



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024 AT 6:00 P.M.
T. PAGE THARP BUILDING
OPAL CANNON AUDITORIUM
WWW.LEE.GA.US

MEETING MINUTES
VOTING SESSION

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Luke Singletary, Chairman	District 2
Chris Guarnieri, Vice-Chairman	District 4
Dennis Roland, Commissioner	District 1
Billy Mathis, Commissioner	District 3
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 voting session on Tuesday, February 27, 2024. The meeting was held in the Opal Cannon Auditorium of the Lee County T. Page Tharp Governmental Building in Leesburg, Georgia. Those present were Vice-Chairman Chris Guarnieri, Commissioner Dennis Roland, Commissioner Billy Mathis, and Commissioner George Walls. Chairman Luke Singletary was absent. Staff in attendance was County Manager Christi Dockery, County Clerk Kaitlyn Good, and County Attorney Jimmy Skipper. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live. Vice-Chairman Guarnieri called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

INVOCATION

Pastor Jonathan LeBarge from New Hope Baptist Church, 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 13, 2024.**
Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for February 13, 2024. Commissioner Mathis seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Walls voting yea.

CONSENT AGENDA

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

- (A) **Recognition of County employees' years of service.**
The following employees were recognized for their many years of service to Lee County:
35 years: Karen Coe – Tax Assessors Office
15 years: Paul Rouse – Sheriff's Office
10 years: Kristen Mathis – Elections and Registration
5 years: Steven Ebel – Fire & EMS
Logan Fowler – Fire & EMS

(B) **Consideration to adopt a proclamation recognizing February 2024 as Career Technical Agricultural Education month.**

Program students and teachers were present. Mr. Jodie Knight and Mr. John Wanner spoke to the Board about the program stating that there are a lot of exciting things happening, including a partnership with local LEAs and will be purchasing a few simulators thanks to grant funding. They are also partnering with local government entities and businesses to generate more opportunities for the kids.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to adopt a proclamation recognizing February 2024 as Career Technical Agricultural Education month. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis voting yea.

Following approval of the proclamation, a photo was taken with the Board and the students and teachers present.

PUBLIC HEARING

NONE

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

Planning, Zoning & Engineering

- (A) **Consideration to approve a Conditional Use Application from Muckalee Plantation, LLC. (Z24-001) to operate a wedding venue and an associated bed and breakfast inn, in the AG-1 (Active Agriculture District). This property is in the First Land District of Lee County. The total acreage of Tract 2 is 1,693.933 acres. The wedding venue proposes to utilize 23.64 of those acres. The east property line borders the Muckalee Creek and is in flood zone A & AE. All development and uses are located outside the SFHA and in flood zone X. The parcel number is 049 159, Lovers Lane Road, Leesburg, GA 31763. Public Hearing held February 13, 2024**

Commissioner Walls asked Chief Building Inspector Joey Davenport if a business license is needed if this application is approved. Mr. Davenport stated that according to the ordinance, anyone who conducts substantial effort business within the county is required to get a business license. Commissioner Walls asked if this would allow them to sell alcohol. Mr. Davenport informed him that it would not and they would need to obtain an alcohol license. Commissioner Guarnieri asked if they hosted a function, if the ordinance allows alcoholic catering. Mr. Davenport responded by stating that if they have a catered function, there are provisions within the ordinance for alcoholic beverage caterers.

Commissioner Mathis asked if a conditional use was necessary as this property lies in the AG district. Mr. Davenport responded that after consultation with the planning consultant and County Attorney Skipper that it was the best course of action due to the inclusion of the bed and breakfast.

Commissioner Walls made the **MOTION** to approve a Conditional Use Application from Muckalee Plantation, LLC. (Z24-001) to operate a wedding venue and an associated bed and breakfast inn. Commissioner Mathis seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland voting yea.

Public Works

- (B) **Discussion of generators. HANDOUT**

Public Works Director Mike Sistrunk spoke regarding generators. Mr. Sistrunk stated that they received several quotes and this purchase would be budget neutral due to using funds received by selling surplus vehicles and equipment on GovDeals. These generators will cover the Landfill office, Public Works well, Animal Shelter, and Facilities building.

Commissioner Mathis stated that he was glad this project was finally being pushed for and that he was in favor of it. Commissioner Mathis added that he agrees with purchasing generators for County used buildings but not State buildings or buildings the County rents out, adding that he would like to allow Mr. Sistrunk to move forward with getting these generators and work on getting bids for the other County offices. Commissioner

Mathis noted that there were Federal Disaster funds remaining and this would only be a small portion of it.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve the purchase of four generators from Wayne's Electric, the lowest responsive bidder, for a total cost of \$41,900.00 and authorize staff to collect quotes for those County buildings that are not leased to other entities who did not have a generator. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Walls voting yea.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS & GOVERNMENTAL BOARDS/AUTHORITIES

NONE

COUNTY MANAGER'S MATTERS

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

County Manager Christi Dockery discussed ongoing projects in the County: (1) There have been approximately 75 permits issued for the broadband project with Kinetic, and while some homes are hooked up already, a direct timeline has not been provided; and (2) the road resurfacing project is going well as Oxford is moving quickly with two crews. County Attorney Jimmy Skipper clarified that the broadband project with Kinetic is only to unserved and underserved areas.

(B) **Consideration to approve a change order with Oxford Construction Company for the Bermuda Lane Pipe Repair project.**

Chief Building Official Joey Davenport explained the need for the change order citing an error in the initial plans. The change is for the necessary 30 inch pipe instead of a 24 inch pipe as was originally in the plans. Mr. Davenport added that the average price for pipe is \$40.00 per foot, and with 300 feet needed, Oxford's price is fair. Commissioner Walls commented that this project had been done, to which Mr. Davenport and County Manager Christi Dockery replied that this bid was recently awarded, however, this is a necessary change order to that project. Ms. Dockery commended Mr. Davenport for his due diligence on finding the issue. Updated project plans were presented to the Board for their review.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve a change order with Oxford Construction Company for the Bermuda Lane Pipe Repair project in the amount of \$12,540.00. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Walls voting yea.

COMMISSIONER'S MATTERS

(A) **Discussion of short-term rentals.**

Commissioner Mathis opened the discussion by stating that he doesn't believe short term rentals should be allowed in R1 districts, specifically those that allow large amounts of occupants. Commissioner Guarnieri asked County Attorney Skipper if there was an ordinance that limited the number of occupants that can be in a house, to which Mr. Skipper replied that there is not, however, an ordinance pertaining specifically to short term rentals could limit the number of individuals in the home during the course of the rental.

County Manager Christi Dockery added that the County does receive revenue from these rentals and emphasized the need for a "host license" to be required. County Attorney Jimmy Skipper stated that the Board could either limit the number of individuals in the home during the time of the rental or prohibit short term rentals in the R1 district. He added that would begin working on a draft ordinance for short term rentals and will bring it back to the Board at a future meeting for consideration.

(B) **Discussion of abandoned mobile homes.**

Commissioner Mathis opened the discussion by stating that he would like to direct staff to take whatever action is necessary to get rid of any mobile homes that are inhabitable, look terrible, and are derelict. County Manager Christi Dockery added that staff had been doing some research about the issue and looking at homes in the 11 mobile home parks within the County.

Chief Building Official Joey Davenport stated that there have been issues in the past regarding abandoned

mobile homes. In 2020, the State adopted the Abandoned Mobile Homes Act, which lays out specific provisions for landowners in addressing this issue. Mr. Davenport discussed a handout the Board received, as provided by Magistrate Court that summarized the provisions laid out in the law. Commissioner Mathis asked if this was a process that could be instigated by Code Enforcement, to which Mr. Davenport replied that there were certain things the private property owner must do.

Mr. Davenport and County Attorney Jimmy Skipper summarized the law and the responsibilities and procedures for each party involved. The process starts with the landowner asking the County to do an inspection. If the home is deemed derelict, the property owners may then take the issue to Magistrate Court. If the property owner does not get an order from the court to move or remove the mobile home themselves or does not wish to start the process at all, the County can move forward using the unfit dwelling ordinance. Mr. Skipper warned that the process can prove to be expensive, especially when liens are involved.

Ms. Dockery stated that letters will be sent to the owners of the mobile home parks. There have been several mobile homes posted already by the Tax Commissioner and several more that have been flagged for further investigation.

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.

No citizens took part in the Public Forum.

Vice-Chairman Guarnieri asked if anyone else would like to speak.

With no further comments or questions from the audience, the Public Forum was closed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(A) The next regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting is **Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 6:00pm.**

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis voting yea. The meeting adjourned at 6:40PM.

Facebook video link: <https://www.facebook.com/leecountyga/videos/409854041697508>

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: _____
COUNTY CLERK

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.

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language interpretation should contact the ADA Coordinator at (229) 759-6000 or through the Georgia Relay Service (800) 255-0056 (TDD) or (800) 355-0135 (voice). This person can be contacted at the T. Page Tharp Building in Leesburg, Georgia between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice of seven (7) working days.

The meeting rooms and buildings are handicap accessible.