

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, June 8, 2026

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

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

MINUTES

Work Session & Regular Session - May 26, 2026

The minutes were presented for the work and regular session meetings of May 26, 2026. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

APPOINTMENTS

Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the terms of Ms. Victoria Copeland and Mr. Marion Ramsey have expired on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Ramsey would like to be reappointed and Ms. Copeland does not want to be reappointed. Mr. Gary Wisenbaker and Mr. Stacy Young are also interested in serving on this board.

Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated Mr. Dan Kerrigan's term has expired, and he is not interested in being reappointed, but would like to serve again in the future. Mr. James Warren and Mr. Christian Funk are interested in serving on this board. Chairman Slaughter stated he had spoken with Mr. Kerrigan and that his decision to not seek reappointment was based on personal reasons.

Lowndes County Public Facilities Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the Public Facilities Authority only meets in the event they have a financial consideration. The terms of Mr. Andy Griffin and Mr. Scott Purvis expired May 31, 2026 and they both wish to continue to serve. Commissioner Marshall asked where they meet. Mrs. Dukes answered they have met at the Development Authority office or here in the Lowndes County Administrative Building. Mrs. Dukes mentioned that this board does not have regular meetings.

Public Hearing

REZ-2026-13 Touchton Lake Park, ~1.4ac, Cannon Dr., Park Dr., US HWY 41 S, C-H to R-10, County Utilities

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this rezoning request represents a change in zoning on the subject properties from C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning to R-10 (Suburban Density Residential). The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to develop home sites. Mr. Dillard stated neighboring properties to the north and east are currently zoned R-10 and the Lowndes County Fire Rescue Station at Twin Lakes is planned for the property to the south. 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 potential environmental impacts, and recommends approval of the request for R-10 zoning. The Planning Commission also recommended approval.

TWR-2026-01 Salem Church Tower - WITHDRAWN

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item stating this item has been withdrawn by the applicant.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Old US 41 North Widening Phase 4, P.I. 0020531 - Transportation Improvement Act (TIA) Project Agreement

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the Board approved the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Local Government Application for the Old US 41 North Widening Phase 4 Project on May 12th, 2026. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) approved the application and sent staff the Project Agreement to be approved and executed. The Project Agreement is required to be executed prior to beginning any phase of the project. Once the agreement is fully executed, GDOT will issue a Notice to Proceed for Preliminary Engineering. The agreement is for eligible project costs up to \$13,252,000.00. Commissioner Marshall asked where this project was starting. Mr. McLeod answered it will be starting at Union Road and go to the Hahira city limits.

Beer, Wine, and Liquor License - Jignasha Patel of Pitstop Three Liquors LLC, DBA Pitstop Liquors, 1405 St. Augustine Road Suite B, Valdosta, GA 31605

Finance Representative, Shelby Clance, presented the item stating that Mr. Patel is requesting a beer, wine and liquor license for consumption off premises. This is due to a change in ownership and all requirements have been met. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked about the required distance between a liquor store and a school or church. Mrs. Clance responded that a liquor store must be at least 300 feet from a church and 600 feet from a school. Commissioner Smith asked about the required distance between liquor stores. Finance Director, Stephanie Black, answered that the liquor stores must be separated by five hundred yards. Commissioner Smith requested that this information be shared with the commissioners. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked whether these distance requirements were established by state law or local ordinance. Ms. Black explained that the county ordinance generally mirrors state law.

GEFA Loan GPPF011 for Bypass Pumps at Lift Station

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Lowndes County has been preselected for a GEFA loan to install bypass pumps at our lift stations that are currently not equipped

with backup capabilities. The loan amount is \$2,812,500.00 with a principal forgiveness of \$703,125.00. This will allow us to have backup capabilities at all of our lift stations. While we have applied for FEMA mitigation money, this will allow us to lock in current pricing and potentially, have equipment in place before the next hurricane season. This project was previously presented to the board at the October 28, 2025, meeting; however, the required resolution and supporting loan documents were not included at that time as they were not available. Staff now requests approval of the attached resolution as required for the GEFA loan approval.

ACCG IRMA Property & Liability Insurance Renewal

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated this request is the ACCG Interlocal Risk Management Agency Program renewal for fiscal year 2027. The renewal provides for comprehensive blanket coverage for property and liability insurance. The annual renewal amount is \$1,248,947.00; this renewal includes a safety credit discount of \$65,734.00.

Industrial Authority Series 2026 Bonds

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated we've spoken about this for several months. Mrs. Dukes stated the Development Authority has been very successful in selling, managing or locating prospects here on the current property. The bulk of this funding will go to purchasing additional property for that industrial relocation for expansion. Mrs. Dukes mentioned before you is a supplemental resolution that will allow you to approve items 1–7 as listed. This is no different than the bond issuances done in the past, but if any questions arise, the County Attorney is available to answer.

BID

Twin Lakes Road Bids, P.I. # 0016280 - Transportation Investment Act (TIA)

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Twin Lakes Road is a TIA 1 approved project. The project is 1.71 miles long and begins at Loch Laurel Road and ends at State Route 7 (Highway 41 S). The contract time is 365 calendar days. Bids were opened on May 21, 2026, and two (2) bids were received from Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$2,664,355.90 and the Scruggs Company in the amount of \$3,713,497.24. Chairman Slaughter asked how paving costs for dirt roads, on a per-mile basis, have increased over the past years. Mr. McLeod responded that he would gather that information.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, mentioned the question Commissioner Wisenbaker asked earlier regarding the distance from a church and/or school to a liquor store. County Attorney, Walter Elliott, has verified that we can double those distances and the majority of the commission has asked that the ordinance be updated. Mrs. Dukes stated at the second meeting in June that consideration will be before the board. Commissioner Marshall asked if those within those guidelines would be grandfathered in. Mrs. Dukes answered yes, but if the current owner were to leave, that would trigger a new consideration for that location. Either the address is grandfathered forever or that it is attached to the applicant. Chairman Slaughter stated we need to be very cautious in making a decision regarding the distance change. Lastly, Mrs. Dukes stated the majority of time last week was spent between balancing the current budget and Senate Bill 33. Mrs. Dukes stated County Attorney, Walter Elliott, has prepared additional information regarding Senate Bill 33 and that will be available at tomorrow night's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:45 a.m.