An Official Statement
8. A Disclosure Certificate
9. Additional actions necessary or desirable in connection with the Contract and the issuance and sale of the Series 2026 Bonds

Mr. Elliott stated this item will come before the Board again for further approval. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if these bonds were for land purchases. Mr. Elliott responded that the bonds were for projects detailed within the documents. President and CEO of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority, Ms. Niki Ogletree, who was in attendance, responded yes, the bonds were for land purchases. Commissioner Smith asked how many years this was locked in for and whether it was twenty years. Mr. Elliott stated he would confirm that information.

BID

2026 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Resurfacing Bids (ENG 2026-01)

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the 2026 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Application was approved by the Commission on January 12, 2026. The grant was approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Lowndes County received the grant funds, and staff advertised the project for bids. The 2026 LMIG Resurfacing bids presented are to include resurfacing and/or restriping the roads attached in the agenda packet. Bids were opened on April 21, 2026, and staff received two bids: The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$629,677.25 and Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$635,191.84.

Bid for a Debris Hauler for Public Works

Purchasing Agent, Amy Woods, presented the item. Mrs. Woods stated the Lowndes County Public Works Department needs a new debris truck with a dual trailer and grapple to maintain operational efficiency and safety when used to pick up large amounts of debris throughout the county. One bid was received from Four Star Freightliner in the amount of \$375,814.00 and is being paid by SPLOST. Commissioner Smith asked if this was being paid out of SPLOST VIII, Finance Director, Stephanie Black answered yes, SPLOST VIII.

REPORTS - County Manager

There was no additional information to report.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the work session meeting at 8:53 a.m.