



Spalding County online

Board of Commissioners

JOINT SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Spalding County, Georgia, the Board of Commissioners of the City of Griffin, The Council of Orchard Hill and the Council of Sunny Side held a Special Called Joint Meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2004 beginning at 6:00 o'clock p.m. in the Courthouse Annex in the Meeting Room at 119 East Solomon Street, Griffin, Spalding County, Georgia.

Those present from the County were Chairman Mike Kendall, Vice Chairman Cecil Davis, Commissioners Eddie Goss, Johnie McDaniel and Dick Morrow. Also present were County Manager William Wilson, Finance Director Jinna Garrison, County Attorney Jim Fortune and County Clerk Phyllis Doane.

Those present from the City were Mayor Cynthia Reid Ward, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Landrum, Commissioners Cora Flowers, Doug Hollberg, Rodney McCord and Joanne Todd. Commissioner Walker Cook was absent. Also present were Acting City Manager Lisa Hutcheson, newly appointed City Manager Kenny Smith and City Attorney Drew Whalen.

Those present from the City of Sunny Side were Bill Slaughter, Mayor, Councilmen Larry Gossett and James Channell.

Those present from the City of Orchard Hill were Council members Robert Morgan and Evelyn Nichols.

Also present were representatives from the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority as follows: David Luckie, Executive Director, Don King, Chairman of the Authority, members Daa'ood Amin and Ray Dender.

The meeting was called to order by County Chairman Mike Kendall, who introduced the representatives attending from each municipality.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss projects to be included on a proposed November 2, 2004 bond referendum for SPLOST.

Chairman Kendall stated that we would begin by hearing from the Commissioners of the City of Griffin and proceed in alphabetical order. Mayor Ward commented that the City wished to hear the proposal from the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority before making their proposal. The other municipalities stated that wish to hear from the Development Authority before making their proposals.

Mr. Don King, Chairman and David Luckie, Executive Director of the Development Authority made a presentation to the Boards. Mr. Luckie pointed out that out of the 423 acres purchased through the 1996 SPLOST, there remains only 4 acres left in the Green Valley Industrial Park that has not sold or not under option for sale. The 1996 SPLOST generated approximately 900

jobs, \$80 Million in capital investment and added \$1 Million to the tax digest. He said that 58% of the employees live in Spalding County and feels that jobs are being provided for all our citizens in the community.

Mr. Luckie stated that their proposal for consideration for the 2004 SPLOST was in the amount of \$17,237,948, which includes land acquisition, land development, an allowance for landscaping, signage and lighting, Wallace Road and Jackson Road infrastructure upgrades, sewer improvements provided by a private wastewater facility located in Butts County and water upgrade to 12" Main to the present system. This proposal includes the purchase of 189.565 acres at the intersection of Wallace Road and Jackson Road at a cost of \$20,000 an acre.

Mr. Luckie stated that this proposal has been reduced approximately \$7 Million from their previous proposal presented to the Spalding County Board of Commissioners at an earlier meeting as there are two parcels which they do not have a contract on. He said that they have been trying to get them under contract for several months and could not secure a contract by the meeting tonight.

Mr. Luckie stated that this is the tract of land that the Development Authority proposed for the March 2003 SPLOST. The land has already been deeded to the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority but has not been paid for. The SPLOST would provide the funds to pay for the land. The Authority would like to acquire the land free and clear to be able to put the money into it to develop it. It was brought up by a City Commissioner that the Authority has a twelve year option to pay for the land. Mr. Luckie stated that the contract is locked in at \$20,000 an acre and the land must be paid for at the end of the contract.

The municipalities requested to hear from the other entities and the audience before making their proposals.

Mr. Ronnie Perdue and Ms. Regina Abbott, members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, made a proposal for the 2004 SPLOST. They had presented their list of projects to the Board of Commissioners earlier at a meeting and the Board had requested that they review and prioritize the recommended list of projects, which they had done. The complete prioritized list totaled \$2,465,000. Ms. Abbott stated that recreation supporters played a critical role in the passage of the 1996 SPLOST which included recreation, industrial development, roads and recycling projects. She said that advocates of Parks and Recreation stand ready to help pass the upcoming SPLOST. The Advisory Commission recommends that the theme of the SPLOST be "Building Communities". The number one priority shown on the list was the expansion and remodeling of the Senior Center at a cost of \$600,000. Ms. Abbott stated that the Center is presently operating at full capacity. The other projects in priority order were (2) Trail and Greenway Master Plan, (3) Neighborhood/Pocket Park Prototypes, (4) City Park (skateboard park), (5) Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park, (playground equipment and lights for soccer field #2, (6) Airport Road Park improvements, (7) AMBUCS Park field expansion, (8) Fairmont Park improvements, (9) Volunteer Park (concession building improvements), (10) Thomaston Mill Village Park improvements and (11) \$150,000 for professional services.

Mr. Perdue, Vice Chairman of the Advisory Commissioner addressed the Board. He said that everyone present tonight is community minded and that recreation in Spalding County is very important to this community. He said that Parks and Recreation serves over 3,000 children which can provide over 6,000 people to help support and pass this SPLOST. He said that over 11% of the community is made up of seniors and we need to keep them in mind on this Senior Center project. He said that he feels that we need to keep Parks and Recreation in mind on this SPLOST.

Commissioner Joanne Todd wanted to know why there was not some type of swimming pool incorporated into this list. She asked what the cost would be on a replacement swimming pool at City Park. Mr. Louis Greene, Parks and Recreation Director stated to replace the City Park pool, it would cost approximately \$1 + Million. This is considered a Junior Olympic Pool, not an Olympic Pool. Ms. Todd said that she feels a swimming pool is a very important issue in this community and should be placed on the SPLOST.

Commissioner Kendall asked at this time if there was anyone in the audience that has a particular proposal they would like to propose.

Commissioner Morrow addressed the possibility of having a four year college at the University of Georgia Griffin Campus. Mr. Morrow stated that he feels that we are within the reach of getting this four year college in Griffin and SPLOST could potentially be the means by which this could happen. A small portion of the SPLOST money could be used to remodel one of the existing buildings on the Griffin Campus that would get the Board of Regents to initiate the four year college. Dr. Gerald Arkin, Assistant Dean, University of Georgia College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, was present and was asked to make a presentation to the Board at this time.

Dr. Arkin stated that there is no firm commitment at this date; however, there is support from members of the legislature on placing in the upcoming proposed State budget some funds (seed money) for instructional faculty time to make this college program happen. He had not heard anything as of this date but there was only two weeks left for the legislature to meet and he would know something by the end of the session. Mr. Akin stated that one of the elements missing at the Griffin Campus is an academic program. He said that they teach graduates at the master and doctorate level but they do not teach at the undergraduate level. He stated in order to offer this program, they would partner with Gordon College. The student would go to Gordon College for the first two years and then would come to the Griffin Campus for the next two years and would graduate from the University of Georgia Griffin Campus with a baccalaureate undergraduate from the University of Georgia.

Dr. Arkin stated he and others feel that if they had a facility for teaching, it would encourage the University system to help them make the teaching program happen. Dr. Arkin also stated that they feel they could start teaching tomorrow with the present facilities with small classes. He said they would use the Old Stuckey Building but it needs to be completely renovated and the costs associated with this renovation would be approximately \$5 Million.

Mr. Anthony Dickson, 1083 Jackson Road, addressed the boards stating that he as a parent supported the proposal made by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission in its entirety with the exception of the added request by Commissioner Todd regarding a pool.

Spalding County Sheriff Dee Stewart and City Police Chief Frank Strickland came forward and made a proposal to be considered for the 2004 SPLOST. Their proposal was the Motorola proposal already presented to both Boards for the 800 MHz Radio System for the City and County. Chief Strickland commented that the problem we are having is the amount of radio traffic and the bleeding through. He said that by 2005 the FCC is going to mandate splitting VHF radio frequencies again, and we would have people within a 35 mile radius talking over and bleeding through to our radio system. The 800 MHz road system will eliminate this problem. Chief Strickland and Sheriff Stewart both agreed that if there was a major disaster in Griffin and Spalding we could be in big trouble. They also advised that the current radio system places

public safety officers in life threatening situations. Also part of the proposal is the early warning system to alert the general public to tornadoes, inclement weather or other natural disasters.

County Manager Wilson stated that the total cost of the 800 MHz radio system, including four tower sites at a cost of \$250,000 each with 150 mobile data units, is \$11.4 Million and an additional \$1.5 Million for the early warning system. Mr. Wilson stated that this would replace all radios used in the City and County, which eliminates the usage of all cell phones and the charges incurred for all departments. He also stated we could possibly save \$1 Million if we are able to connect to the Fayette County system and upgrade their system to handle the additional capacity of our system.

Chairman Kendall asked to hear a proposal from the City of Griffin. Mayor Ward stated as a Board they had agreed to support the Griffin Spalding Development Authority project, which until tonight was \$24 Million but has been reduced to \$17 Million and the 800 MHz Radio System. They had other suggestions but were unaware of the \$7 Million remaining from the Development Authority proposal.

County Manager Wilson commented that the anticipated revenue from a proposed five year SPLOST is \$39.2 Million.

Chairman Kendall asked to hear a proposal from the City of Orchard Hill. Mr. Robert "Bobby" Morgan made the presentation. He said they were requesting money to build a new city hall/community center at the present location of their City Hall, to pave the front parking lot at their Phase I park, to install rubberized pad on their Phase I walking track and to install utilities-water, sewer and electricity in their Phase II park at an associated cost of \$800,000.

Chairman Kendall asked to hear a proposal from the City of Sunny Side. Mr. Bill Slaughter made the presentation. He said they were requesting between \$275,000 to \$300,000 for paving of two streets, rubberizing the walking track and purchasing land for recreation practice field.

Chairman Kendall asked if any Commissioner would like to make a proposal. Commissioner Hollberg stated that the City and County both needed road improvements as well as capital improvements. Commissioner Morrow endorsed road improvements as the cost to pave a mile of road is \$700,000. He said there are a number of roads to pave out in the County and also intersection improvements. The City has a prioritized list of road projects they would like to see done as well as a prioritized list of sewer improvements to wastewater facilities.

Commissioner Kendall addressed sewer problems in the County. He said with the pressure that has been placed on all the elected officials in regards to all the additional residential development that has taken place in unincorporated Spalding County, we are in dire need to resolve some of the infrastructure issues. He said that he would like to see the funds necessary to implement the Wastewater Management Plan adopted by the Griffin-Spalding Sewer Task Force.

Chairman Kendall commented that looking at all the proposals presented tonight, it seems that we have far more than we can possibly pay for in a five year SPLOST. He said that he is not sure if the SPLOST would pass with a Christmas tree approach or only one or two items and feels that the Board of Commissioners has quite a task ahead of them trying to come up with a proposal.

Commissioner Landrum made his suggestion for a proposed SPLOST consisting of the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority industrial project less \$3.7 Million for purchase of land giving the reason as they already have use of it for an amount of \$14 Million and the \$13 Million for the

800 MHz Radio System for a grand total of \$27 Million for an approximately three year SPLOST as opposed to a five year SPLOST. He feels that this is the only proposal that will pass.

Commissioner Morrow suggested that after hearing all these proposals, the Board needs to take time to think through these proposals made by each entity present tonight and the County Commission in the very near future meet in a workshop to sort these out and let the other entities know in which direction we are headed. The other members of the County Commission were in consensus.

Commissioner Goss stated he was getting a lot of feed back on this one proposed industrial site and wanted to know if there might be an alternative to look at. Mr. Luckie said there was a possibility to acquire the other two tracts of land before the SPLOST list is finalized. Mr. Goss stated he was interested in hearing other alternatives.

County Manager Wilson commented that he would work with Chairman Kendall in setting up a work session before the end of March and then we could meet again with the other municipalities.

At this time Mayor Ward introduced the newly appointed City Manager, Kenny Smith, who would be taking over his position on March 15th.

Chairman Kendall declared the Special Joint Meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

County Clerk

Chairman

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