JOINT MEETING

THE SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AND

THE CITY OF GRIFFIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners participated in a Joint Meeting with the City of Griffin Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the W. Elmer George Municipal Hall at One Griffin Center.

In attendance for Spalding County were: Chairperson Rita Johnson, Vice Chairman Donald Hawbaker, Commissioners James R. Dutton, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Bart Miller. Also present were County Manager, William P. Wilson Jr., County Attorney, James Fortune, County Attorney Stephanie Windham, Assistant County Manager, Michelle Irizarry and Executive Secretary Kathy Gibson to record the minutes.

In attendance for the City of Griffin were: Chairperson Cynthia Reid Ward, Vice Chairman Rodney McCord, Commissioners Douglas Hollberg, Cora Flowers, Holly Murray, David Brock and Truman Tinsley, III. Also present were City Attorney, Drew Whalen, City Manager, Kenny Smith, Chief of Staff, Jessica O’Connor and Susan Bartholomew, Secretary to record the minutes.

Call to Order: Chairperson Cynthia Reed Ward called to order the joint meeting of the City of Griffin and the Spalding County Board of Commissioners.

Invocation: City Commissioner Doug Hollberg delivered the invocation.

Pledge to the Flag: City Commissioner Rodney McCord led the pledge.

Agenda Items:

1. New airport construction and funding.

Chairperson Ward stated that the first item on the agenda will be an update from the Airport Authority representatives and a discussion of new airport land acquisitions and construction funding. Authority Chairman, Randy Peters and Project Manager, Bob Stapleton will address.
Airport Authority Chairman, Randy Peters, stated that everyone is familiar with the new airport project for Griffin and Spalding County that has been going on, in its current configuration, since 2014. The original MOU that was signed by the City of Griffin, Spalding County and the Airport Authority and the FAA, contained a number of items, the most important being in subparagraph 12 which stated that once we had obtained $6 million in property, fee simple title, the reimbursements from the FAA would begin. Mr. Peters stated that we are there in terms of our obligations; however, we are not there yet in having paid all of those obligations and that is what he is here to talk about tonight.

Dr. Peters then stated that the Airport Authority had two requests to present tonight:

The first is they are requesting that the City and the County each make a loan to the Airport Authority of $165,000 as soon as this can be done. This will be repaid by the proceeds that will be coming from the sale of two parcels to the Kiwanis and the Airport Road Walking Track. The proceeds from the sale of these three properties will be more than enough to pay back the loans they are requesting.

Dr. Peters then advised that the current obligations applied to the $6 million land acquisition. There have also been a number of items that they have had to pay for that do not apply to the $6 million before reimbursement from the FAA will “kick in.”

First, is the Court finding where they contested the Newsome property. It was a condemnation and the jury returned with a verdict that was approximately $102,000 more than they had put in escrow, there is an additional $11,000 in pre-judgement interest that accrued to that, making the total $114,229. They recently closed on the two Huckaby properties; however, they are entitled to approximately $65,000 in relocation expenses and that is still outstanding. We have one remaining parcel in the Phase I land acquisition Parcel SEA01 for $18,900 and we have one task order that is partially complete at $27,000. All of these items when added together is $224,000 which reaches the $6 million total which is the magic number to turn on the FAA reimbursement.

Dr. Peters then stated that they have some other obligations that are not generally reimbursable: Beck, Owen & Murray, Croy Engineering or GSAMPLELLC (Bob Stapleton, the Airport Project Manager). All of these obligations taken together add up to $329,450. If we split that in half that gives us the $6 million with zero in outstanding obligations. This becomes more important in light of the second item he is here to discuss.

Dr. Peters referred to a letter from GDOT dated April 12, 2019, which is a proposal from GDOT, speaking for the FAA outlining the tentative allocation of funding for FY2020 for the new airport. He stated that under projects it shows Land Acquisition Phase II, there are approximately 18 parcels to complete the acquisition of property
for the airport and there will be utility relocation, there are two power lines that cross the intended airport that will need to be relocated and $7,112,179 is an estimate from both the Georgia Transmission Company and Georgia Power to move those power lines. The bottom line is it totals $13,612,179 and they are asking that the Authority to commit to its share of $680,609.

Dr. Peters then stated that their second request is that the City and County approve the Airport Authority proceeding in writing a letter back to GDOT accepting the proposal, but with a proviso that rather than agreeing to the $680,000 that we ask that they substitute funds already earned through previous expenses that are reimbursable by the FAA. There is a risk that they will say no to this proposal. The reason we are here this evening with an incomplete plan is because the first part of the letter asks whether we accept the proposal or not by May 17th; however, we will not have to contract until September. They feel that the best course of action is to propose that the State take some of the reimbursements and apply them to the local portion as outlined in the letter, then if they say “no” we still have time to figure out what to do going forward. They do not have a proposal ready at this time to address how to approach the problem should they say no.

Dr. Peters then advised that if the City and County do not agree to the funding for this project as outlined in this letter there is the possibility of $13 million in funding that will go away or the project could conceivably get put back into line for funding. He added that in short, if we don’t do anything at all, we are probably “dead in the water” on this project. There simply is no moving forward if we don’t do something.

Dr. Peters then stated that their proposal for the boards this evening is that they each authorize a $165,000 loan to be repaid by the proceeds coming from the property sales and that the boards allow the Authority to go ahead and accept the GDOT proposal with the proviso that instead of agreeing to the $680,000 up front, that we would agree to ask them to substitute reimbursements for that amount. If we don’t do both of these, we are going to be pretty much stuck as far as the airport project is concerned.

Commissioner Donald Hawbaker asked if it was safe to assume that the $680,609 allocated to the State is going to be there?

Dr. Peters stated that there are a number of methodologies that this project works under. One is 90% Federal 10% us. One is 90% Federal, 5% State, 5% Us. There are some components that are GDOT 75% and Local 25%, we probably won’t see many of those until later in the project which would involve terminal buildings and fuel farms. They are working on other things trying to reduce costs, maybe how to get private investment as we go forward.
Chairperson Ward stated that she was under the impression that the $6 million that we were to spend up front was the match for the complete amount that we were receiving. Can you explain to us why this is not the case.

Dr. Peters stated that he didn’t know if the rules changed or if we misunderstood them, the issue here is the $6 million is reimbursable at 90% so this will be reimbursed some time in the future.

Chairperson Ward then asked if we were going to ask them to use part of the reimbursement of the $6 million for the $680,000.

Dr. Peters then advised that the reimbursement we would be requesting is for studies done prior to the $6 million. The Airport Location Study, the original Environmental Impact Study, the supplemental Environmental, the Airport Layout Plan. These are things that we have already paid for and are reimbursable at 90% and don’t really apply or impact the $6 million. We gave basically had this on account and what we are asking is that they apply this funding that we have on account. In a five year plan, they have reimbursements scheduled for years 4 and 5 of the project and we want them to accelerate that.

Commissioner James Dutton then asked if he could speculate on the odds of them being receptive to this idea? Is this how these types of projects normally work?

Dr. Peters advised that this project is a special case in that the history of this project goes back before he was involved in the project. The $6 million and a special MOU agreed to and signed which is very unusual. So, from the beginning we have been operating under special conditions. The way they have programmed the funding is that we basically pay the $6 million up front and then we pay our 10% as we go and then they give us back the reimbursements at the end. We are asking them to change that procedure.

He advised that what is displayed on the letter from GDOT is more of the way that they do business. These projects work on a grant basis, you have a local share, a federal share and perhaps a state share and the projects will go forward like that. We have been in somewhat of an unusual circumstance, but once we make the $6 million, he feels we will get back to the regular routine.

Commissioner Bart Miller asked if the money from the walking track and the Kiwanis Club would settle the debt.

Dr. Peters stated that it should be more than enough to pay back the loans from the City and County that they are asking for tonight. Just the appraisal values alone will more than pay that back.
Commissioner Miller then asked when we can look toward selling those pieces of property?

Dr. Peters advised that they had already prepared and submitted the first of those proposals. The issue is that because the current airport is a federal program and is funded 90-10 the same way we are doing now, they have a vested interest in the current airport property in order for us to sell off a piece of it, we have to get permission that works through the staff at GDOT, to the staff at the FAA, to the staff at the U.S. Department of Transportation and is ultimately signed by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. We had the first parcel ready to go when GDOT advised that we were going to have issues going to the U.S. Department of Transportation three times and stated that the three properties needed to be combined. He stated that it will be approximately 90 days before they have the other two parcels complete and ready to submit to the FAA and the processing time, once it is submitted is probably another 120 days. So, we are looking at an end of November, first of December timeframe before we can consummate the sale of all three of the parcels.

Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor then stated that according to the letter it is $13 million, we were told that the airport would be about $60 million and she was under the impression that the $6 million was the 10% for this project and we needed to spend that first. So, going forward, as allocations come out each year we will still need to match the amount based on whatever the State and local match is determined to be?

Dr. Peters stated that as it stands right now the answer is yes. We are attempting to get them to change that, rather than reimbursing at the end we want them to reimburse as we go. The $6 million was a negotiated number that became the 10% figure, it was never negotiated to be 10%, it just turned out to be 10%. The entire $6 million is reimbursable by the FAA so essentially once we have that completed they will owe us approximately $5,400,000, but it is a timing issue more than anything else.

Commissioner Dutton then stated that then we turn that money back into money for the next phase.

Dr. Peters stated that is the way we want it to work, that is not how they have laid it out. We are in discussions with them, trying to get them to change that structure right now.

Commissioner Miller then asked, “What if they don’t change it?”

Dr. Peters then advised that if they don’t change it, the Authority will have to come back to the boards with a plan on how to fund this. At the present time, we do not have that plan. That is why we are hopeful that we can get them to change what they are doing and make the requested substitution, if they won’t make the substitution
then we ill have to come up with the additional funding. That’s not our rules, that is the FAA rules and we have no control over that. The Authority is going to have to come back with some long term financing plan, whatever that may be and at this time he cannot propose what that might be.

One possible component could be private investment. They layout of the airport sits within the Federal Opportunity Zone, he feels there are some investment opportunities there, particularly when it comes to constructing the buildings at the new airport such as the terminal building, the fuel farm, the fixed base operations offices, hangers for the people who are in our current business park. He then advised that at the end of this process they will be required to buy out all of the owners in the current business park because they will have violated every lease that they currently hold because they leased a building next to an active runway. Once we close the active runway they we have violated their lease.

Commissioner Doug Hollberg then asked with regard to staff and legal do we need to vote on this tonight, or will the Authority present it to us at the next regularly scheduled meeting?

City Attorney, Drew Whalen, stated he would ask that the commission not vote tonight and he has some questions that cannot be talked about right now.

Dr. Peters advised that they have to send the response by May 17th.

City Manager, Kenny Smith, then stated that the initial $165,000 loan from the City and County you need as soon as possible.

Dr. Peters confirmed as quickly as that can be done.

Mr. Smith then added that assuming we get approval from legal, the City may be able to “scrape up” the $165,000 in the remainder of this fiscal year, but he is much more worried about the $680,000 in the next fiscal year that we don’t have.

County Manager, William Wilson, then advised that everyone needs to remember there is interest accruing on the judgement as well.

Airport Authority Attorney, Stephanie Windham, advised that there is both pre-petition interest and post-petition interest on the condemnation on the Newsome property that is being accrued.

Commissioner Holberg then asked if the Authority had any cash reserves.

Dr. Peters advised that the Airport Authority has no source of revenue, we had the bond finding but all of that has been spent.
Mr. Whalen then stated that the next meeting for the City of Griffin is not until May 15th, he asked if they would be willing to call a Special Meeting so that we can respond to the Authority’s Request?

Mr. Smith stated that he didn’t know if it would be necessary to have a called meeting, because in order to do the $165,000 we just need to do a budget amendment at the next meeting and advise where the funds will be coming from.

Mr. Whalen then stated that he wants to make sure that the City has the authority to make a loan or a grant for that amount.

Mr. Wilson stated it is simply a budget appropriation.

Mr. Smith stated it is no different than the money that we give them now.

Mr. Wilson then advised that the County can go ahead and cut the check if the board approves tonight. Mr. Wilson stated that the County is purchasing the Airport Road Walking Track property and this money could be applied to the purchase of that property.

Mr. Smith stated that he would present a budget amendment to the Commission to let them know where the money will be coming from and we can cut the check after that.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then stated that this is for $165,000, what about the other $340,000 we are going to be asked to find in a few months and what about the subsequent funding that is going to be expected annually?

Commissioner Dutton then stated that if the idea of having the FAA reimburse us as we go if they say no to that, is there a possibility of arranging a public/private partnership and essentially run that same money as a loan through a private bank?

Dr. Peters stated he did not know the answer to that question; however, they have been told that they cannot encumber the property by a direct loan and use that property as collateral.

Stephanie Windham stated that the Authority does have property that is owned free and clear and we were told at one time by GDOT that we could encumber it, because it is our property and there is no FAA money that has been used to purchase that property. However, during a recent meeting at GDOT where that changed to “no you can’t” encumber the property. She advised that at this time she is not clear as to the answer, but we have been in contact with some institutional lenders and there are possibilities in the future.
Ms. Windham then stated that at some point in the future the airport is going to make money and will be able to handle these things on its own, but right now we are in a position that we didn’t expect to find ourselves in.

Chairperson Johnson then stated that based on what Dr. Peters has stated, if we don’t act on these things that we are pretty much at a loss.

Dr. Peters stated that the City, the County and the Authority are all signatories to the MOU with the FAA.

Ms. Windham advised that one thing that the MOU states is that our failure to comply with the requirements to get a refund of FAA funds does not mean we won’t build this airport. We are required to build the airport whether we have the money or not according to this MOU.

Chairperson Ward asked the City Manager if he has figured out what can be done to come up with the $165,000 on the City side.

Mr. Smith stated that he is concerned about the letter that needs to be sent on May 17th, he believes that is what the attorneys want to talk about.

Commissioner Dutton stated that in talking with Mr. Wilson, the $165,000 could be a down payment toward the Airport Road Walking Track purchase opposed to a loan.

Chairman Johnson stated consensus is that the County is good with the $165,000.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Hawbaker to authorize staff to allocate $165,000 to be structured as a loan or a down payment for property as requested by the Airport Authority. Motion carried 4-1 (Miller).

Dr. Peters stated that they are not asking that the boards commit to the $680,000 tonight, we are asking for permission to respond to GDOT letter and authorize us to go forward in requesting the substitution. If they come back with a negative answer we will then have to determine what we are going to do.

Mr. Smith stated that he would prepare a budget amendment for consideration, but if the commission would like to go ahead and vote on the request from Dr. Peters regarding the $165,000, they should.

Dr. Peters stated the other thing they are asking tonight is that they be allowed to provide an answer to GDOT and ask for the reimbursement funds to cover the requested amount.
Motion/Second by McCord/Hollberg to approve the $165,000 loan and for the Airport Authority to proceed with the letter to GDOT regarding the $680,000. Motion carried unanimously by all.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked Dr. Peters if he was asking for a second vote allowing a response to GDOT stating that we will go forward.

Dr. Peters stated yes, but agreeing that they substitute reimbursements that we have already earned for the $680,000.”

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that in real life this letter is saying that we want to go ahead with the project, we are not wanting it to stop. What you are saying is if we don’t send the letter and we’re not able to get the money, the project could stop.

Dr. Peters stated that is possible, but it is far more likely the funds would “go away” and we would have to wait in line to get funding again at some unknown time in the future. What we would wind up doing is adding years and years to the project.

Chairperson Ward stated that we need to make sure in the response that it is clear that we will move forward. That we are not putting a condition on it, we would like to see them apply the reimbursements already earned, but we need them to know that we are willing to go ahead.

Dr. Peters stated he would be happy to defer writing the letter back to counsel and let them word the letter as may be appropriate.

Mr. Smith then stated that his concern from the City’s staff standpoint is we already have a bond in the amount of $6 million that the City and the County are making annual payments on already, so if you take that budgeted amount of $600,000± and if they come back and reject the proposal and you add another $680,000 on top of the $600,000 that we are already making for the bonds, he’s not sure that he can budget that for the next however many years it takes to build this airport. So, if they come back with a negative to that request, he’s just not sure if the City is going to be able to do that.

Dr. Peters stated that they have not proposed any alternative funding, they will have to study it to determine what would be possible at this juncture.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then stated that her concern, as a County Commissioner, we are looking at an additional $3 million during the construction. Her concern is the same as the City’s, where is this money going to come from down the road? She feels this is a bad situation because we are obligated to build the airport and we are so deep into the project at this point we really cannot, not do it. This is the challenge, it is just a formality of sending the letter back because whether we have the
money or not, we don’t want to say to them that we don’t want to go forward with the project.

Chairperson Ward asked what year they will start reimbursing us?

Dr. Peters advised it would be 2023 and 2024.

Mr. Smith stated that he had been in a lot of meetings on this from the beginning and it was always his understanding and staff’s understanding was that the $6 million was our 10%. The only exception was that we had to spend that up front, but once we spent that up front, that was our 10%. Now the way he interprets this letter, we spend that up front plus we have to come up with a match every year in addition to that, which is not the way it was presented to us.

Dr. Peters stated the reason they wanted to put this before you tonight is we didn’t want the Airport Authority come running to you saying, “I need $100,000 tonight, and six weeks from now I need another $300,000 and six months from now come in with another number.” They wanted to make sure that both boards have a good understanding of what the real situation is and the bottom line. They will come back after some study on what possible kinds of funding there may be available rather than taking it out of the City and County budgets.

**Motion/Second by Dutton/Flowers-Taylor to allow the Airport Authority to respond in the affirmative to GDOT as discussed tonight. Motion carried unanimously by all.**

**Commissioner David Brock left the meeting at 6:40 p.m.**

2. Future SDS amendments.

Trudy Gill was present to moderate the SDS portion of the meeting. Ms. Gill stated that one of the things she likes to establish when she facilitates a meeting is common ground. She then asked each participant to tell why they are here this evening and give one good memory of Griffin.

Commissioner Truman Tinsley stated (unintelligible, to far away from the microphone) .. he wanted to do the best he could do for his constituents. His favorite memory would be his daughter getting married in Griffin.

Commissioner Doug Hollberg stated he wanted to make Griffin the best it can be and his favorite memory is growing up in this community.
Commissioner Holly Murray stated she wanted to serve her community and make Griffin the best quality of life for everyone. Her favorite memory is growing up in Griffin and raising her own children in Griffin.

Commissioner Cora Flowers stated she wanted to give under represented people a voice and her favorite memory is knowing that Griffin is her home base.

Commissioner Rodney McCord stated he wanted to make Griffin better and his favorite memory is growing up in Griffin.

Chairperson Cynthia Reid Ward stated she wanted to give a voice to the people who were being underserved in the community and her favorite memory is growing up here in Griffin.

Chairperson Rita Johnson stated that she wanted to contribute to the economic development of Spalding County.

Commissioner Donald Hawbaker stated that he ran for office to assist in economic development and property tax control. His greatest memory is he is really proud of the Honor Our KIA project.

Commissioner James Dutton stated that he ran because it makes him happy to help other people and he felt this is a good chance to help as many people as possible in the community. His fondest memory is the night he received his Eagle Scout award.

Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor stated that she is here to serve my community and a favorite childhood memory is spending summers at Fairmont Park.

Commissioner Bart Miller stated that he ran for office because he worked for the County and he wanted to see how they spent the money they take in. He grew up in Spalding County, his children and grandchildren live here.

Stephanie Windham stated she didn’t run for anything, she is here because of work, it is her job. Her favorite memory of Griffin is when they had their first Archway Executive Committee meeting.

Drew Whalen stated he is here to serve this community and he has tried to do so for the last 30+ years. He has lots of fond memories of Griffin, he grew up here it was his home and still is.

The next question she had is “What is the goal for the Service Deliverables? What is it that you want to accomplish at this meeting tonight?”
Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that her goal is to clear up some misunderstandings.

Chairperson Ward stated that her goal is to start some discussions that we have not had in 10-12 years.

Chairperson Johnson stated that she would like to see more of a reasonable compromise/fairness.

Commissioner Dutton stated that in any kind of Service Delivery it is to do it in the most efficient and lowest cost way for citizens. How do we save them money?

Commissioner Hollberg stated that he is not a proponent of consolidation, but he does support back door consolidation as to determining what services can be done better and more efficiently. He would like to see collaboration of services.

Commissioner Flowers stated she would like better communication.

Drew Whalen stated that one thing he had not heard mentioned. He had the privilege of serving on the Georgia Communities Commission which was the Commission that recommended and sought the enactment of legislation that became the Service Delivery Strategies Act. One of the major tenants of that Commissions’ recommendations was to end double taxation and to provide tax equity in the delivery of services. Since that law went into effect in 1997 there has been some case law that has been decided that deals directly with the tax equity issue and he thinks that we have been afraid in the community for the City and County to come to the table to talk realistically about that issue and it is probably time that you do so. He would certainly recommend that you give it your best “good faith” effort.

Commissioner Hollberg stated there is a history for those who have been here for over two decades and there are others that are new faces so you haven’t been through this process. There are some feelings that are hurt, just to give a few examples: there was an agreement that the industrial park would be annexed into the City in exchange for our support of the SPLOST which never happened. Promises and hand shake agreements that were made multiple times just haven’t worked out. At times, the City Commission to make things work has had to bite their lip and move on for the greater good of the community versus drawing a line in the sand and saying we are going to agree to do this we’re going to kill LOST tax, kill whatever for the greater good of saving face.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked if that was a goal.

Commissioner Hollberg stated “no” he is just trying to make what is better for Griffin, whatever it is, whether it is merging a department or figuring out what’s being double
taxed, what is being paid for into the general fund of the County that the City is being paid for.

Ms. Gill then asked Commissioner Hollberg to turn this into a goal for this meeting tonight.

Commissioner Hollberg then stated to be fair.

Commissioner Murry would like to rebuild a relationship.

Commissioner Hollberg added that he feels that because of the Archway Partnership our relationship has grown over the last three to five years. We are now able to fight through whatever issue may arise for the greater good of the community.

Commissioner McCord stated that he would like for the process to be efficient because time is of the essence always and that we not lose sight of the citizens that we serve. We are here to serve the public, it is not about the personalities of the City and the County and the territories, but the public that we serve. The citizens that we serve and the most important aspect of this exercise. He is here to do some work. To talk about what it is we are going to talk about.

He stated that he is not sure where we are going with this, but a lot of the time when we get together in these settings of City and County staff and we do a lot of praising each other, but we never actually talk about the things that make us uncomfortable and that is what the public needs for us to do is to start making some decisions and start saying things that need to be said. If someone gets mad, then that is where the communication starts. When we keep doing what we're doing, he feels that we never quite get where we need to be because we are afraid to have that conversation.

Commissioner Hollberg, Commissioner Flowers, Chairperson Ward and I have been here for a long time and we've been going through this same thing for a long time and nothing ever happens. When it is time for something to happen there is a discussion and everything is kumbaya. We are here, hopefully tonight by 7:30 we will get somewhere.

Ms. Gill then stated that when she went back to get her Master's Degree she was in a cohort of 15 people and the thing that stuck with her and actually helped her were really hard discussions. One of the things that has helped her during really hard discussions is the definition of dialog: “Suspending your own opinion in order to hear the viewpoint of someone else.” If we don't all agree to do this, then all of the goals and all of the good stuff that she wanted everyone to remember as to why you are here in order to actually have these results we all have to remember why we are here. You people are the leaders. You are the influencers. You people influence and it is sad that so many people said “Trudy, good luck” when I took over the podium. Because she
doesn’t like that with her Commissioners, she is a citizen and has been here over 37 years. She is proud of Griffin so the dialogue this evening is suspending your opinion to actively listen to the viewpoint of someone else. With this being said, she then asked “What are some of the issues?”

1. Animal Control
2. Solid Waste being paid out of the General Fund. (Hollberg)
3. No discussion of Service Delivery Strategy (Ward)
4. Schedule of Meetings to discuss the issues on Service Delivery
5. Timetable to meet. Negotiation of single item issues.

**Commissioner James Dutton left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

Ms. Gill stated we can’t go back and change what has happened in the past; however, going forward now that we know that is an issue for both sides, you didn’t have the information, and the City felt like they didn’t have an opportunity to come together to have the SDS amended. How can we fix this tonight?

Mr. Smith stated that we’re not going to fix it tonight.

Commissioner Flowers stated that there needs to be a timetable for how we meet and when negotiating contracts we need to tackle one issue at a time and limit the discussion to that single item at that time.

Mr. Smith stated that the City had asked for this meeting and he wanted to clarify a few things that might make it easier on Ms. Gill since she doesn’t understand Service Delivery Strategy. The original Service Delivery Strategy was negotiated in 1999 and it has been revised several times since then, but it has been revised in bits and pieces. The entire Service Delivery Strategy has not been revised because at the occasions it has come up for revision, the agreement was made to simply go with what we have done, except in a few circumstances like the water territory and this last opportunity for the wastewater territory. Other than that we have just kind of blanket went through and checked all the boxes and sent it back without really having a tight negotiation like this.

In actuality, the Service Delivery Strategy, by law, is not required to be renegotiated until 2022, but it is his feeling that we don’t need to wait until 2022 because the 1999 that we have checked the boxes on, is totally outdated. For example, from what he can tell through research, the airport is a countywide service paid for by the County and the City and County only split the capital expenses. We haven’t been doing it that way, but that is what the Service Delivery Strategy from 1999 says. There are a number of other issues in there. The County’s Planning and Zoning is paid for 100% by user fees. Code Enforcement is paid for by fines and forfeitures. The City’s is not and it is the City’s intent that we need to sit down and go through this document.
The 800 Mhz contract ran out last year. The leases at the ball field in City Park have expired. Do you know how many Intergovernmental Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding we have between all of us and do you know how many of them have expired? It is things like that we have just ignored over the years that have caused the whole Service Delivery Strategy to go awry. He doesn’t think we should wait until 2022 to revisit all of those things and get them all “shored up.” He feels that staff needs to start going through all of the MOU’s, all of the IGA’s and every agreement that is in the Service Delivery Strategy and bring it up-to-date and that is where we are going to talk about having some serious conversations. That is where we are going to talk about pools and parks and recreation, and solid waste and all those things that could or could not be double taxation. That is going to be some hard discussions and it’s not something we are going to solve tonight, but what he wanted everyone to know tonight, at least in his and his staff’s opinion this is a mess because over the years it has been ignored and we have taken the easy way out. We went through, checked the boxes and sent it back just like it is.

Ms. Gill asked how it was divided, if we look at a timetable like Cora and Rodney suggested and we take one item at a time can you divide the SDS up and create a schedule so that you can pick-it-apart one item at a time or not?

Mr. Smith stated that you could put a schedule together for anything, but this is going to be a series of activities, but he doesn’t feel we need to talk about specifically what the document says because it has changed over the years.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she agrees with Mr. Smith because the Animal Control Contract that was originally created with the City which is due to expire, basically says that the County has a countywide Animal Control, yet we have a contract with the City for animals.

Mr. Smith then stated that the County does not have a current contract with the City, in the Service Delivery Strategy the Animal Shelter is a countywide service. The City provides a higher level of service than Animal Control because we have a citywide leash law different from what the County has. The County provides a level of service for animal control and the City provides a higher level of service, which we can do and the shelter is a countywide function. That is the way the current Service Delivery Strategy reads.

Commissioner Flowers then stated in general as two boards can we get a consensus that the City will direct its staff to begin looking through our stuff and the County will as well. So, in terms of an action item, there may not be anything for the Commissioners to do at this time, but we do need to provide the directive of how we want to proceed so that we can have discussions in the future. Whether we agree on it or not, if a contract has expired, it is expired and we need to be aware of that. So rather than we leave here saying we are going to do it, we need to make a motion or
there is some agreement within some reasonable time table associated with it. She would like for a time to be established by the City Manager and County Manager to allow for time for review so that when we leave here we will have some idea when we can get to this.

Mr. Smith estimated that it would take at least 12 months for us to go through this piece by piece and get it all sorted out. He added that he hasn’t talked with Mr. Wilson, but he decided today that he was going to task Ms. O’Connor and maybe she and Ms. Irizarry can “tag team” on going through all of the documents and start putting things together for the rest of us to review, but it is going to take months.

Chairperson Johnson stated that she feels this is a great strategy to have the staff review and work through it for before presenting it to us. She doesn’t know how the other commissioners feel about this, but maybe we didn’t have a good understanding of what to expect tonight. She feels there was some break down in communication, if this was the case was it necessary for us to be here, we could have made that decision in a formal meeting.

Chairperson Ward stated that yes it was important because this is the same thing that we have been saying for years and years. We’ll get to it.

Chairperson Johnson then stated that if staff works through this then it can be brought back to the board with the items that we need to know.

Ms. Gill stated why not give the staff time to go through and in six months set another meeting to discuss at least part of the SDS, at least one section of it, would that work?

Mr. Wilson stated that when we did this in 1999 there are a number of services that you have to go through page by page. Drew Whalen, Jim Fortune and I were the only three that were there at that time and are still here. At that time, we put out a report where we agreed there were certain services where we were in agreement that nothing needed to be done. The Courts and other things of that nature were listed in order to get those out of the way which would then leave the 6-8 items that we really needed to address.

While Michelle and Jessica are going through all the agreements then Mr. Smith, Mr. Whalen Mr. Fortune and Mr. Wilson can meet to see about the items that we agree can remain the way they are: Probate Court, Clerk of Court, etc. so we can eliminate the ones that no discussion is required on and establish the harder ones that we will need to discuss.

Ms. Gill asked if a target of October, which will be 6 months would be agreeable to both boards to meet again.
Consensus of both boards is to meet again in 6 months.
Commissioner Flowers asked that the date for the meeting be set in September to allow time for everyone to work it into their schedules.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated so that she is clear on what is supposed to happen. Mr. Smith is going to ask his staff and Mr. Wilson is going to ask his staff to go through the Service Delivery Agreements, look for any Agreements that have expired any that are contentious. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Smith, in the mean time will go through the SDS and establish those services that are non-challengeable so that those will not be the items that we are concerned about.

Ms. Gill stated that is correct and that way what comes back to the Boards are for decisions on working out the rest of the Service Deliverables.

Commissioner Hollberg asked if there could be an agreement amongst the group that they will not get blindsided like they did with the Water Authority’s request with regards to changing the Service Delivery Strategy which caused this meeting. The Water Authority knew that they needed our blessing and they waited until the last minute, in our opinion, instead of coming to us and saying this is our situation, how can we work through it.

Ms. Gill then stated that you have to work through matters like this.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that the Water Authority is not here to answer for that incident.

Ms. Gill stated that you have to move forward, you have to make an agreement right now that this dialog right here is going to happen. All of you said that the reason why you are here is for quality of life and service and you do a great job of it, we just need to push it forward and continue to push it forward and change the influence and perception that a lot of people have about the commissions. You guys have the power to do it and I believe in you. So, in September the respective chairs will get together and set a date for October. Mr. Wilson, Mr. Smith and their staffs will go through the files and establish the non-challengeables, then the remaining items will come back to the Managers and they will pick one thing to concentrate on.

Motion/Second by Hollberg/Tensley to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. for the City of Griffin. Motion carried 6-0 (Commissioner Brock left the meeting early.)

Motion/Second by Hawbaker/Flowers-Taylor to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. for Spalding County. Motion carried 4-0 (Commissioner Dutton left the meeting early.)