

After Agenda

**Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Extraordinary Session
Monday, February 17, 2020
6:00 PM
Room 108, Annex Building**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held their Extraordinary Session in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex on Monday, February 17, 2020, beginning at 6:00 p.m. with Chairperson Gwen Flowers-Taylor presiding. Commissioners James Dutton, Rita Johnson and Bart Miller were present for the meeting. Commissioner Donald Hawbaker was absent from the meeting. Also present were County Manager, William P. Wilson, Jr., County Attorney, Stephanie Windham, Assistant County Manager, Michelle Irizarry and Kathy Gibson, Executive Secretary to record the minutes.

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER) by Chairperson Gwen Flowers-Taylor.

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR CELL PHONES AND ALL OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

II. INVOCATION

Pastor Zachary Holmes with Grace Paradise Fellowship Church delivered the Invocation.

III. PLEDGE TO FLAG

Commissioner Bart Miller, District #4, led the pledge to the flag.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

1. Marcia Ridley, Elections Supervisor, is present this evening to demonstrate the new voting machines for the Board and those in attendance.

Mr. Ridley introduced herself and thanked the Commissioners and the County Manager for inviting her to be present this evening. She then advised that members from the Board of Elections were also present: Chair Margaret Bentley, Vice Chair Randall Gooden and Vera McIntosh the newest member.

Ms. Bentley then thanked everyone for coming out this afternoon, she stated they are in the process of demonstrating the new machines all over the County, so if you have a group or event where you would like to have a demonstration of the new equipment, please contact the Elections Office and we will be happy to set that up for you.

Ms. Ridley stated she realizes all the equipment looks intimidating, but it is very easy to work with and is user friendly for the voter. She then presented the steps to utilize the new equipment. Starting with the Poll

Pad for check-in which takes the place of the certificate. Ms. Ridley was assisted by a service technician from Dominion, the company that produced the new voting hardware and software. The Poll Pad reads the bar code on the back of your driver's license and your voter information pops right up. A drivers license is the only item that it reads, everything else will have to be entered manually; however, it is still a very fast process.

Ms. Ridley then presented the process for voting on the new equipment from the Poll Pad through to the completed document being placed through the scanner to finalize the vote. She explained that the participation by the Elections Staff is minimal with this process. The individual will proceed through the process and be given a number of opportunities to review their selections. They will also have the ability to change a selection at any time before the final printed document is placed in the scanner. Your vote is not counted until it is reviewed and placed through the scanner.

Ms. Ridley completed her presentation and then answered questions regarding the process. She then encouraged everyone to come by the Elections Office for a "hands on" demonstration. She then advised that early voting has moved two doors down from the prior location and will be held at the Sports Athletic Hall of Fame.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Sports Hall of Fame is located at the opposite end of the building, it has handicap access with plenty of parking and everyone will get to see the Hall of Fame while they are there to vote.

V. PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Consider approval of financial statements for the seven months ended January 31, 2020.

Mr. Wilson advised that this report is through the seven months ended January 31, we have received most of our property taxes. General Fund revenues are \$36 million or 71% of budget with expenditures of \$28 million or 57% of budget. These figures do include the large payments received in December for taxes and tax collections will continue through to March. Staff recommends approval.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Dutton to approve the financial statements for the seven months ended January 31, 2020.

Motion carried unanimously by all.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT

Speakers must sign up prior to the meeting and provide their names, addresses and the topic they wish to discuss. Speakers must direct your remarks to the Board and not to individual Commissioners or to the audience. Personal disagreements with individual Commissioners or County employees are not a matter of public concern and personal attacks will not be tolerated. The Chairman has the right to limit your comments in the interest of disposing of the County's

business in an efficient and respectable manner.

Speakers will be allotted three minutes to speak on their chosen topics as they relate to matters pertinent to the jurisdiction of the Board of the Commissioners. No questions will be asked by any of the commissioners during citizen comments. Outbursts from the audience will not be tolerated. Common courtesy and civility are expected at all times during the meeting. No speaker will be permitted to speak more than three minutes or more than once, unless the Board votes to suspend this rule.

JoAnn Phinazee, 859 Park Point Drive, Griffin, GA – Thanked the Board for finally making Fairmont an option and putting it into perspective and by the end of the year and the end of the SPLOST we will see it all.

Bob Beyer, 516 Orchid Lights Court, Griffin, GA –Spoke regarding the Public Hearing regarding the Elections Board. He believes there are no issues with the voting system in Spalding County, it works well. He became a Deputy Registrar in 2018, and current Chairman, Margaret Bentley did the training for him and spent hours going over the State and County laws and procedures. He was impressed with the knowledge Margaret had and how emphatic she was to make sure that he understood the rules and laws. In his dealings with this Board he has noted that all of the members are friendly and respectful of each other and all are focused on doing the best for a fair elections process here in Spalding County. He takes comfort in knowing that Spalding County has an Elections Board that runs smoothly. He further stated that he had contacted Ms. Ridley in the past and found her to be very helpful and professional. Spalding County is fortunate to have that kind of professionalism.

VII. MINUTES -

1. Consider approval of minutes for the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Special Called meeting on January 25, 2020 and the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting on February 3, 2020.

Motion/Second by Miller/Dutton to approve the minutes for the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Special Called Meeting on January 25, 2020 and the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting on February 3, 2020. Motion carried unanimously by all.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS -

1. Consider approval of a contract with GMASS, Inc. to represent the County at Board of Equalization and Certified Hearing Officer hearings.

Mr. Wilson stated that Jerry Johnson with the Tax Assessors Office is also here this evening to answer any questions the Board may have. We have

used GMASS before to help us with some of the Board of Equalization and Certified Hearing Officer hearings. Their cost is \$750 per day and Mr. Johnson estimates that 10-15 appeals can be heard each day. The total number of appeals to be heard is 161, if they do all of them and the maximum cost would be \$16,500. There is currently a total of 211 outstanding appeals, but right now the staff and Board of Assessors are working on 50 of the appeals. Of the 161 outstanding we will be giving GMASS the more complicated appeals to deal with and staff and Board of Assessors will do the rest.

Mr. Wilson then advised there is money in the budget to cover this expense, we had budgeted \$100,000 in Contractual Services and there remains over \$75,000 in that budget. Staff recommends approval. The County Attorney has reviewed the contract and approves it as written.

Commissioner Miller then asked the years involved in the appeals.

Mr. Wilson stated that most of them are 2019 appeals. There are 111 – 2019 appeals, 32 – 2018 appeals, 55 – 2017 appeals, 11 – 2016 appeals and 2 – 2015 appeals. The older ones are not average appeals, they are very large complicated and involves larger businesses like Walmart, Home Depots and big appeals that take a lot of time and involves legal counsel with the appeals.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Miller to approve a contract with GMASS, Inc. to represent the County at Board of Equalization and Certified Hearing Officer hearings. Motion carried unanimously by all.

2. Set Public Hearing date to discuss possible amendments to local legislation concerning the Spalding County Board of Elections.

Mr. Wilson advised that this was discussed during the retreat. The Board decided they would like to have a public hearing on the matter. Staff is suggesting March 2nd during our Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. Given the circumstances of a four-member Board currently, there is a possibility that the Board, even after hearing Public Comments may or may not vote to do this because we could have a tie vote.

Commissioner Johnson asked if this is something we may want to bring up for a vote, or do we want to address if we still want to have a Public Hearing?

Mr. Wilson stated that this is a new business item for the Public Hearing, the actual vote relates back to 2018 at which time it was tabled indefinitely. We talked about it at the Retreat and consensus of the Board was to have a Public Hearing to gain input on the matter and you would vote after the Public Hearing on whether or not to move forward with the local legislation.

Chairperson Flowers-Taylor stated that she feels we need to have the Public Hearing regardless of whether we vote or not after the hearing. There are parties outside of the Board that this is going to affect, and she feels it is important for us to go ahead and get that information out, let them come in

and share their concerns and feelings. Then whether we vote on it or not in a future meeting we will have already done the Public Hearing Part.

Commissioner Johnson then stated at some point we need to put this to rest.

Consensus of the Board is to set a Public Hearing on the March 2nd Regular Meeting Agenda.

X. REPORT OF COUNTY MANAGER

- ✓ The Senior Center was inspected on Friday, February 14th, and was clear and free of any pests. No chemical treatments were needed. That was the final of the 8 week investigation into the bed bugs. We have been fortunate and not had a repeat. We have a new bed bug policy that has been put into effect with our personal care homes and we will now move to a quarterly inspection of the Senior Center.
- ✓ Spalding County Public Works, Parks and Public Grounds will be hosting Business After Hours for the Chamber of Commerce on June 16th. They will have some of the equipment out there for everyone to look at and touch a truck for kids and parents. We are looking forward to this.
- ✓ The Georgia Department of transportation notified us this morning that of the bridges submitted to them in October 2019 for low impact bridge study, two have been chosen for replacement at no cost to the County. They are located on Dutchman Road over Cabin Creek and Wildwood Road over Bear Creek. They will be completed sometime in 2021-2022.
- ✓ He is trying to establish a date for the Spalding County Water Authority and the Spalding County Board of Commissioners to have a joint meeting to discuss planning and the future.

As you know, Chad Jacobs has resigned and his last day with the County will be March 9th, he is moving over to the City of Griffin. He wanted to get something done before Chad leaves and have Newton Galloway explain our current Comprehensive Plan to the Water Authority and the Water Authority discuss where they would like to see water and sewer placed.

We will also be talking next year about revising our Comp Plan so we could get input now from the Water Authority and the Board of Commissioners so that we will both be on the same page for future water and sewer improvements. He will let the Board know what the best day for the meeting will be, it needs to be held during the day as he wants to have staff there and he wants to have Mr. Galloway there, because it is very important that everyone understands the Comp Plan and where the current Comp Plan calls for development versus where the Board of Commissioners may want it in the future and the Water Authority needs to provide water and sewer to help this community grow.

- ✓ Zoning Public Hearing is scheduled for February 27th at 6:00 p.m.

XI. REPORT OF ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER

- EMA is updating the Pandemic response for the community and they are continuing to work with WellStar Hospital on their continuity of operations, the COOP Plan. We have our next meeting on Thursday of this week.
- EMA personnel will be attending a one-day hospital coalition conference in Forsyth on Friday of this week.
- Chief Byrd had a meet and greet with the Fire Personnel on Saturday, Sunday and today. He was able to meet all of the Fire Personnel and Ms. Irizarry attended today's meet and greet and there was a lot of good discussion at this event.
- Chief Byrd is teaching shift officers Professional Development Courses, right now their concentration courses are on Risk Management.
- The Fire Department taught the Stop and Bleed Course to 68 staff members at Spalding County Schools since the last meeting.
- The Correctional Institute was offered Hepatitis A shots to inmates and staff, 50 of the inmates and 5 staff received these shots.
- The Kick Off Meeting for the Animal Shelter was on February 5, it was a meeting with Project Managers, Architects, Engineers and staff. We have a follow-up meeting on design set for February 21st.
- The euthanasia rate at the Animal Shelter is at 8.8%.

Mr. Wilson added that this qualifies Spalding County as a No-Kill Shelter. Anything below 10% qualifies as a No-Kill Shelter. This is something that we have been working on for a number of years and we are making good progress toward getting there and the new shelter will help even more.

XII. REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS

Bart Miller – Thanked Public Works for all they have been doing on the dirt roads, but it hasn't helped any because of all the rain. We have had 7-8" of rain so far this month and it is supposed to rain again tomorrow. They need to keep things rolling. The ditches need to be cleaned at this point so that the water doesn't run back over the road. It's going to take some time because the ditches are completely full.

Rita Johnson – She and the Chairman have been talking about existing SPLOST projects that we are all working diligently on, particularly the Heritage Park and the Aquatic Center projects and she is hoping in March to have more to share. We need some updated reports and we do have some coming, and what we have to report we want to make sure we have it together before we report. We are working on these projects especially after the Archway Retreat where the City, the County, the School Board and the Housing Authority had a chance to talk about these projects.

James Dutton – Wanted to echo Commissioner Johnson’s comments regarding Heritage Park. We feel we are going to have some good news very soon, but we are going to have to wait on other moving parts to fall in line, but he feels there will be some really good news in March.

He is excited about the appointment of Ben Coker as the fifth Judge in the Griffin Judicial Circuit and that Marie Broder has been appointed as the District Attorney for the Griffin Judicial Circuit. Ms. Broder has been in charge of the Spalding County District Attorney’s Office, she was the Chief Assistant and is one of his favorite prosecutors to work with. Very fair, very justice minded, really cares about the victims and everyone else involved. He really feels she is going to be good for the County in this position and he wanted to congratulate her as well as Ben Coker on his appointment, he will be an asset to the Circuit in this position as well.

It has been brought to our attention that there is an issue at the Skate Park, BMX bikes are not allowed in the Skate Park. Seems like a Skate Park should include BMX bike, but some folks brought it to his attention that the current rules say that it doesn’t. He would like to ask if there is anyone opposed to opening the Skate Park to BMX bikes.

Mr. Wilson stated that we will check with Park and Rec.

Dutton asked that Parks and Rec be asked about this with an eye toward doing it or advising why we shouldn’t. The Skate Parks in other counties allow BMX bikes in their Parks. Not dirt bikes, but BMX bikes.

We have talked about the Board of Elections issue and he is excited to have the Elections Board here this evening. Again, he feels they have done a fantastic job and our Elections Supervisor has a very good reputation around the State. So, he feels that this is making a good situation great and bringing us more in line with what the other Counties do and bringing us more in line with what other Counties do is just going to prevent any future issues.

Gwen Flowers-Taylor – She commended the Fire Department on working with the Stop the Bleed Program. She had talked with Chief Polk about it and they both share the same sentiments that while it is important to make sure that the teachers know how to put on tourniquets and to provide first aid, if the teacher is the victim, who in the classroom is going to be able to provide immediate first responder services.

She realizes in this community we are teaching girl scouts and boy scouts how to put on tourniquets and how to do first aide, why can’t we provide that same training within our school system? She feels it is very important that we do as much as we can to prepare should something happen in the school. We want the children to feel confident that they can help take care of their classmates or their teachers if something happens.

She thanked Mr. Wilson for the bed bug report, that is just something that she cannot comprehend, but we did have a problem and she is glad to know that our wonderful Senior Center is now vermin free.

Mr. Wilson then advised that it's not just the Senior Center, but Big Blue and the transit buses as well.

This is one of those things that she never thought we would have to be dealing with when we got the Senior Center and the bus, but it happens in life and we handled the problem.

XIII. CLOSED SESSION – None.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

***Motion/Second by Miller/Dutton to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously by all.***