

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Tuesday, July 14, 2026 8:30 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

Commissioner Scott Orenstein was not in attendance.

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and stated the Vice Chairman for the upcoming rotation would be Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker. Chairman Slaughter thanked Commissioner Orenstein for his time serving as the Vice Chairman.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session meeting of June 22, 2026, the regular session meeting of June 23, 2026, the FY 2027 Budget Public Hearing of June 23, 2026, and the Special Called Meeting to Adopt the FY 2027 Budget of June 30, 2026. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

APPOINTMENTS

Lowndes County Library System Board of Trustees

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated in March 2026 the Constitution of the Lowndes County Library System was amended to conform with Georgia law. Regarding the Board of Trustees of the Library System, the Constitution, as amended, provides: The Board shall be composed of nine (9) residents of Lowndes County who are appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Lowndes County as the only governmental agency supporting the System on a regular basis. Appointments shall be made in writing and the Board members shall serve staggered terms of three (3) years beginning July 1 and ending June 30. Mrs. Dukes stated that each term would need to be voted on separately when making the nomination at the regular session meeting. Mrs. Dukes stated the following applicants are interested in serving on the Board: William Booth, Dr. Elveta Miller, Dr. Kendal Crawford, Greg Moore, Dean Poling, Dr. Debra Carruth, Jane Peebles, Gary Wisenbaker, and Mary Beth Brownlee. Chairman Slaughter asked if any applicants were in attendance this morning; two of the applicants were present.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2026-14 Ray Colding, 6808 Wisenbaker Rd., Lake Park, ~8.5ac, M-1 & R-A to M-2, County Water and Septic County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from M-1 (Light Manufacturing) and R-A

(Residential Agricultural) zoning to M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) in order to unify the zoning to allow for a saw mill operation and related services. Mr. Dillard stated the property is within the Urban Service and Rural Residential Character Areas, and within a groundwater recharge area, with no wetlands on the property. Mr. Dillard stated that Mr. Colding is trying to allow his sons to be able to take over the business. 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 Water, the viability of septic drain fields, the potential environmental impacts, and therefore recommends approval of the request for M-2 zoning with the following conditions:

1. Any proposed commercial/industrial entrances off of Wisenbaker Road will require the developer to pave Wisenbaker Road from the entrance to South Main Street. The developer will also be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities and construction costs for the paving of Wisenbaker Road from the development's easternmost entrance to South Main Street.
2. No Correctional Facilities, Transitional Care Facilities, and Junk and Salvage Yards shall be allowed.

The Planning Commission recommended approval with the two conditions. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker asked if the applicant was currently grinding mulch. Mr. Dillard responded yes. Commissioner Smith asked about the M-1 zoning behind his property. Mr. Dillard answered that those are trailers behind his property. Commissioner Marshall asked if this was based on recent comp plans from this year. Mr. Dillard answered yes. Chairman Slaughter asked to verify this is a parcel of property that has split zoning and this is an effort to bring everything into conformity based on current use of the parcel. Mr. Dillard responded yes.

TWR-2026-02 Bermuda Run, New 159' Telecommunications Tower near North Valdosta Road and Hyta Mederer Drive

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this is not a zoning decision, it is a quasi judicial decision whether the standards for a telecommunications tower have been met in accordance with Section 5.05.05 of the ULDC. The property is located off of Hyta Mederer Drive, inside of Langdale Park, which is zoned Conservation (CON) and is allowed to be used for the construction of a new telecommunications tower subject to compliance with the standards. Mr. Dillard stated the proposed tower is within a Floodway zone and additional information was requested by staff a couple of years ago to receive an updated Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which has been provided. This is a 10,000 square foot leased area off of Hyta Mederer Drive proposing approximately 600 square feet for actual equipment to go with the proposed tower. The applicant is proposing a 155-foot tower, with a four-foot lightning rod at the top with the overall height of 159 feet. Mr. Dillard mentioned the capacity for existing towers to handle additional traffic. The applicant provided sites with eight picture locations. The TRC recommended approval with the standards set forth in Section 5.05.05 of the ULDC. The Planning Commission recommended approval for this new tower. Commissioner Smith asked if this was halfway down the dirt road that goes into Langdale Park, but not near the river area. Mr. Dillard answered yes, that is correct.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Award of Pre-Event Disaster Logistics Support Services Contracts

Emergency Management Director, Ashley Tye, presented the item. Mr. Tye stated this is similar to the debris removal contracts. After recent hurricanes and with the uncertainty of what future disasters look like as far as federal and state resources are concerned, Lowndes County wanted to ensure we could meet needs locally. An RFP was solicited for logistic services, ex: base camps, tent cities, helping manage the points of distribution (water and ice), etc. This places Lowndes County in a good position regarding pricing and will speed up availability to get those resources rather than wait for a disaster event to happen. Lowndes County received proposals, evaluated, and the recommendation is to award a non-exclusive contract to three vendors. Similar to the County's debris removal contracts, if the first company is unable to provide the requested service, a secondary company would be available. Each company is located in a different geographical location throughout the Southeast and were chosen based on their qualifications, pricing and accessibility. Mr. Tye stated there will be no cost unless services are utilized. Chairman Slaughter stated the recent storms demonstrated the value of having these types of contracts in place before a disaster occurs. Commissioner Marshall asked whether this RFP would also cover the cities within Lowndes County. Mr. Tye responded that for FEMA reimbursement purposes, if the cities choose to go on their own, they can use our RFP and enter into a contract with the same vendors.

Acceptance of FY2027 Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Award

Emergency Management Director, Ashley Tye, presented the item. Mr. Tye stated in April the board approved submission of the application to continue funding for the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant, which provides Functional Family Therapy (FFT) services used with Evidence-Based Associates. Mr. Tye stated Lowndes County applied for \$375,000.00 and was awarded \$325,000.00.

Lift Station Bypass Pump Request for Proposal

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Lowndes County Utilities was awarded a GEFA loan to install backup bypass pumps at several of our lift stations that lack emergency backup. Staff advertised a request for proposal and received two responses from BBA Pumps, Inc. and Hydra Services, Inc. Proposals were considered based on scoring criteria that comprised several evaluation factors, totaling a maximum potential score of 100. An evaluation committee comprised of Lowndes County staff and Carter and Sloope Engineering representatives scored both proposals, the results of which are: BBA Pumps, Inc. – 96 and Godwin (via Hydra Service, Inc.) – 89. Staff recommends approval to proceed with BBA Pumps, Inc. to provide the bypass pumps. Commissioner Smith asked if BBA Pumps had been used in the past. Mr. Stalvey responded that this is the first time using this company and research was done as well as the pumps were tested.

Chairman Slaughter acknowledged Ms. Pavi Parssinen, the Executive Director of Legacy Behavioral Health and thanked her for attending the meeting.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, welcomed Ms. Pavi Parssinen, the Executive Director of Legacy Behavioral Health and commented that when they met regarding their budget, the main concern mentioned regarding their clients was transportation. Lowndes County Probation has been collaborating with Legacy Behavioral Health to possibly use the Leila Ellis building to help address this need.

Mrs. Dukes stated regarding EMA Director Ashley Tye's item, Pre-Event Disaster Logistics Support Services Contracts, if these contracts had to be enacted, the board would be asked for guidance before enacting them.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the work session meeting at 8:58 a.m.