



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

T. PAGE THARP GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING
102 STARKSVILLE AVENUE NORTH, LEESBURG, GEORGIA 31763

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023 6:00 P.M.

T. PAGE THARP BUILDING
OPAL CANNON AUDITORIUM
WWW.LEE.GA.US

MEETING MINUTES
VOTING SESSION

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Billy Mathis, Chairman	District 3
Luke Singletary, Vice-Chairman	District 2
Dennis Roland, Commissioner	District 1
Chris Guarnieri, Commissioner	District 4
George Walls, Commissioner	District 5

COUNTY STAFF

Christi Dockery, County Manager
Kaitlyn Good, County Clerk
Jimmy Skipper, County Attorney

The Lee County Board of Commissioners met in a work session on Tuesday, February 28, 2023. The meeting was held in the Opal Cannon Auditorium of the Lee County T. Page Tharp Governmental Building in Leesburg, Georgia. Those present were Chairman Billy Mathis, Vice-Chairman Luke Singletary, Commissioner Dennis Roland, and Commissioner Chris Guarnieri. Staff in attendance was County Manager Christi Dockery, County Attorney Jimmy Skipper, and County Clerk Kaitlyn Good. Commissioner George Walls was absent. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live. Chairman Mathis called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

INVOCATION

Chairman Billy Mathis led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and the audience said the Pledge of Allegiance in unison.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- (A) **Consideration to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for February 14, 2023.**
Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for February 14, 2023. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Chairman Mathis voting yea.

CONSENT AGENDA

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

- (A) **Recognition of employees' years of service.**
The following employees were recognized for their years of service to Lee County:
5 years – George Hammond – Paramedic/Firefighter
10 years – Brenda Ferguson – Superior Court Deputy Clerk
10 years – Carnie Block III – Part Time Records Clerk
15 years – Joseph Clark – Major- Jail Division
- (B) **Mike Talley, Flint River Consulting, regarding the NPDES Phase I MS4 Permit**
Mike Talley stated that he was here tonight to bring for the Board's consideration the contract for Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) to update Lee County's stormwater management plan. Mr. Talley discussed that last year

the five-year permit expired but EPD issued a new one, he continued by stating that part the issuing of a new permit is updating the stormwater management plan to meet all of their new requirements. Mr. Talley stated that GMC helped Lee County with this in 2019 and recommends the County partner with them again. There are two parts to the contract: (1) A Service Agreement to assist with the NPDES Phase I MS4 Permit renewal with the lump sum fee of \$14,660.00 and (2) an agreement to encompass any additional stormwater professional services for plans, at an hourly fee to not exceed \$12,320.00. The stormwater management plan is due to EPD by June 1, 2023.

Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to approve the agreement with Goodwyn Mills Cawood for the NPDES Phase 1 MS4 Permit to come from SPLOST VII funds. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Chairman Mathis voting yea.

Chairman Mathis asked Mr. Talley if he could also provide them with ideas to help with future growth, to which Mr. Talley replied that he could.

PUBLIC HEARING

NONE

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

Planning, Zoning, and Engineering

(A) **Consideration to adopt a resolution granting final approval of Cypress Cove Subdivision Phase 3.**

Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to adopt a resolution granting final approval of Cypress Cove Subdivision Phase 3. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Chairman Mathis voting yea.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS & GOVERNMENTAL BOARDS/AUTHORITIES

(A) **Elections & Registration – Discussion of the need for additional storage, voting, and office space.**

Chairman Mathis began the discussion by congratulating Veronica Johnson on the award recently received from the state.

Veronica Johnson, Elections Superintendent, discussed the need for space for the Elections & Registration office. A conversation was had with staff about this topic previously, with no follow up action taken. Mrs. Johnson stated that since this is the time of year when the budget is being discussed, she felt it was a good time to speak regarding their needs. While many neighboring counties have experienced population loss, Lee County has continued to experience population growth. On January 1, 2003 the number of active voters in Lee County was 11,550 and as of today that number is now 22,952. The total number of active and inactive voters stands at 25,274. This continued growth in populations pushes the need for additional resources so as to continue to adhere to state laws.

Mrs. Johnson said that currently there are three critical issues as of today: (1) storage for equipment and election documents, (2) secure and limited access areas for the election management server and a secure area for absentee ballots storage and processing, and (3) an area conducive for large advance voting turnouts. Secure storage for election equipment has become a significant issue as well as a need for functioning workspace to program and test equipment prior to deployment on election day.

Voting equipment now includes several separate components that must be stored in a climate controlled location with an alarm system or continuous video surveillance as outlined by state election board rule 183-1-12. Currently, the warehouse used to for election equipment is at capacity and unable to function as is needed. Mrs. Johnson has included additional ballot scanners in this year's budget submission. There are currently 24 election bills in the General Assembly proposing changes, many regarding security.

OCGA 21-2-386 states that three (3) people must be present when absentee ballots are opened and processed and also allows for party monitors and poll watchers. Depending on how many ballots come in, there could

be up to four panels of three people processing the absentee ballots and the current space staff has to complete this process is very small and it is difficult to support this many people. The need for separate limited access areas for the server is also crucial.

The current area for advance voting has become inadequate to handle the high voter turnout. As a voter favorite, advance voting accounts for nearly 50% of voter turnout for each election, with some elections showing higher percentages. The current space allows for only 10 voting booths, with no room for expansion of additional voting equipment. Mrs. Johnson added that meeting state law requirements, maintaining crowd control, and providing transparency is best achieved in a single large space. Additional benefits to this larger, controlled, open area would include the ability to accommodate for inclement weather, accommodating multiple voters in the check in station, and increase the number of voting booths, thereby shortening wait times.

Commissioner Roland asked if tearing down walls at the current location to create a more open space would solve the issue. Mrs. Johnson stated that making a few modifications would help but adds that it would buy a little bit more time, however, it would be ideal to have all equipment and elections functions in one building. Being that security is such an issue, it would make more sense to have a self-contained unit.

(B) **Tax Commissioner – Consideration to approve a quote from K&G Consulting, LLC for Georgia Tax Collection System (GA-TCS) software.**

Mr. Gregg Reese, with K&G Consulting, LLC was present and available for questions.

Operating license and first year maintenance for GA-TCS will be provided for the sum of \$30,000.00. Invoicing will not occur until the system is installed and deemed functional by the user. The operating license will cover unlimited users. The operating license fee also covers the cost of converting the previous 7 years of system's data to the GA-TCS format. Additional years can be converted at a cost of \$750.00 per year.

Any costs charged by the previous vendor for data access and/or export are not covered under license and support. Such cost will be paid by the County. An annual support fee of \$15,000.00 will be assessed after the first full year of usage. The support fee covers all maintenance, upgrades and assistance by the K&G Consulting Services team.

Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to approve a quote from K&G Consulting, LLC for Georgia Tax Collection System (GA-TCS) software. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Chairman Mathis voting yea.

(C) **Utilities Authority – Consideration to utilize \$1.2 million in ARPA funds for water system improvements.**

Chris Boswell, Utilities Authority Manager, was present and available for questions.

Chairman Mathis asked if the Board had any questions for Mr. Boswell, there were no questions at this time.

The Board did not take action on this item.

COUNTY MANAGER'S MATTERS

(A) **Updates on County projects.**

County Manager Christi Dockery discussed ongoing projects in the County: (1) The 2021 CBDG project is ongoing and the County should be looking into completing the 2023 CBDG application soon; (2) The Lee County Landfill project has been completed; (3) the Gymnasium project is 90% complete; and (4) SPLOST VIII will likely be on the ballot in November 2024, so staff is beginning that process of identifying potential projects. Chairman Mathis also discussed a possible future courthouse expansion project.

Vice-Chairman Singletary stated he will be meeting with Jeremy Morey, Parks & Recreation Director, and other staff to go over documents from the committee meeting and discuss plans. He will bring information to the Board at one of the regularly scheduled March meetings.

- (B) **Consideration to adopt a Text Amendment for Chapter 38, Article VII, Division 3, adding Section 28-299.1 relating to post-development stormwater management and runoff reduction. FIRST READING**
Mike Talley, Flint River Consulting, was present and available for questions.

Chairman Mathis stated that this text amendment is for the County to adopt a change in the ordinance to reflect a recent change in state law.

The first reading was conducted.

COMMISSIONER'S MATTERS

- (A) **Discussion of road resurfacing.**
Chairman Mathis suggested the Board to look at the provided list and think of other suggestions. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S MATTERS

NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NONE

PUBLIC FORUM

Citizens will be allowed to address the Board of Commissioners regarding any issues or complaints. Individuals should sign up prior to the start of the meeting.

Sam Johnson – Old Leslie Road and Public Works contact issues

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (A) The next regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting is **Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 6:00pm.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:21PM.

Facebook video link: <https://www.facebook.com/leecountyga/videos/3377724725816905>

Lee County is a thriving vibrant community celebrated for its value of tradition encompassing a safe family oriented community, schools of excellence, and life long opportunities for prosperity and happiness without sacrificing the rural agricultural tapestry.

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The meeting rooms and buildings are handicap accessible.