



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023 6:00 P.M.

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

MEETING MINUTES
WORK 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, November 14, 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, Commissioner Dennis Roland, Commissioner Chris Guarnieri, and Commissioner George Walls. Staff in attendance was County Manager Christi Dockery, County Attorney Jimmy Skipper, and County Clerk Kaitlyn Good. Vice-Chairman Luke Singletary was absent. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live. Chairman Mathis called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

INVOCATION

Pastor Lee Smith, First United Methodist of Leesburg, 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 minutes for the Board of Commissioners meeting for October 24, 2023.** Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the minutes for the Board of Commissioners meeting for October 24, 2023. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri voting yea.

CONSENT AGENDA

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

- (A) **Chief Ranger David Hodges, Georgia Forestry Commission, to present the annual report.** Chief Ranger David Hodges was not present at the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

- (A) **The Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing to consider a resolution transmitting a draft Capital Improvements Element Annual Update to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission for regional review pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.** Chairman Mathis opened the Public Hearing.

With no comments or questions from the Board, audience, or staff, the Public Hearing was closed.

Consideration to adopt a resolution transmitting a draft Capital Improvements Element Annual Update to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission for regional review pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to adopt the resolution transmitting a draft Capital Improvements Element Annual Update to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission for regional review pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland voting yea.

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

Planning, Zoning & Engineering

- (A) **Consideration to approve a variance application from Kyle Watson (Z23-012) to install a detached shop on the back side of the property, located at 1012 Pinewood Road, Leesburg, GA 31763. This property is in the Second Land District of Lee County, Lot 11 of Old Canoy Estates. The total acreage of the property is 6.7 acres and is in flood zone A. Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval.**

Chairman Mathis asked if the Commission would like to vote on this item or wait until Vice-Chairman Singletary is present due to this property being in his district. Chairman Mathis then asked if Interim Planning Director Joey Davenport had spoken with Vice-Chairman Singletary regarding this, to which Mr. Davenport stated that he had not. Chairman Mathis said that he would like to hear from Mr. Davenport but suggests tabling this until Vice-Chairman Singletary is present.

Mr. Davenport discussed the variance application as it relates to the existing flood damage prevention ordinance. He stated this property lies in flood zone A, meaning that it has been known to flood but its flooding has not had a specific detailed study completed. The ordinance states that structures in the flood zone are required to be built 3 feet above the highest adjacent grade. Mr. Davenport clarified that this particular permit application is for a second metal accessory structure on the property needed to store a boat and other items and feels that it would not be necessary for an accessory structure such as this to fall under these rules set by the code, hence the variance application. Mr. Watson's existing accessory structure is not 3 feet above the highest adjacent grade. This area is not near the floodway.

Commissioner Roland asked why it matters if someone builds on their flood land. Mr. Davenport replied that there are areas in the County in the floodplains and to be in the national flood insurance program for the citizens of Lee County to be able to purchase flood insurance, certain federal rules and regulations must be complied with. Commissioner Guarnieri asked if this would have any impact on the rules and regulations, to which Mr. Davenport stated that if the Commission grants the variance, there are provisions within the ordinance for buildings and structures just used for parking and storage; not habitable. These buildings and structures can be built below the flood zone as long as they have automatic flood vents installed.

Commissioner Walls asked if Mr. Davenport agrees with the recommended approval, to which Mr. Davenport stated that he did. Applicant Kyle Watson was present and available for questions. Chairman Mathis advised Mr. Watson that while no opposition was heard from the Board, it is customary that decisions be made when the Commissioner of the respective district is present and asked if it would be an inconvenience if he were to wait until the next meeting. Mr. Watson replied that it had been in process for several months so it wouldn't necessarily put him out to wait one more month. Chairman Mathis stated that typically if he had any objection with a project, Vice-Chairman Singletary would let it be known prior to the meeting and he hadn't in this case.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve a variance application from Kyle Watson (Z23-012) to install a detached shop on the back side of the property, located at 1012 Pinewood Road, Leesburg, GA 31763. This property is in the Second Land District of Lee County, Lot 11 of Old Canoy Estates. The total acreage of the property is 6.7 acres and is in flood zone A. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (B) **Review of the draft minutes for the November 2, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.**
The minutes were reviewed as presented.
- (C) **Review of the minutes for the October 5, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.**
The minutes were reviewed as presented.

Public Works

- (D) **Consideration to purchase three (3) new vehicles.**
County Manager Christi Dockery stated this was a previous item and one of the vehicles has since been removed from the request. She informed the Board that these pick-up trucks include one (1) Ford F-250 diesel engine and two (2) F-350 diesel engine trucks that will be purchased through a state contract. Two of these vehicles will be replacing old ambulances (high hours) that Public Works is currently using. One is going to be replacing a van that is currently hauling the skid steer, which is approximately 13,000 pounds.

Commissioner Roland asked if there was money available in SPLOST to buy ambulances. Ms. Dockery stated that a majority has been spent, but there is some to get through 2025 adding that the County is not in need of any ambulances right now. Commissioner Roland said that he thought that we would rotate the ambulances out and give the old ones to Public Works. Ms. Dockery voiced concern about the warranty being voided. Chairman Mathis added that money is not the problem.

Commissioner Walls asked if these would be diesel or gas. Ms. Dockery reiterated that they would be diesel, as staff has spoken with different auto shops and that was their recommendation for hauling equipment.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve the purchase of three (3) new vehicles for the Public Works Department using T-SPLOST funds to include one (1) Ford F-250 diesel engine and two (2) F-350 diesel engine trucks with a total estimated cost of \$175,818.00 (state contract price). 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) To education the public, SPLOST VIII articles will be created by staff in support and promotion of the referendum having been placed on the March 12 ballot; and (2) the County is currently at 92% collection on SPLOST VII, with expectations to reach the ballot amount in February 2024.
- (B) **Consideration to approve the Meeting Calendar for the Board of Commissioners for 2024.**
County Manager Christi Dockery stated that there would be a total of 22 meetings.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the Meeting Calendar for the Board of Commissioners for 2024. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri voting yea.
- (C) **Consideration to approve the Holiday Calendar for Board of Commissioners offices for 2024.**
County Manager Christi Dockery stated that there would be eleven (11) holidays.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the Holiday Calendar for Board of Commissioners offices for 2024. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri voting yea.

(D) **Consideration to approve the Budget Calendar for FY 2024-25.**

County Manager Christi Dockery stated that the Board has to adopt a budget calendar to begin the budget process. Ms. Dockery summarized the important dates on the budget calendar.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve the Budget Calendar for FY 2024-25. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Walls voting yea.

(E) **Consideration to approve an Easement for Anchors, Guy Poles, and Guy Wires for Georgia Power for the Oakland Library and Bindery property.**

County Manager Christi Dockery stated that County Attorney Jimmy Skipper has reviewed and approved this easement and Library Director Claire Leavy has been made aware.

Commissioner Roland asked if this is for The Bindery and wanted clarification on where this would be at on the property. Ms. Dockery clarified that this easement is for replacing existing poles along US Hwy 82. Commissioner Roland asked County Attorney Jimmy Skipper if this easement is giving more land. Mr. Skipper clarified that the easement is not giving more land and only allowing them to replace the equipment. He stated that there is already an easement for the poles but they are changing out some equipment. Interim Planning Director Joey Davenport stated that this was a required upgrade for their services, which will require larger cables and the guy wires and anchors to support those larger cables.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve an Easement for Anchors, Guy Poles, and Guy Wires for Georgia Power for the Oakland Library and Bindery property. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland voting yea.

(F) **Consideration to accept a quote for duct cleaning. HANDOUT**

Chairman Mathis requested to table this item. He stated that he would like to contact businesses in both Lee County and Dougherty County and suggested staff also receive a second quote for regular maintenance.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to table the quotes for duct cleaning. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Walls voting yea.

COMMISSIONER'S MATTERS

(A) **Consideration to ratify the addition of Winnstead Drive to the 2023 Road Resurfacing Projects RFP.**

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to ratify the addition of Winnstead Drive to the 2023 Road Resurfacing Projects RFP. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland voting yea.

(B) **Consideration to ratify the updated projects list for SPLOST VIII.**

County Manager Christi Dockery stated there were recalculations based on collections, as completed by the Finance Director.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to ratify the updated projects list for SPLOST VIII. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Walls voting yea.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S MATTERS

(A) **Consideration to adopt a resolution approving notice of special election, call of special election, and ballot question in connection with SPLOST VIII.**

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to adopt a resolution approving notice of special election (March

12, 2024), call of special election, and ballot question in connection with SPLOST VIII. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri voting yea.

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.

Ricky Spence – Property taxes on a lot on Kinchafoonee Creek Road that lies in the floodplain and is unbuildable

Paul Clayton – Current status and paving Old Leslie Road

Chairman Mathis asked if anyone else would like to speak. With no more comments or questions from the audience, the Public Forum was closed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (A) Offices of the Lee County Board of Commissioners will be **closed Thursday, November 23, 2023 and Friday, November 24, 2023** in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.
- (B) The “**Spirit of Christmas Parade & Festival**” will be held on **Saturday, December 2, 2023**. Parade kickoff will be at **10:00am** and will be immediately followed by a festival which includes vendors, entertainment, great food, and lots more. Admission is free and if you would like to be a sponsor, vendor or participate in the parade please contact the Chamber of Commerce at (229) 759-2422.
- (C) The next regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting is **Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 6:00pm**.
- (D) The renewal process for 2024 Occupation Tax/Business Licenses began November 1, 2023. Please go to Lee County’s website at www.lee.ga.us for information or contact the Building Inspection office at (229) 759-3326 and we will mail you a packet with an application and all information. **All current business licenses will expire on December 31, 2023.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:30PM.

Facebook video link: <https://www.facebook.com/leecountyga/videos/327431893242642/>

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.