



LEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

T. PAGE THARP GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING

102 STARKSVILLE AVENUE NORTH, LEESBURG, GEORGIA 31763

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 AT 6:00 PM

T. PAGE THARP BUILDING

OPAL CANNON AUDITORIUM

WWW.LEE.GA.US

MEETING MINUTES

Work 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

Co-Assistant County Manager Joey Davenport

Co-Assistant County Manager Heather Jones

Kaitlyn Good, County Clerk

Jimmy Skipper, County Attorney

The Lee County Board of Commissioners met in a voting session on Tuesday, May 13, 2025. 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 were Co-Assistant County Manager Heather Jones, Co-Assistant County Manager Joey Davenport, and County Clerk Kaitlyn Good. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live. Chairman Singletary called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **INVOCATION**

A) Apostle Malden Batten, The Church of Leesburg, to lead the invocation.

Apostle Malden Batten led the invocation.

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A) Consideration to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2025 Board of Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2025 Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Mathis voting yea.

B) Consideration to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2025 Budget Workshop.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2025 Budget Workshop. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

A) Discussion of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments regarding Multi-Family Residential Zoning.

Planning Director Amanda Nava-Estill stated that this was for acknowledgment. There will be a public hearing at the next meeting. At a previous meeting, public input was given. This is just acknowledgment of that outcome.

7. **PUBLIC HEARING**

- A) **Lanier Engineering (Z25-026)** has submitted an application requesting a **variance** from Section 38-319 (b) (1), Additional design for nonresidential streets of the Lee County Code of Ordinances, from the regulation of a maximum cul-de-sac length of 800 feet, to allow the construction of a commercial drive with a total length of 1,036 feet. The property is zoned C-2 (General Business District), located at 3268 Palmyra Road, Lee County, at parcel number 037C023, in Land Lot 83 of the Second Land District of Lee County, Georgia. **Planning Commission recommended approval.**

Planning Director Amanda Nava-Estill stated that this is a variance to extend the cul-de-sac further than is currently allowed in the ordinance. The Planning Commission and staff recommend approval. Commissioner Guarnieri stated that it was his understanding that there is a building where the cul-de-sac was originally planned to end, meaning that they need to extend it.

Chairman Singletary opened the Public Hearing at 6:08PM. With no comments or questions from the public, staff or Board members, Chairman Singletary closed the Public Hearing at 6:08PM.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve a variance application from Lanier Engineering (Z25-026). Commissioner Mathis seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- B) **Zoning Text Amendments (T25-002) to the Lee County Code of Ordinances:**
- A request to amend Article I.-Introductions, Sec.70-6. Definitions of the Lee County Code of Ordinances, with respect to removing the Motor Vehicle Establishment definition and adding the Car Wash Establishment definition. **Planning Commission recommended approval.**
 - A request to repeal Article III.- General Provisions, Sec. 70-94- Land Conservation of the Lee County Code of Ordinances. **Planning Commission did not provide a recommendation.**
 - A request to amend Sec. 70-95. (e) – Buffers in residential districts of the Lee County Code of Ordinances, with respect to removing the sentence, “This buffer area may account for the land conservation area required by section 70-94 of this chapter.” **Planning Commission did not provide a recommendation.**
 - A request to amend Article V. - R-1 Single Family Residential District, Sec. 70-162. – Permitted uses of the Lee County Code of Ordinances, to remove the permitted use, “zero lot-line housing shown on approved subdivision plat.” **Planning Commission recommended approval.**
 - A request to amend Article V. - R-1 Single Family Residential District, Sec. 70-163. - Conditional uses of the Lee County Code of Ordinances, to add “Zero lot-line housing if shown on an approved subdivision plat. Not to exceed two per 1.5 acres.” **Planning Commission recommended approval.**
 - A request to amend Article V. Sec 70-164. Area, height, bulk, and placement requirements of the Lee County Code of Ordinances, with respect to the Dwelling Units Per Acre of Developable Land-R-1 chart, amending the three (3) per every one (1) acre requirement for water and sewer to two (2) for every one (1) acre for water and sewer. **Planning Commission recommended approval.**
 - A request to add Car Wash Establishment to Article XII. - C-2 General Business District under Sec. 70-383. - Conditional uses. **Planning Commission recommended approval.**

Planning Director Amanda Nava-Estill stated that she recommends further review of the text amendments regarding land conservation and zero lot-line housing. She recommends approval of the requests to amend the developable land R-1 chart and the request to add car wash establishment to Article XII.

Chairman Singletary opened the Public Hearing at 6:08PM. With no comments or questions from the public, staff or Board members, Chairman Singletary closed the Public Hearing at 6:09PM.

- C) **Text Amendment (T25-003) to the Lee County Code of Ordinances**, to amend Chapter 58 Subdivisions Sec. 58-159. - Effect of approval of general development plan (e) with respect to removing the wording, “All designated greenspace area shall meet the requirements for greenspace as established in section 70-94 of this Code.” ***Planning Commission did not provide a recommendation.***

Planning Director Amanda Nava-Estill stated that this was included in the land conservation that they would like to review further.

Chairman Singletary opened the Public Hearing at 6:09PM. With no comments or questions from the public, staff or Board members, Chairman Singletary closed the Public Hearing at 6:10PM.

8. **DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS**

- A) **Building Inspection/ Business Licensing** - Consideration to approve an alcohol license for Ms. Tammy Mathis, owner of L. Fierce Enterprises LLC, to be located at 122 Hugh Rd Unit I, for wholesale sales of distilled spirits, wine, and malt beverages.

Co-Assistant County Manager Joey Davenport stated that this license is the first wholesale operation that has been applied for in Lee County. There will be no consumption on the premises. It is a small warehouse that is fire-rated and separated from the surrounding warehouses. Mr. Davenport said that this is shipping and receiving. The applicant has a manufacturer in California that has a specific blend for them that they send to distribute.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve an alcohol license for Ms. Tammy Mathis, owner of L. Fierce Enterprises LLC. Commissioner Guarneri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- B) **E-911** - Consideration to approve a quote from Motorola to provide a fiber connectivity handoff from the Albany Master Site to the tower on Hwy 32 East.

E-911 Director Nikkie Celinski summarized. She stated that this is a connectivity box that will connect the fiber that Albany is running to the radio equipment. It is significantly less than purchasing a new microwave. Commissioner Mathis asked what the quote is. Ms. Celinski stated that the quote is for \$17,596.37. Commissioner Walls stated that he thought this had already been approved. Ms. Celinski stated that it was approved for Albany to run the fiber, but the connectivity box is still needed.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve a quote from Motorola to provide a fiber connectivity handoff from the Albany Master Site to the tower on Hwy 32 East. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarneri and Commissioner Roland voting yea.

- C) **Planning, Zoning & Engineering** - Review of the minutes from the April 3, 2025 Planning Commission meeting.

The minutes were reviewed as presented.

D) **Public Works - Discussion of Amnesty Days at the Landfill.**

Commissioner Mathis stated that he thought it had already been approved to do this once a quarter. Chairman Singletary said that he thought it was decided to do it for yard debris because curbside pick-up is not offered. Public Works Director Mike Sistrunk stated that he would do what the Board would like to regarding this. Commissioner Mathis stated that it should be in the meeting minutes regarding the discussion. Commissioner Roland said that he was informed that staff looked for these minutes, but were unable to locate them. Chairman Singletary asked County Clerk Kaitlyn Good to continue looking for the minutes regarding the discussion. He stated that if they are unable to locate this information, then they can revisit this item.

Chairman Singletary thanked Mr. Sistrunk for providing cost information regarding this. Mr. Sistrunk stated that tires cost the most, but the biggest problem for Amnesty Day is having to bring in extra staff. Commissioner Mathis stated that it is better for citizens to bring tires to the landfill rather than in the woods.

9. **CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS & GOVERNMENTAL BOARDS/AUTHORITIES**

A) **Consideration to appoint one (1) member to the Community Foundation Board of Trustees for a term of two (2) years. Term expires 03/25/2027. Letter of interest in appointment received from Judy Powell (reappointment).**

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to reappoint Judy Powell to the Community Foundation Board of Trustees for a term of two (2) years. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Mathis voting yea.

B) **Consideration to appoint one (1) member to the Regional Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council for 2025-2028 term.**

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to reappoint Cole Williams to the Regional Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council for 2025-2028 term. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Mathis voting yea.

C) **Sheriff's Office - Consideration to approve the purchase of a 2025 Ford Explorer.**

Chairman Singletary stated that there was a discussion regarding this item in the budget workshop on May 1. The Finance Office, Tax Commissioner's Office, and Elections Office are currently using two (2) worn-out vehicles. It was discussed contacting the Sheriff's Office to see if they have an explorer that they would like to cycle out. The Sheriff's Office has a 2021 Ford Explorer they will give and will replace it with a 2025 model.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve the purchase of a 2025 Ford Explorer. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Roland voting yea.

D) **Tax Assessor - Consideration to approve taking action on several new requirements pertaining to assessment notices, as laid out in House Bill 92 (a cleanup to House Bill 581). ACTION ITEM**

Chief Appraiser Doug Goodin stated that on the assessment notices that are about to be sent out, they have to have either the estimated rollback rate or the estimated taxes based on the previous millage rate. If the rollback rate is used, then it has to be in the minutes 15 days prior to sending out assessments. Commissioner Mathis asked which of these options were more confusing to citizens.

Mr. Goodin stated that estimated taxes were. Commissioner Mathis asked if there was time to put the actual rollback on the assessments. Mr. Goodin stated that you can't put the actual rollback, you have to estimate it. They are currently working to get the estimate and the assessment notices have to be sent by July 1. He said they just needed to know how the Board would like to proceed. If they would like to do the estimated rollback, then it will need to be voted on, then sent to the Tax Commissioner's Office and forwarded to the Tax Assessor's Office.

Chairman Singletary asked what would change the estimated taxes from last year. Mr. Goodin said that the millage rate would change the estimate. Commissioner Mathis stated that he believes they should do the estimated rollback due to the prior confusion with the estimated taxes. Mr. Goodin stated that he has until July 1 to send the notices to citizens, but it takes a few weeks for the vendor to prepare everything. If the board would like to do the rollback, it needs to be decided by the next meeting.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to use the estimated rollback for the upcoming assessments. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

Mr. Goodin added that in the clean-up bills, citizens still have a 45-day appeal period to file for homestead. There used to be a deadline of April 1, but now when the assessments are sent out, citizens have the additional 45 days. He added that in 2028, a county-wide reevaluation has to be done throughout Georgia. They will have to contract a company to do this as they do not have the in-house staff trained to. Mr. Goodin stated that currently they have two (2) staff members in training and requested an additional staff member. They hope to be able to do this in house after the 2028 reevaluation.

Chairman Singletary asked who is eligible for homestead. Mr. Goodin said that anyone that owns property in the county and resides there. They have to come to the Tax Assessor's Office and provide a photo ID. Co-Assistant County Manager Joey Davenport asked for clarification that the estimated rollback has to be approved by the Board fifteen days prior to sending out notices. Mr. Goodin stated that was correct, and they should be able to input it as soon as it is approved at the next meeting.

10. COUNTY MANAGER'S MATTERS

A) Updates on County projects.

Co-Assistant County Manager Joey Davenport discussed the following updates to County Projects: (1) The architect and engineer are working on the plan for the Courthouse addition; (2) Windstream is 95% installed and anticipates to be connecting citizens soon; (3) the engineering company with the contract for the Coston Road project has dissolved, a new contract is underway for the new company; (4) the Public Works renovations is close to completion; and (5) the application and drawings for the Animal Control and Code Enforcement building were received.

B) Discussion about submitting an application for the 2025 LMIG Safety Action Plan (SAP) grant from GDOT.

Chairman Singletary stated that the grant amount is \$485,000.00 with a 30% match, which would equal \$630,500.00. This is a striping project and the proposed roads are a total cost of \$631,214.00. The proposed project list was included in the agenda packet.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to submit an application for the 2025 LMIG Safety

Action Plan (SAP) grant from GDOT to include the project list as presented. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- C) Consideration to amend the 2025 LRA application to also include Leland Ferrell Drive, White Horse Drive, and Brandt Court.

Chairman Singletary stated that this was due to the Ledo Road estimate coming in lower than anticipated.

Co-Assistant County Manager Heather Jones stated they committed \$1.7 million to Ledo Road originally, but the estimate came in at \$1.3 million. That leaves a remaining \$469,000.00 that needs to be recommitted to other roads. The proposed roads Leland Ferrell Drive, White Horse Drive, and Brandt Court, totaled to be just above that amount. There would need to be an additional \$6,600.00 out of TSPLOST. Commissioner Mathis asked if these roads were proposed due to them being the worst roads. Ms. Jones stated that English Drive was originally included in LRA funds, but it would cost crews too much to move the equipment for only that road. Chairman Singletary stated that they would save \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 in moving costs if all of these roads were done together. Mr. Brent Davis added that English Drive was included originally, but it did not make sense due to it costing \$40,000.00 to pave with \$20,000.00 being for moving equipment. The additional roads are within the same neighborhood as English Drive.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to amend the 2025 LRA application to also include Leland Ferrell Drive, White Horse Drive, and Brandt Court. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- D) Consideration to approve a lighting agreement with GDOT for the Cedric Street/ Ga Hwy 133 round a bout project.

Co-Assistant County Manager Heather Jones stated this was brought to the board in July 2024, but they did not have the actual agreement to approve. The cost estimate is \$80.00 to \$100.00 a month for the lighting costs and the county will be responsible for the maintenance of the lighting.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve a lighting agreement with GDOT for the Cedric Street/Ga Hwy 133 round a bout project. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Roland voting yea.

11. **COMMISSIONER'S MATTERS**
12. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
13. **COUNTY ATTORNEY'S MATTERS**
14. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
15. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Commissioner Walls discussed a greenspace property on Stroud Road. He stated that it is overgrown and Public Works Director Mike Sistrunk has agreed to go clean up the property. However, citizens have stated that there is illegal activity happening on this property. Commissioner Mathis asked if Commissioner Walls had a conversation about leasing that property. Chairman Singletary stated that he has spoken with County Attorney Jimmy Skipper regarding this property and leasing it to Philema Road

Baptist Church.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to clean up the property on Stroud Road and discuss with County Attorney Jimmy Skipper regarding leasing. Commissioner Roland seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

Dennis Cooper - Requested signage on GA Hwy 32 West on the curve near Armena Road.

Sam Johnson - Discussed the right-of-way for Old Leslie Road.

Paul Clayton - Discussed the impact that the rain has had on Old Leslie Road.

Chairman Singletary asked if anyone else would like to speak.

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

16. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A) The Offices of the Lee County Board of Commissioners will be closed Monday, May 26, 2025 for Memorial Day. Residential garbage collection will be delayed by one day.
- B) The next regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners meeting will be held May 27, 2025 at 6:00pm.

Chairman Singletary also announced that Public Works will be holding an event to celebrate Public Works week on Friday, May 23, 2025 from 11:00am to 3:00pm.

17. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45PM.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK