

## SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting in Room 108 in the Courthouse Annex, on Monday, June 26, 2008 beginning at 5:45 o'clock p.m. with Chairman Edward Goss, Jr. presiding and Commissioners Eddie Freeman, Gwen Flowers-Taylor, and David Phillips present. Absent was Commissioner Johnie McDaniel. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson, Jr., Assistant to the County Manager Paul Van Haute, County Attorney James R. Fortune, Jr., and Executive Secretary Teresa Watson.

### I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER)

### II. ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Consider adoption, on second reading, of the Spalding County Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Ordinance.

*After discussion, Commissioners Phillips and Freeman moved and seconded, respectively, to approve the FY2009 Budget Ordinance. Motion carried by a vote of 4-0 and the FY 2009 Budget Ordinance was adopted.*

2. Consider Intergovernmental Agreement for the division of SPLOST proceeds for the proposed September 16, 2008 SPLOST referendum.

County Manager Wilson noted the different scenarios developed for the project list to be recommended on the September SPLOST referendum. The five-year tax will not work to provide enough collections, so a six-year tax is necessary. The only way to have a six-year SPLOST generating about \$54,000,000 in revenue is to execute an intergovernmental agreement. The Chairman and Mr. Wilson recommended Alternate #5 except **without** the annexation element desired by the City of Griffin for the Development Authority's new industrial park (Crouch property). He felt, as did commissioners, that annexation and SPLOST were two distinct and separate issues and should not be linked. Mr. Wilson noted with emphasis the need to take action quickly in order to provide for a September SPLOST referendum; the deadline is Monday, June 30, 2008. Should the deadline not be met for September, the deadline for a November referendum would be mid-August. The reason September was preferred was to ensure a seamless, continuous transition between collecting the current SPLOST and a new SPLOST. Alternate #5 proposes the following:

<b>Total available for all projects:</b>	<b>Requested \$50,674,000</b>	<b>Recommended \$50,674,000</b>
Griffin Spalding Development Authority	25,000,000	15,000,000
Griffin Technical College	8,500,000	7,000,000
City of Griffin	12,183,470	14,000,000
City of Orchard Hill	475,605	475,605
City of Sunny Side	<u>100,000</u>	<u>100,000</u>
<b>Total Available for County Projects</b>	<b>4,414,925</b>	<b>14,098,395</b>

County Projects will include: \$150,000 for bus for Senior Citizens, \$2,500,000 for sewer expansion on the north side, and \$11,448,395 for transportation/infrastructure improvements and equipment.

Chairman Goss said as far as he was concerned, he would not consider anything with annexation attached. The Spalding County Board of Commissioners had thought this issue of an intergovernmental agreement had been resolved only to discover the City wanted to totally revamp the agreement to address distribution of proceeds. They also want to tie the agreement to annexation of the new industrial park, which is an issue with this Board. He apologized for the short notice, but negotiations have been hectic.

On individual polling:

**Freeman:**

Apparently the City has more clout through GMA than the County does through ACCG. The law is clear that the City is entitled to 40% which is part of Alternate #5. He was not a fan of annexation except for property contiguous to the City. Annexation seems to be a

sticking point for the City which would probably mean they would not approve the intergovernmental agreement, but he also favored Alternate #5, but without annexation.

**Flowers-Taylor:**

She was adamantly opposed to any intergovernmental agreement that was tied to annexation. She had major issues with being presented these proposals that have not been adequately reviewed by the Board of Commissioner, or even by the City's full Board of Commissioners. There has been a great deal of bantering and bartering among a select few. People in the City need jobs just as badly as those in the County which is a situation the new industrial park could help to remedy. It appears to her that the City of Griffin is willing to sacrifice the Development Authority project and jobs for the community in order to get more money to fix their financial woes. SPLOST and annexation are two totally separate issues and should not be linked inextricably. She voted no for annexation and no for any of the alternatives just detailed. If the SPLOST must be postponed until a later date to negotiate further, so be it. When this community is still struggling because we don't have jobs or the ability to adequately train our workforce, it will be on the conscience of the City and not the County.

**Phillips:**

He was not comfortable with the City having a Special Called Public Meeting in Savannah, away from their constituency who elected them; that practice is reprehensible. The City's request is unconscionable and constitutes blackmail to him. Comments he has heard regarding SPLOST have been negative and he does not feel it will pass a general referendum. He acknowledged we badly need jobs created and felt the project would benefit the County, but he was not sure this agreement was the way to accomplish that. There is a time-sensitive element to the Development Authority's SPLOST project request to purchase the Crouch property, but other funding mechanisms can be explored. His vote to the proposal is no.

**Goss:**

If the City wants to accept the project list as originally presented last week with a \$7.2 million allocation to the City, they can either vote it up or down so that everyone can proceed. If not, the project is off altogether as far as he is concerned. Their desire for not only annexation but \$18,000,000 for projects is simply ludicrous. Per Mr. Fortune, the offer extended to the City initially is still on the table.

Mr. Wilson reiterated the status of the project list proposed to the City noting the differentiation of Level I and Level II projects, and Mr. Fortune reminded of the June 30, 2008 deadline. Mr. Wilson relayed the County had not actually received a response to their proposal from the City, other than the letter sent to counsel. The first offer sent still stands. Mr. Wilson explained that other types of project lists could be considered, such as a one- or a two-project SPLOST, but time is rapidly approaching for the deadline.

Chairman Goss reiterated that none of the alternatives presented tonight were acceptable; the only one acceptable at this point is the one presented to them last week. If that does not materialize, he saw no choice except to go back to the drawing board.

Doug Hollberg, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for the City of Griffin, said the City fully supports the proposals of the Griffin Technical College and the Development Authority, but they needed a bigger return on the investment of sewer to the industrial park project. That was the rationale for requesting annexation of the property. Regarding the meeting Saturday, the City was trying to ensure clarity and an understanding of the complex law involved which resulted in the counsel's communication. The proposal tonight was not directly from the City but rather was for purposes of discussion between Chairman Goss and Mr. Wilson in an attempt to reach a mutually agreeable position. The City is not trying to blackmail Spalding County but rather just to reach a fair distribution of proceeds for the SPLOST.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

*Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m. on motion and second by Commissioners Flowers-Taylor and Phillips by a unanimous vote.*

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Chairman

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County Clerk

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