

After Agenda

Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Regular Meeting
Monday, May 4, 2020
6:00 PM
Room 108, Annex Building

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held their Regular Meeting in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex on Monday, May 4, 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., Assistant County Manager, Michelle Irizarry, County Attorney, Stephanie Windham and Executive Secretary, Kathy Gibson 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

Commissioner Rita Johnson, District 3, delivered the invocation.

III. PLEDGE TO FLAG

Commissioner James Dutton, District #2, led the pledge to the flag.

IV. APPOINTMENTS

1. Consider appointment to the Region IV Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council to succeed Jonathan Johnson, Director of EMS for WellStar Spalding Regional for a term to expire June 30, 2021.

Mr. Wilson stated that Jonathon Johnson was the Director of EMS, he has moved on and now Mr. Matt Perry is the new Director of WellStar Spalding Regional EMS. His name is in the book and he comes to us from the Georgia Public Safety Training Center and is doing an excellent job. Staff is recommending the appointment of Mr. Perry.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to approve the appointment of Matthew Perry to the Region IV Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council to succeed Jonathan Johnson for a term to expire June 30, 2020. Motion carried unanimously by all.

I. PRESENTATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

1. Consider approval nunc pro tunc of a Proclamation declaring April 2020 as Donate Life Month in Spalding County, Georgia.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to approve nunc pro tunc a Proclamation declaring the month of April 2020 as Donate Life Month in Spalding County. Motion carried unanimously by all.

2. Consider approval nunc pro tunc of a Joint Proclamation declaring April 12, 2020 as a local day of prayer in the City of Griffin and Spalding County.

Motion/Second Johnson/Dutton to approve a Joint Proclamation nunc pro tunc declaring April 12, 2020 as a local day of prayer in the City of Griffin and Spalding County. Motion carried unanimously by all.

3. County Manager to introduce new Community Development Director, Deborah Bell.

Mr. Wilson stated that Ms. Bell is here this evening and asked Ms. Bell to come to the podium. Mr. Wilson advised that Ms. Bell started with the County last Tuesday and is doing an “awesome” job. She has stepped right in. She has extensive knowledge in Community Development. He then asked Ms. Bell to introduce herself.

Ms. Bell stated that she is a native of Fayette County, she graduated from UGA. She advised that was a resident of Spalding County for a while and all three of her children graduated from Spalding High School. She stated that she is excited and pleased to be here.

II. PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Consider approval of financial statements for the eight months ended February 29, 2020.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to approve the financial statements for the eight months ended February 29, 2020. Motion carried unanimously by all.

2. Consider approval of financial statements for the nine months ended March 31, 2020.

Mr. Wilson stated that this reflects 9/12^{ths} or 75% of the year. Revenues exceed expenditures and we anticipate this trend through the remainder of the year. We had budgeted some of Fund Balance to balance the budget, but we do not feel that we will be using any of Fund Balance. Sales tax numbers are holding their own and we are very fortunate that we do not rely as heavily as other entities for monthly inflows of cash from sales tax, hotel/motel tax or enterprise funds. Predominantly, the property tax is our major source of revenue and those have already been paid.

Motion/Second by Miller/Dutton the approve the financial statements for the nine months ended March 31, 2020. Motion carried unanimously by all.

III. 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.

Mr. Wilson then advised there are three signed up to speak this evening and we have one person, via ZOOM, to speak.

Doug Kidd, 281 Bowman Street, Lavonia, Georgia, stated he is here to speak on item #3 under New Business. The Indigent Defense Bids, this is the comment period and the Board can't ask questions during this time, but he will stick around to answer any questions the Board may have when Item #3 is considered.

Mr. Kidd stated that the Board should have a copy of the bid submitted by his firm for Indigent Defense. This bid includes the prices they have quoted and the services they will be offering. He advised that resumes for the four attorneys in the office are included and he feels they are highly qualified for consideration. He advised that they have handled thousands of these types of cases: Misdemeanor Criminal Offenses in State Court, Magistrate Court, Probate Court and Superior Court in their jurisdiction.

Mr. Kidd then advised that his Company is not located in Spalding County, they have addressed this in the bid. He then stated that although his firm is not located in the County, he grew up in Henry County and still has relatives in Henry County. He also advised that his wife taught at Jackson High School about 15 years ago and they both have family in Spalding County. He advised that although he is not a stranger to the area, his partners are and they have had very limited experience with Griffin.

Mr. Kidd stated that he is serious about establishing an office in Spalding County and he would have at least one legal assistant and one attorney in the office at all times and he would be the attorney that would be here at all times. The other three attorneys would be here as needed on court dates and to meet with clients.

As proposed in the bid, they will meet with clients in the office, in the jail and in the courtroom and will make ourselves available. They do not anticipate taking any private cases while they are in Spalding County if they get this bid. If they are awarded the bid, this would be solely what they do.

Mr. Kidd advised they have two individuals in their office they have extensive experience in Juvenile Court, and he would anticipate their focus to be on juvenile while he and Mr. Eason, his partner would focus on State Court. Mr. Eason is the State Court Defender in Elbert County and Mr. Kidd is the Public Defender in Franklin and Hart Counties.

Sam Sullivan and Michelle Ogletree, 7435 S. Hill Street, Griffin, Georgia stated that his firm has responded to the RFP issued. He advised that he has been the State Court Public Defender in Spalding County for 31 years, and Ms. Ogletree has been involved for 22 years. They currently have three attorneys in their law firm and two sub-contract attorneys that they utilize for Juvenile Court as well as conflict matters.

Mr. Sullivan then advised that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court extended the emergency judicial order today, basically closing down all courts in Georgia until June 15th. This is going to put a tremendous burden on these Courts. Currently, they are looking at a backlog of cases like they have never seen before. Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Ogletree have already been looking at and talking about the employment of two additional attorneys to assist. Mr. Sullivan then advised that it would probably take a year to bring these caseloads current.

Mr. Sullivan stated that they have been doing this for a long time and they do a real good job for folks. He stated that they dedicate a lot of time to this and it is the only thing that he does. He closed down his civil practice three years ago and they are dedicated to offer Spalding County's poor and less fortunate the best legal representation they possibly can, and they would appreciate the Board's consideration.

Jewell Walker-Harps then joined the meeting via ZOOM.

Jewell Walker-Harps, 103 McEthel Drive, Griffin, stated she has two topics she would like to address. The first being Heritage Park, she stated that they believe it is time to start construction on the Rosenwald School and the Gym at Heritage Park. The other matter she commented on was the Indigent Defense contract for services to those less fortunate. She wanted to make sure that the Board awarded the contract to someone who would provide the best representation possible.

IV. MINUTES -

1. Consider approval of minutes for the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Special Called Joint Meeting on March 10, 2020, the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Extraordinary Session on March 16, 2020 and the Spalding County Zoning Public Hearing on March 26, 2020.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Miller to approve the minutes for the for the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Special Called Joint Meeting on March 10, 2020, the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Extraordinary Session on March 16, 2020 and the Spalding County Zoning Public Hearing on March 26, 2020. Motion carried unanimously by all.

V. OLD BUSINESS -

VI. NEW BUSINESS -

1. Consider approval of final plat for Journey's End Subdivision (minor) located off Barnesville Road and Henley Road.

Mr. Wilson stated that this is a minor subdivision which means that it does not require any roads or streets. It has existing water on the roadway and meets all of the criteria for approval.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Miller to approve the final plat for Journey's end Subdivision (minor) located off Barnesville Road and Henley Road. Motion carried unanimously by all.

2. Consider request from Post 5448 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to utilize the Spalding County Senior Center; should it rain, for the Memorial Day Celebration on Monday, May 25, 2020.

Mr. Wilson advised that at this time, the Veterans of Foreign Wars are making plans for a FaceBook Live celebration and he stated that the County would assist like we normally do. They are going to try to get one of the churches to broadcast it live and he advised that the County would work with them on the audio and video. The church is probably going to set up the equipment for that. Historically, the County has set up bleachers and a P.A. system. There will be some in attendance, but he feels that a vast majority will not be attending due to the Governor's Order regarding seniors over 65.

This request is for the Senior Center should it rain on Memorial Day. It would be the same thing, we would social distance inside. Either way they are probably doing FaceBook Live.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Miller to approve the request from Post 5448 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to utilize the Spalding County Senior Center; should it rain, for the Memorial Day Celebration on Monday, May 25, 2020.

Commissioner Johnson asked if we would be monitoring the social distancing and how would that work?

Mr. Wilson stated that the County would work with them on social distancing, we will be providing the seating for the event and we will probably provide chairs instead of bleachers.

Chairperson Flowers-Taylor stated that she has attended this event a number

of times and there are always lots of people, when it's been on the inside the attendance has been wall-to-wall and she has a hard time with us not having opened the Senior Center to allow for a gathering. She doesn't want anyone to think if we are not letting the public come back into the building that we are opening the building. We have to let them know it is only being made available for that occasion.

Commissioner Miller stated that he felt that if there is a limited number to be allowed into the building he feels that the VFW will adhere to that.

Commissioner Johnson stated that she was concerned about the monitoring and if the VFW will make sure the social distancing is adhered to then she has no problem with their using the Senior Center should it rain on Memorial Day.

Motion carried unanimously by all.

3. Consider bids for Indigent Defense Services for FY 2021, 2022 and FY 2023.

Commissioner Dutton stated the he would like to address this. We received two total bids and the bid time was during the COVID crisis. He feels that because of the COVID crisis, there was a lack of bids and he feels if we reopen the bidding and extend the due date until June we would have a lot more bids. We could see the value of the current bids and we could see what we could get otherwise. He feels that the winner would still have ample time to "tool up" even if it was a brand new firm if it is needed if the submission time as extended another 30 days beginning tomorrow. He feels we should reopen the bids due to extraordinary circumstances with COVID.

Commissioner Johnson then asked that Mr. Wilson explain the process to the Board.

Mr. Wilson advised that the County advertised for bids. We advertised in multiple places, it was on the County's website, it was advertised on Vendor Registry, it was advertised on the State of Georgia Procurement listing, it was advertised in GLGA Marketplace which is the Georgia Local Government Association which is where Cities and Counties advertise jobs and bids. It was also advertised in the Griffin Daily News.

Mr. Wilson stated that the County will run ads in the Griffin Daily News once a week for 4 weeks in the legal ads, they are extremely expensive running about \$300 per week. We issued the RFP, plus to addendums. One at Commissioner Dutton's request to make sure they would list out the number of attorneys that would be totally dedicated to this and no other private practice and one at Chairperson Flowers-Taylor's request for a customer service report that they would generate and provide feedback from their clients on how they were represented.

Mr. Wilson then reminded the Board that the current contract does expire on June 30th, 2020. We have already advertised it once a week for four weeks, we could possibly extend it for two weeks.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she really isn't interested in it being advertised again locally. She is simply saying that to advertise locally is the same fish bowl that we are in, she stated that she wants to throw a wider net, if we want to get more people. She then stated that she has some issues with how the RFP was written with the questions that she asked. She was expecting that someone would say they have two attorneys that would be full time and this is how many man hours it would take.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she also expected someone to say that "our customer service plan will involve X, Y, Z." We will see the client within 72 hours of incarceration, with our first encounter we will give them a ten question survey to answer such questions as: Were we respectful? Did we meet your needs? Then before the case is over or settled, you still have to see that person, so why not get an end survey? If you can't tell me how you are going to work that out, there will be some bad reviews, but there will be a lot of good ones as well.

Right now, the way we know how Indigent Defense is doing is based on what the Judges are saying. The Judges don't have a dog in this fight, they will never pay a fee, they will never pay a fine, they will never be on probation and they will never go to jail, but our clients are the ones who should be able to say that the "soup was good."

That being said, she would also like to ask for an extension, should we go past the end of June deadline. Due to the backlog of cases due to the COVID event, it would be stupid for us to go into an agreement knowing that the candidate would not be able to meet the requirements of the job with the staff being request in the RFP. Really, the RFP has changed due to the proposed backlog of work.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that the Board needs to decide if we want to request an extension of the current contract so that we would have time to either tweak the RFP and resubmit with the specific things that we want in there, she feels that the original RFP was very general and she didn't get the sense that someone was going to be at the Indigent Defense Office so that when someone was arrested they would have someone in there before they hit that 72 hour mark when they are supposed to get bond even if they can't afford it. We need to be confident that somebody is paying attention to that, currently we don't have anything to mark that.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that at the end of the day she wants to know: Were you treated fairly? Were you treated respectfully? Were your family members treated respectfully? Do you feel your attorney was available when you tried to contact them?

Commissioner Dutton stated that many of these questions are asked by the Judge when you take a plea.

Mr. Wilson stated that he would ask that the RFP be extended through the 22nd of May which would allow staff time to put it on the agenda by the 27th for the

June 1st meeting.

After additional discussion, Mr. Wilson suggested that staff reissue the RFP and then have a presentation by each respondent at a work session, possibly a 20 minute presentation by each and let the commissioners ask questions and then put it on an agenda for a vote.

Mr. Wilson then proposed that we make the responses due May 22nd, a Friday, we have a Zoning Public Hearing on May 28th and the Board has to be here anyway, why don't we set up the presentations on May 28th and allow each respondent an opportunity to present for 20 minutes then allow for question an answer, to be followed by the bidders in an established order.

Chairperson Flowers-Taylor then asked Mr. Wilson how long we traditionally advertise an RFP.

Mr. Wilson stated that traditionally for a construction RFP we advertise once a week for 4 weeks or 30 days. That is because construction has to be done that way. Professional Services we normally do not bid and this is for Professional Services, but the Board wanted to do it, so we did it for 4 weeks. Now there is nothing that says it has to be done for 4 weeks again because you are extending the time to respond.

Mr. Wilson stated that he has no idea where they Board wants him to advertise other than where he has already done it.

Commissioner Dutton stated we should let the State Bar Association know.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor and Commissioner Miller asked Mr. Kidd how his company saw the listing.

Mr. Kidd returned to the podium and advised that he had found the request for RFP on the Georgia Local Government Association listing (GLGA) which is where every local government posts their professional services, construction and every other bid is always on this list.

Commissioner Flower-Taylor then asked if the RFP should be posted on the same locations.

Commissioner Miller stated that it should be placed on the same sites and if people want to participate they can participate.

Commissioner Dutton stated that he would like to see it sent to the State Bar Association for posting on their listing.

Mr. Wilson advised that Addendum 1 and 2 would be incorporated into the RFP that is submitted for consideration. What we are doing is very unusual, 95% of the governments in the State of Georgia do not bid indigent defense.

Mr. Wilson stated that in the RFP he will direct people to the video of this meeting so that they can see what type of questions you are looking to be answered.

Mr. Wilson then reiterated that May 22nd would be when the RFP's are due and he is proposing a work session on the 28th for presentation by the Bidders to the Board prior to the Zoning Public Hearing and depending on how many responses we receive we will adjust the presentations to accommodate. The item will then be placed on the June 1 meeting for consideration by the Board.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to table consideration of bids for Indigent Defense Services for FY2021, FY2022 and FY2023 until June 1, 2020. Motion carried unanimously by all.

4. Consider request from Three Rivers Regional Commission to amend the FY2020 CSBG Budget to reflect additional funding in the amount of \$9,988 to be added to the Nutritional Program.

Mr. Wilson advised that this is carry over funding that is divided between the Counties.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Dutton to approve the request from Three Rivers Regional Commission to amend the FY2020 CSBG Budget to reflect additional funding in the amount of \$9,988 to be added to the Nutritional Program. Motion carried unanimously by all.

5. Consider approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Spalding County Board of Commissioners, the City of Griffin, the Griffin-Spalding Board of Education and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia to continue the Spalding County Archway Partnership.

Mr. Wilson advised that this is \$20,000 per year funding from each entity, it is in the recommended 2021 budget.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the Spalding County Board of Commissioners, the City of Griffin, the Griffin-Spalding Board of Education and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia to continue the Spalding County Archway Partnership. Motion carried unanimously by all.

6. Consider approval of Intergovernmental Agreement with the Georgia Department of Corrections for care and custody of State Offenders at the Spalding County Correctional Institute.

Mr. Wilson stated there are 384 inmates, the State pays us \$22.00/day to keep them that is \$3,083,520.00 for FY2021, it is in the recommended budget and staff recommends approval.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Miller to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Georgia Department of Corrections for care and custody of State Offenders and the Spalding County Correctional Institute.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked with the income of \$3 million at the end

of the day how much does the County end up spending?

Mr. Wilson stated that the total budget for the Correctional Institution is approximately \$7 million. So, this and other revenues make up \$3.5 to \$4 million so about \$3.5 million in tax dollars is expended for the operation of the CI.

Motion carried unanimously by all.

7. Consider approval of revised budget calendar.

Mr. Wilson stated the week of May 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th. He would like to complete it on the 11th and 12th because he has a class, but if it isn't complete then Ms. Irizarry and Ms. Garrison will take over.

- It does not include a tax increase.
- It does include a 2% cost of living for the County Employees that the Board talked about at the Retreat.
- It incorporates all of expenditures that the County Commissioners approved at the Budget Hearing last year that were not in the original budget. Debt Service went up dramatically in several departments. Public Works and Parks Debt Service doubled due to the expenditures the Board made during the budget hearing.
- It does not include any new positions, there will be people upset. There were requests for about 7 new positions, most being in Parks and Public Works, but there was one in Board of Elections and there was one in the Solicitors Office, but those were not recommended.

He stated that Chairperson Flowers-Taylor had stated that she had some questions and he asked that she go ahead and submit the questions so that they can discuss them prior to the Budget Hearings.

Mr. Wilson then advised that the Budget Hearings will begin at 9:00 am. on Monday, May 11th.

- There is no increase in the Health Insurance and no change in the benefits provided by the Health Insurance.

Chairperson Flowers-Taylor asked if Mr. Wilson could provide the Board with the information that was provided last year regarding the amount paid in premiums versus the amount expended for claims and what percentage of the employees made up the largest amounts of the claims.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to approve the revised budget Calendar. Motion carried unanimously by all.

8. Consider a Resolution naming Kathy Gibson, Deputy County Clerk as the designated Open Records Officer and Michelle Irizarry, Assistant County Manager as the Alternate Open Records Officer to act for Spalding County and all of its related subsidiary entities.

Mr. Wilson stated that this will clarify the Open Records Clerk, we are getting some new software to handle this. Predominantly our open records requests are for the Sheriff's Office, E-911, Board of Elections and the Fire Department. Except for Constitutional Officers and Elected Officials, the County is ultimately responsible for making sure a response is provided in a timely manner. In the past, if we didn't know that a department received an Open Records Request and the response wasn't made in a timely manner, the County could be held liable for that.

Stephanie Windham, County Attorney, advised that if we do this officially and put it on the website and advertise it in the Griffin Daily News, it can actually increase the time limit to respond, if somebody doesn't send the request to the right person.

Motion/Second by Miller/Dutton approve a resolution naming Kathy Gibson, Deputy County Clerk as the designated Open Records Officer and Michelle Irizarry, Assistant County Manager as the Alternate Open Records Officer to act for Spalding County and all of its related subsidiary entities. Motion carried unanimously by all.

9. Consider recommendation of staff for reopening County Offices to the public.

Mr. Wilson stated that he had been consulting with the City of Griffin on this matter. Spalding County and the City of Griffin closed at the same time, we did an A and B shift at the same time, so it is felt that we should open the offices back up at the same time. Staff is proposing to bring all employees back on May 11th and May 14th we would open all of the buildings to the public except for the Senior Center and Recreation Facilities. Mr. Wilson stated that he is recommending that the Senior Center be the last location to reopen due to the age of the citizens who go to the Senior Center. It is hard to see how you can maintain social distancing at the recreation centers, so staff will come back with a recommendation at a later date based on what is happening.

Mr. Wilson advised that the Tax Commissioner has advised that that will work for her. The Sheriff's Office will set their own schedule for reopening as they will have to consider reopening the jail for visitation. The Clerk of Courts office has remained open, the Chief Justice ruled June 13th for court cases to resume except for where the session can be done by video.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Miller to approve the reopening of County Offices to the public as proposed by staff. Motion carried unanimously by all.

VII. REPORT OF COUNTY MANAGER

- New Home Data – January 21 permits were issued, February 23, March 23 and in April 19. These are for homes all over the County.
- SPLOST Revenues for March were \$886,420.43 which is 6.35% higher than this same period last year and it is the second highest month in 15 months.

- The only month that beat it was this past December at \$973,000.
- Intersection #3 – it is coming right along.
- As you learned tonight, we have hired a Community Development Director. We have also hired a Citizen Engagement Specialist she will be starting May 26th. She will be coming home, she currently resides in Seattle, Washington. He thinks the Board will be extremely impressed. Her name is Rachael Conort, she is Pastor Timothy Conort's daughter.
- Tomorrow we will be closing on the purchase of Airport Road Park. We will be purchasing it from the Airport Authority. We started this process 14 years ago.
- The City and County jointly put on the 4th of July fireworks display every year and there has been some discussion about holding off and not doing it. Staff and City staff will make a decision soon. Mr. Wilson stated that his recommendation would be to go ahead and hold it July 4th, people can social distance. He feels it is like the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds flying over the area last week, it is a tribute to the American Spirit and he feels that by July 4th with social distancing it should be fine. He doesn't think there will be any activities during the day like there was last year, but he does feel that fireworks are an important part of this.

After discussion by the Board, consensus of the Board is to go forward with the 4th of July fireworks display.

VIII. REPORT OF ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER

➤ Collection Centers

- Today was the first day for the new Collection Center Rules and Regulations. Signage looks really good, it has been cleaned up very nice. For the most part, everything went very smoothly.
- Beginning Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday this week we will have an illegal trash pick-up crew working. This will be an on-going process.
- Saturday, May 2nd, all bulky bins were full at Woodruff, Cabin, Carver and Akin, people were turned away. Still accepting metal and co-mingle cardboard and bagged household garbage at all centers.
- Collection Center Traffic Counts: Blalock – 337, Woodruff – 1307, Cabin – 739, Akin – 679, Carver – 1263. Total: 4325 vehicles.

➤ Fire Department

- Acquired and put into place new decontamination systems for apparatus.
- Working on department infection control plan update
- Georgia Fire Academy has advised they will be starting their classes on May 18th. Spalding County new hires will be attending that class. If something happens and they move it again, the Spalding County Fire Department is prepared to do internal training beginning the same date. So, one way or another the new hires will be starting classes on that date. She does not foresee the Fire Academy changing the date again. Currently they are only doing the basic training classes which will drop the student population by a significant number.

➤ **EMA**

- Currently working on paperwork for the federal declaration reimbursement with partner departments.
- The Pandemic Plan update has been completed
- Working on education for tornado safety and hurricane awareness week.
- Continuing to work on PPE Supply for partner departments

➤ **Animal Control**

Animal control has been closed to the public for a couple of weeks due to COVID-19. The Foundation didn't have the students to perform the spay and neutering so we fell behind, but luckily Auburn University brought in doctors last week to help during this time and we were able to send 6 dogs and 3 cats to be fixed and vaccinated.

➤ **Correctional Institute**

- There has been no testing on inmates or staff because no one has had any symptoms or been sick. In the event that someone shows symptoms, they are quarantined immediately and will be tested by DPH.
- Inmates and staff have been issued masks, the entire location will continue to be fogged with a disinfectant that has been approved by EPA and CDC daily.
- Staff is taking the temperature of every inmate every day and taking the temperature of staff before they enter the facility.
- There is a quarantine area set up and ready if needed and there is PPE available if needed.
- Three inmates and one staff member were quarantined after an employee at one of the facilities we provide janitorial services to tested positive for COVID. However, all have completed the 14 days and are healthy with no symptoms.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked about the detention area at the Jail, there are people who have been out there for a prolonged amount of time, have we seen any cases.

Mr. Wilson asked Sheriff Dix to address this.

Sheriff Dix stated that they have had one employee who has tested positive. He is recovered and is not positive now. There have been several other employees who were exposed at a residence, all of them were quarantined and are now released from the quarantine. We have had no reports of COVID-19 at the Spalding County Jail. We have guidelines posted for taking inmates into the jail, they are screened before they come in because we have had two inmates, suspects that were brought in that falsely claimed that they had been exposed to the virus. Those inmates were charged with making false statements and creating a public alarm. There is now signage outside of the facility and now that they understand it completely, we have had no more false claims since the signage was put up.

Inmates are screened by medical before they even come into the building, because we have dropped the population in the jail down to approximately half of what it

has been for some time. We have a cell block area that has been set up as a quarantine. As people come in, they are screened, they are booked and placed in that quarantine area where they remain for 14 days, they are allow out for one hour in rotation continuously. Everything is sanitized. We have inmate work crews on site that are going through the facility bleaching, cleaning and sanitizing all of the areas and all of the cell blocks during the day. He believes this has led to the fact they have not had any COVID cases in the Spalding County Jail.

They did have two inmates that were brought to the jail who refused to answer any of the screening questions required. They were turned away. They were brought in by an outside agency, they were turned away and told they would not be accepted into the jail until they were cleared by hospital staff. At that time, the arresting officers decided to release them.

Sheriff Dix stated that at this time they are good, they have plenty of PPE they can issue to the staff. We have been working with Deputy Chief Polk at the Spalding County Fire Department and everything seems to be going very well. We are being very particular about people that we let into our facility and we are making sure that we don't have anybody in the jail that is not a violent offender. Most of the inmates that have been released were people who were on probation and had less than 30 days left on their probation. We have had orders signed by Superior Court Judges and approved by the District Attorney's office to release inmates as we can as long as they are non-violent.

IX. REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS

Bart Miller – Stated he was glad to see everyone here this evening and he glad everything is going well at the jail, because he had seen in Atlanta where they had released a lot of people who had minor cases, so they could free up space and try to keep the population down.

He feels that we need to get on the indigent defense contract as quickly as we can, we don't need to prolong that. If we are going to have a workshop we need to set it up as soon as possible and go ahead and get this out of the way.

Rita Johnson – Stated it is good to be back, everyone needs to continue to practice social distancing, be safe, be well. It is good to start to come back to the "Land of the Living." It is good to be out.

She thanked the Sheriff's Office and Public Safety, thanked Mr. Wilson for keeping the Board informed of the numbers. Considering, our number look well and we appreciate you keeping us informed.

James Dutton – Stated he wanted to thank Mr. Wilson as well for the nightly report that is emailed to everyone of the number cases total. Those numbers really do look promising and he is heartened by that.

He wanted to thank the Sheriff for all he is doing, the fact that we have had no COVID cases at the jail speaks volumes for the Sheriff and God working together. He could not be more satisfied with the work that the Sheriff is doing not just at

the Jail, but in the general public as well. Here in Spalding County we can really be proud of our Sheriff.

We have two new Superior Court Judges, both from Upson County, Ben Miller, Jr. who was the Senior Juvenile Court Judge is now the newest who took Judge Crawford's place. Both he and Judge Coker who is the former District Attorney are impeccable men and are very honorable people. He can't wait to see the amazing things that they do. That said, because our D.A. was appointed as a Superior Court Judge we have a new D.A. in Marie Broeder. She is very happy to be the new D.A.

Commissioner Dutton stated that some of the courts give different levels of credit for community service. For example, at Henry County if you work at their Recycling Center on sorting, they will give you double credit. Clayton County, if you work at their homeless shelter they will give you double credit. He stated that he is planning to talk with Judge Thacker and his assistant about the littering problem in Spalding County and the possibility of increasing credit for community service dedicated to picking up litter.

Commissioner Dutton then stated that he is ready for the world to open back up. He is super ready to get back there. That said, at this time he would ask that citizens eat local and support local. There are mom and pop businesses here in town that will close if we don't support them at this time. It is time for us as a community to support these local businesses.

Commissioner Johnson then asked the Sheriff if the numbers for crime have decreased due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sheriff Dix responded that the numbers are down approximately 17% year to date from last year and about 37% from the last quarter of 2019 to first quarter of 2020. So, there has not been a huge impact from the people who were released early.

Chairperson Gwen Flowers-Taylor – Stated she wanted to thank Mr. Wilson and Ms. Garrison for doing an awesome job on the budget. There is just some much stuff and she doesn't look forward to wading through all of it, but she encourages the Board, as you wade through it to highlight and mark your questions so that we can ask appropriate questions. This will make our process of reviewing the budget much quicker, because we will have our concerns ready.

She advised that she shared with Mr. Wilson earlier in the day that she would like to see in the reports that he is sending to the Board a graph. A month ago, we were talking about flattening the curve, she has not seen the first graph, Deputy Chief Polk provides us with data every day. While the number of cases we are getting is significant, that is going to be a different curve than the death rate, which really doesn't look that bad for us. She feels a picture is worth a thousand words when you are saying we need to flatten the curve, but you don't know where the curve is. Having that for the Board and posted on the FaceBook page is important.

Chairperson Flowers-Taylor stated that she had also discussed the summary that the Board should have received after the Retreat. We need to make sure we are working toward the goals.

She also asked that staff look at the Pandemic Plan for Administration and tweak it to incorporate what has been learned during this time so if we're not here should an event like this become a reality again, then someone will know how it was handled during this pandemic.

She is glad that we made a decision regarding indigent defense, from our standpoint the only way we can have any control as Commissioners is over Customer Service. That is not to say there is anything wrong, but when you pay that kind of money to anybody, you need to be able to measure that the citizens whose money you are spending is actually getting what we are saying that we are offering to them. Hopefully, by June we will be able to make a decision regarding the indigent defense contract.

Mr. Wilson advised he had just received the COVID numbers for today, total 219 which is one down in positive cases and 11 deaths.

X. CLOSED SESSION

XI. ADJOURNMENT

***Motion/Second by Miller/Dutton to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously by all.***