



Spalding County online

Board of Commissioners

JOINT SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Spalding County, Georgia and the Board of Commissioners of the City of Griffin, held a Special Called Joint Meeting on Thursday, May 6, 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, Attorney Charles Jones (attending for County Attorney Fortune) and County Clerk Phyllis Doane.

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

Also present were Dr. Brant Keller, George Reid and Chief Frank Strickland of the City of Griffin, David Luckie, G/S Development Authority and Dr. Gerald Arkin, UGA Griffin Campus.

Chairman Kendall called the County meeting to order.

Mayor Cynthia Ward called the City meeting to order.

Chairman Kendall stated that this meeting was called to meet with the Board of City Commissioners in an effort to try to discuss the issues that are now facing us in regards to the new law that goes into effect on July 1, 2004. This law requires that the SPLOST funds be allocated to countywide projects first and the remaining funds can be distributed by an intergovernmental agreement or if no agreement can be reached, they must be distributed on a population basis.

City Manager Kenny Smith presented the City's proposal on behalf of the City Board of Commissioners. Mr. Smith commented that he felt that it was important for the City Board to have an opportunity to come before this Board and make a presentation and in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Griffin, requested that the SPLOST referendum be called after July 1 and that an agreement be made between the City and County and the other affected cities and that the proceeds from this SPLOST be appropriated through an intergovernmental agreement as if the law was presently in effect.

Mr. Smith presented the following proposal: The proposal would be for a 72 month SPLOST based on the new law. The total amount available for projects would be \$43,346,000. The City would support the Griffin/Spalding County Development request in the amount of \$17,237,948. Although the consensus of the City Commission is that these monies would be better spent in conjunction with the expansion of the present Green Valley Industrial Park. The City is willing to cooperate with the County and in a spirit of cooperation to support the Development Authority in funds to be used at the site on Wallace Road if the County so appropriates it that way. The City does feel like it is extremely important for both City and County to support wholeheartedly the 800 MHz Radio System in the amount of \$11.4 Million and supports in conjunction with this the Early Warning System in the amount of \$1.5 Million. The total for Countywide projects would be 30,137,948, leaving a balance of \$13,208,052 available for other projects with \$7,821,685 designated to the County, \$5,302,258 designated to the City of Griffin, \$52,003 designated to City of Orchard Hill and \$32,106 designated to City of Sunny Side. Mr. Smith stated that the City's proposal for use of the \$5 Million would include improvements to their infrastructure including \$996,000 for resurfacing city roads; \$450,000 for bridge repair; \$500,000 for 75 sub standard housing removal; \$665,600 for ROW improvement program and \$2.64 Million for wastewater projects including rehabilitation of lines. The total for their proposed projects is in the amount of \$5,253,211.

The City did not include the \$5 Million for the renovation of the Stuckey building on the UGA Griffin Campus for the start up of a four year college.

Commissioner Davis stated that he feels we will be remiss in our responsibility if we don't give the citizens the opportunity to vote on a college here in Griffin, GA. He said he would like for our citizens to have an opportunity to have a higher learning educational system at the Experiment Station. If the college does not come to fruition, that \$5 Million would be split between the Cities and County for improvements on infrastructure. Commissioner Davis commented that he has heard from citizens all over the County to keep the SPLOST simple and his proposal is the Development Authority project, the 800 MHZ radio system and money for the college with anything left over he is prepared to split with the cities as required in the new law.

Commissioner Morrow stated that he agreed with Commissioner Davis. He said that he feels that this is the first time that we really have a chance to step forward and have some vision and put a college in our midst as the \$140,000 is still in the State budget. Mr. Morrow stated that if we do not come to the plate with some money, he feels that this opportunity is going to slip out of our grasp again because that college will go to Tifton or some other place and we will never see it again. Commissioner Morrow wanted the records to show that twenty years from now that people looking back said "thank goodness some body started that four year college here". He agreed with the Development Authority project and the 800 MHz radio system and the remainder split with the other cities.

Commissioner Goss stated that comments he is hearing that people are in favor of the radio system and haven't heard objections to having several things on it, but the biggest objection is the Wallace Road project. He said that he feels that the development project should be in the current industrial park. He agrees that the County has to make some sewer improvements, not in just one area, but in all Spalding County.

Commissioner McDaniel commented that any one of these items, be it Development Authority project, radio project, college project or sewer projects, could hold the SPLOST hostage. He said that we have seen this before when there was the recreation proposal for a SPLOST. He said that this points out a problem that we are not a community here and we don't think community.

Commissioner Kendall addressed sewer concerns on the north side of the County as well as sewer for the entire County. Mr. Kendall made the Boards aware that there is a private company that is proposing to come to Spalding County and spend several million dollars to build a wastewater treatment plant in Spalding County. He feels what makes the most sense for everybody is the implementation of the Wastewater Management Plan, which we have an opportunity to do. He feels that the County should be bringing some of their money to the table. He said that he was not against bringing a four year college to this community but doesn't feel that SPLOST dollars is the way to obtain this. He had rather see the money go for sewer in the unincorporated area of Spalding County.

City Commissioner Walker Cook made comments about talk in his district. His district is telling him that they want the City and County to work together and wants to know who is going to back this SPLOST referendum and feels we need every major group in the City and County backing and supporting this SPLOST.

Commissioner Morrow asked if Dr. Arkin could address the Boards regarding an update on the four year college. Dr. Arkin stated that as of Monday night, the first day of the legislature reconvening for a Special Session, that the \$140,000 placed in the Governor's budget for the next fiscal year remains in the budget and also heard from the University System Chancellor's office with that money in the budget that he needed to get prepared and get the teaching program on the ground. Commissioner Morrow said that the University of Georgia is stressed for money, they are sympathetic to our project, and this \$140,000 funds the first teaching position which gets the ball rolling. When meeting with the Governor, he said "When locals bring money to the table, that's what talks, that's what helps and it is a process of them making a commitment and starting to fund the teaching program. They do not have a place to do it; they need a building and there should be some money in the SPLOST to help them remodel the building, make the courses and get that commitment. That's the kind of thing we are looking for."

Commissioner Todd wanted to know if the University would give us a letter of intent that if the \$5 Million would come in from our citizens, that they would in fact match it or go forward with it. She feels that to ask the citizens of this community to support this college this needs to be put in writing instead of through verbal conversation.

Commissioner Morrow said that he would attempt to explain this. If the money is in the SPLOST, that the County goes to the University and make this proposal of the \$5 Million to renovate one of their state buildings and if we don't get a proposal that we feel is a good solid agreement and understanding then the money comes off the table and we go back to our 60/40 split.

Commissioner Todd stated that the Board was in agreement that they do not want this \$5 Million to come off of what percentage they would get with the July 1 calling for the election.

Commissioner Morrow commented that we are entitled to collect money for a project on the ballot and if that project does not come to fruition, the money can be used for other projects, which would go back to the splitting 60/40.

The resolve from all the discussion shows a difference between the City and County with the County wanting the four year college and the City wanting the early warning system for Countywide projects.

Mr. Smith stated that there was not a project on either list that the City was against but it is simply a matter of priority in the order that we presented them to you. He said the City Board feels like they have needs and in the spirit of cooperation that his Commission has reached an agreement.

County Manager Wilson stated that he had drawn up an alternate proposal with the Countywide projects being the Development Authority project, the 800 MHz radio system and the UGA Griffin Campus project for a total of \$33,637,948 with the remaining funds distributed by population as follows: Spalding County \$5,749,017, City of Griffin \$3,897,214, City of Orchard Hill \$38,223 and City of Sunny Side \$23,598.

Commissioner Morrow made a proposal to leave the Development Authority project and the 800 MHz radio system, drop the early warning system at a cost of \$1.5 Million and reduce the UGA to \$4 Million and split the rest 60/40.

City Commissioner Doug Hollberg asked if the Development Authority could reduce their numbers. Mr. Luckie said that this total comes in as to what would be land acquisition and development. Their hope is that this funding will become a self-funding mechanism and was the previous SPLOST industrial project. There was \$1.5 Million left in the 1996 SPLOST and \$1 Million of that was used to purchase the Hudson Industrial Park which has been developed and now being sold. In the March proposal turned in the Authority designed it to be for warehousing and distribution but now it is going to be a combination of this and light manufacturing and assembly with job rates of \$10-12 hour.

Mayor Ward commented that they feel the City's proposal has been well stated and are really comfortable with what they have presented. They are not totally against the college portion but does not want the money to come out of their part of the 60/40 split. With this statement made Mayor Ward asked for a motion to adjourn the City part of the meeting. *Upon motion by Commissioner Todd, seconded by Mayor Ward the City Commission meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:17 P.M.*

Chairman Kendall stated that the County Commissioners would continue with their meeting.

Chairman Kendall stated that we understand what the City wants and we have to determine what it is that the County Commissioners want to see on the SPLOST.

Commissioner Morrow wanted to see the Development Authority project, the 800 MHz Radio System, the \$4 Million UGA Griffin Campus project and the remainder split between the County and the City with Orchard Hill and Sunny Side getting their proportion. If we don't reach a definitive agreement with the Board of Regents then the \$4 Million drops into the population split for infrastructure.

Commissioner Davis agreed with Mr. Morrow's proposal as stated above.

Commissioner Goss wanted to see the 800 MHz radio system, is not for Development Authority project down I-75, the college not sure, doesn't feel we need the early warning system and supports sewage north, south, east and west.

Commissioner McDaniel wanted to see the Development Authority project, the 800 MHz Radio System, and had mixed feelings regarding four year college whether it should go on the SPLOST because it is just a big unknown and also mixed feelings about sewer. He said he was afraid the mere mention of sewer would defeat the SPLOST. He felt he could support the college if we had a signed agreement with the University of Georgia.

Commissioner Morrow stated that we need to make a tentative decision and present it back to the City to see if they will participate in the UGA Griffin Campus proposal. Commissioner McDaniel and Commissioner Davis agreed.

Motion made by Commissioner Morrow to propose to the City of Griffin based on our total collections of 72 months estimated to be \$47,300,000. After the bond issuance costs and, interest expense, the amount available from the bond proceeds and pay as you go projects total \$43,346,000. The Griffin-Spalding Development Authority to receive \$17,237,948, 800 MHz Radio System budgeted at \$11,400,000, the UGA Campus budgeted at \$4,000,000 based upon a firm agreement with the Board of Regents, Early Warning System \$0 with total countywide projects in the amount of \$33,637,948 which leaves a remaining \$10,708,052 to be split as follows: Spalding County \$6,341,208, City of Griffin \$4,298,655, required legal amount going to City of Orchard Hill \$42,160 and City of Sunny Side \$26,029. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and motion was approved by a vote of 3-2 with Commissioners Goss and Kendall voting in opposition.

With no further discussion, motion made by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kendall and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 P.M.

County Clerk

Chairman

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