



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024 AT 6:00 P.M.

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

MEETING MINUTES  
VOTING SESSION

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### 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

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The Lee County Board of Commissioners met in a voting session on Tuesday, March 26, 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 Chairman Luke Singletary, Vice-Chairman Chris Guarnieri, Commissioner Dennis Roland, Commissioner Billy Mathis, and Commissioner George Walls. Staff in attendance was County Manager Christi Dockery and County Clerk Kaitlyn Good. County Attorney Jimmy Skipper was absent. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live. Chairman Singletary called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

### INVOCATION

Pastor Shane Mullins, Move Christian 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 March 12, 2024.**

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for March 12, 2024. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and 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:

5 years: Antonio Smith – Building Inspection, Inspector  
5 years: Austin Rouse – Fire & EMS, Firefighter/EMTA  
10 years: Martha Roberts – Building Inspection, Permit Technician  
10 years: Christopher Sellers – Public Works, Supervisor  
20 years: Anthony King – Public Works, General Supervisor  
35 years: Articia “Trish” Hawkins Batten – Sheriff’s Office, Office Manager

(B) **Mrs. Trish Batten to address the Board regarding building a healthy community with Medicaid Expansion.**

Mrs. Trish Batten addressed the Board regarding building a healthy community with Medicaid Expansion by stating that she was requesting support in closing the healthcare coverage gap in Georgia so as to ensure all citizens have access to affordable and comprehensive healthcare coverage no matter their socioeconomic status, employment status, or demographic factors.

A coverage gap refers to those who do not qualify for Medicaid, but cannot afford other health insurance options. Some of the benefits to expanding Medicaid and closing this gap are: Access to healthcare facilities, an increase in affordability for all, increase economic stability and productivity, better management of chronic conditions through regular medical visits, and a reduction in out of pocket expenses. Another goal would be an improvement to the wellbeing and prosperity of individuals and families in Lee County. Mrs. Batten stated that she is requesting the Board support bolstering a resolution, which can be provided to the Board upon request.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

NONE

**DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS**

**Building Inspection/ Business Licensing**

(A) **Consideration to approve an alcohol license for One Stop Mart (old Doublegate EZ Mart) located at 1250 US Hwy 82 West due to new ownership.**

Commissioner Mathis asked what the status was on staff being able to approve licenses such as this, to which Chief Building Official Joey Davenport stated that every time Commissioner Mathis brings it up, County Attorney Skipper cites a state law indicating the Board must approve them. Upon Commissioner Mathis questioning this, Mr. Davenport stated that he would once again consult with County Attorney Skipper.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve an alcohol license for One Stop Mart (old Doublegate EZ Mart) located at 1250 US Hwy 82 West due to new ownership. Commissioner Mathis seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and 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) The road resurfacing project is ongoing and nearly 50% complete; (2) TSPLOST II will start collections on April 1, 2024 and continue to 2029; (3) LRA grant funds (no required match) will come to the Board on April 9, 2024 for consideration of projects, with the application due June 1, 2024; and (4) LMIG 2025 funds will be announced in July 2024.

(B) **Consideration to adopt a Resolution to Amend the ACCG Defined Benefit Plan, the ACCG 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan, and the ACCG 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan for Lee County Employees, effective as of July 1, 2024.**

Ron Rowe, Regional Client Manager with ACCG Retirement Services, presented the proposed resolution and amendments to the Board. Mr. Rowe prefaced the discussion by stating the documents being discussed, if adopted, would have no effect on current employees and would only affect new full-time employees hired after July 1, 2024.

Discussions began regarding the retirement plan and the potential options back in July 2022. What resulted from those discussions and what is presented tonight is multifaceted. The first step is to potentially close the defined benefit (DB) plan, if the resolution is adopted, effective July 1. This change would eventually affect budgetary numbers as people leave, retire, or pass away and in the future the liabilities will be reduced over time.

The second part of the resolution is to reopen the 401(a) defined contribution (DC) plan for new employees to be able to receive a contribution from the County. If the employee then chooses to contribute to the 457(b) deferred contribution plan, they would receive more of a contribution from the County. The base contribution from the County is 3% (consistent match across the region and country), with a max of 6%, of the individual's annual salary; however, this amount is variable and the Board can vote to change it at any time. Mr. Rowe added that this makes the plan easily budget-able as the contribution number is fixed.

The DB plan over 30 years provides a 45% income replacement ratio. With the projection of 6% from the employee and 6% from the County, that 12% over the same length of time is projected to provide a very similar benefit in the DC plan. The DB Plan is not a portable plan, whereas the DC Plan is. In the current plan, the amount of service necessary to be vested is 5 years; however, this too is variable. If someone does not work the 5 years, the money the County invested into that individual's fund will then go into a forfeiture account. This forfeiture account can be used for matching for future employees. The existing forfeiture account funds can be used going forward to help cover base and match. Any monies contributed by the employee will always be the employee's money.

Mr. Rowe noted that this plan is only for full time employees and reiterated that any changes made by the Board tonight will have zero effect on current employees and only affect those employees hired on or after July 1, 2024. The employee can decide how much they would like to contribute, with a max of \$23,000.00 annually, and even can opt out of contributing at all. Even if the employee does not contribute, the County will still contribute the 3%.

Commissioner Roland asked about the potential plan being tax exempt, to which Mr. Rowe stated that the 457(b) has a Roth contribution option (after tax contribution will grow tax free) and the 401(a) is pre-tax option because it is coming from the County. Employees can do either or both if they wish. For the pre-tax option, there is no age restriction on receiving a distribution as far as a penalty. Other types of plans have a 59.5 rule where if you take any out before that age, you may be subject to a 10% penalty. The pre-tax option does not have that penalty attached to it for age, which is one of the benefits. The Roth option does.

Commissioner Mathis stated that the main concern voiced by employees, primarily public safety employees, was the age of retirement. Mr. Rowe replied that both Sheriff's Office and Fire & EMS have optional retirement plans with their respective associations, which have their own formulas with a retirement age of 55 for full benefits. The average retirement base for general employees is 65.5; however, the federal government has the age of 57 for public safety employees. Also, on the DC plan, employees can leave whenever; however, the average retirement age is 65.5 years old. On the current DB plan, no matter when an employee leaves, the retirement benefit will not begin until they are 65 or could be pulled out sooner, with a penalty. If the Board changes the retirement age to 55, there is a cost to that, but it can be done.

Another benefit to the DC plan are legacy benefits; when you pass away, all the funds you contributed into the plan will go to your beneficiaries. In the DB plan, if you pass away while still an employee, there is a pre-retirement lump sum benefit that will go to your beneficiary, with no monthly benefits ever. In retirement, the DC plan can pass to your beneficiaries. In retirement with the DB plan, if you begin your benefits within 60 days of retirement, there is a \$15,000.00 maximum death benefit attached.

Chairman Singletary summarized the benefits of a DC plan. Mr. Rowe added that adopting this resolution would be the first step of potentially several in order to mold the program into the best for all employees. The next step would be to address if there is anything the Board wishes to do for current employees.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to adopt a Resolution to Amend the ACCG Defined Benefit Plan, the ACCG 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan, and the ACCG 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan for Lee County Employees, effective as of July 1, 2024. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

**COMMISSIONER'S MATTERS**

NONE

**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.

Chairman Singletary 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 offices of the Lee County Board of Commissioners will be **closed Friday, March 29, 2024** in recognition of **Good Friday**. Offices will reopen for normal business hours on Monday, April 1, 2024.
- (B) This year's **Annual Great American Cleanup**, Amnesty Day at the Landfill, and Prescription Drug Take Back event will be held **Saturday, April 6, 2024** beginning at 9:00am and ending at 4:00pm.
- (C) The next regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting is **Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 6:00pm**.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Walls voting yea. The meeting adjourned at 6:46PM.

Facebook video link: <https://www.facebook.com/leecountyga/videos/772398807893227>

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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.*

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