

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, July 27, 2026

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

Commissioner Joyce Evans was not in attendance.

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

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session meeting and the regular session meeting of July 14, 2026. No revisions to the minutes were requested.

APPOINTMENTS

Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the term of Mrs. Suzan Garnett has expired and Mrs. Garnett is interested in serving another term. Mrs. Dukes further stated Mrs. Garnett has been a driving force behind VLPRA and providing leadership for many years. Mrs. Dukes stated the term of Mr. Timothy McCoppin (City of Valdosta appointment) has also expired. It is the County's turn to appoint a member to the rotating seat. Mr. Brent Moore, Mr. Herb Reinhard, Mr. Timothy McCoppin, and Mr. Broc McDowell are all interested in being appointed to the rotating seat.

Lowndes County Library System Board of Trustees

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated at the July 14, 2026, commission meeting, Mr. William Booth was appointed to serve a one-year term. However, Mr. Booth no longer lives in Lowndes County. Members of the Lowndes County Library Board are required to live in Lowndes County. Mrs. Dukes further stated there is a vacant seat for the one-year term beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. Dr. Debra Carruth has expressed a desire to be reappointed to the board. Chairman Slaughter stated that on the application, in the section called Board or Agency Applying for, when it states South Georgia Regional Library, that is a typo, and it should state, Lowndes County Library System Board of Trustees. Commissioner Smith asked if there are two different Library Boards. Chairman Slaughter stated there is a Regional Library Board and a Lowndes County Library Board. The members of the Regional Board are appointed from the Lowndes County Library Board. Mrs. Dukes stated Kimberly Cliett and Dave DiSalvo also submitted forms to be considered for the Lowndes County Library System Board of Trustees.

PUBLIC HEARING

2026 Comprehensive Plan Transmittal

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated staff has been working for the past several months with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to prepare the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Dillard stated the purpose of this public hearing is to notify the public that it will be transmitted to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, who will then transmit it to the Department of Community Affairs at the state level for their review. During the review period, the document will be available online for public comment and if there are any final questions, suggestions or changes the commission would like made to the document, they will be accepted during this review period. Mr. Dillard further stated staff is ready to transmit the 2026 Comprehensive Plan at this time.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Resurfacing Batch 1 P.I. # 0020532 — Local Project Delivery Application Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Resurfacing Batch 1 is a TIA II approved project. The Local Delivery Application starts the process by allowing Lowndes County to manage the project at the local government level. Mr. McLeod further stated 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 include resurfacing 36 county roads, with a budget of \$13,134,000.00. Mr. McLeod stated staff will let the project in three (3) phases between 2026 and 2029. Commissioner Smith asked if this is all paid for out of TSPLOST. Mr. McLeod stated that is correct.

BID

Hickory Grove Road Widening P.I. 0020527 and Skipper Bridge Road Widening P.I. 0020528 - Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Hickory Grove Road widening and Skipper Bridge Road widening are TIA 2 approved projects. The project mainly consists of adding 2' of pavement widening to each side of the existing road width, overlaying with OGI, resurfacing the entire new width with 12.5 MM super paving, rebuilding the shoulders, and temporary & permanent striping. Mr. McLeod further stated Hickory Grove Road begins at State Route 7 (US 41) and ends at the Echols County line, which is 7.8 miles. Skipper Bridge Road begins at the end of the curb and gutter section north of the bridge at the Valdosta City Limits line and ends at the Cook County line, which is 8.8 miles. Mr. McLeod stated the contract time is 180 calendar days. Staff received two (2) bids, one from The Scruggs Company for \$5,039,798.50, and one from Reames and Son Construction for \$5,248,172.38. Commissioner Smith asked if the work will start soon if this is approved. Mr. McLeod stated they anticipate starting in August. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker asked if the county could get three feet instead of two. Mr. McLeod responded no, sir. Commissioner Smith stated widening it makes it safer. Mr. McLeod stated it gives a wider driving lane and it is safer because it helps to prevent people from running off the road. Commissioner Marshall mentioned adding an inch or two for people who ride bikes.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, asked Mr. McLeod to explain about TIA's approach from a contingency standpoint and how careful we have to be as far as overages. Mr. McLeod stated that based on collections and estimates from the 2016 to 2018 timeframe, we were able to use inflation costs on TIA I to cover some of the overages. We have estimated TIA II at the current cost, but they are being

conservative for the first half of TIA II. Mr. McLeod stated they are not planning to do any inflation costs. They are going to look at the County to do more value engineering if a project comes in over budget because during the first half of TIA II, they do not know what it will look like throughout the entire process. Mr. McLeod further stated currently, we came in under the projected budget, but we are still careful moving forward and making sure we have done our part. Commissioner Smith asked when TIA II revenue starts. Mr. McLeod answered in January. Chairman Slaughter stated there should be more money coming out of TIA I that is basically leftover revenue from inflation. Chairman Slaughter further stated that the check should be coming soon. Mr. McLeod agreed with Chairman Slaughter. Commissioner Smith asked if that money could be used for Howell Road and GA 376 roundabout. Chairman Slaughter stated that is something that can be looked at, but keep in mind that Perimeter Road is a state route. Chairman Slaughter further stated it could open up precedence if you start putting money into state routes that are not a part of the TIA projects.

Chairman Slaughter reminded the Commissioners of the hospital tour following the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, Commissioner Evans seconded. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:42 am.