

After Agenda

**Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Special Called Meeting
Monday, August 16, 2021
4:30 PM
Room 108, Annex Building**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex on Monday, August 16, 2021, beginning at 4:30 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners Rita Johnson, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Ryan Bowlden were present for the meeting. Commissioner Dutton joined the meeting at 4:47 p.m. Also present were County Attorney, Stephanie Windham and Interim County Manager, Michelle Irizarry to record the minutes.

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER) by Chairman Clay Davis.

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 Ryan Bowlden, District #4, led the Pledge to the Flag.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Chairman Davis would like to meet to discuss the items to be considered as part of the Joint Strategic Plan during the Archway Intergovernmental Retreat.

Ms. Irizarry advised that the idea for the Joint Strategic Plan came through the Archway Executive Committee working with Dr. Paula Sanford. This initiative is to lead a direction for the community's future as well as evaluate assets, challenges and opportunities. Dr. Sanford spoke with each member of the Executive Committee as well as members of the community and five core goals were developed: Achieving Prosperity, Economic Development, Education, Housing and Public Safety.

Each of the five core goals were assigned to committees with members from Spalding County, the City of Griffin, the Griffin-Spalding School Board and stakeholders within the Community.

Stephanie Windham then advised there were a number of organizations within the community involved including the Griffin Housing Authority, representatives from the Board of Realtors, representatives from the School System, just not elected officials. The only elected officials included were in the area of crime, both Marie Broeder and Patrick Shephard even though elected both have a unique and necessary perspective to that particular group.

Stephanie Windham and Newton Galloway were representatives from Spalding County on the Housing Committee.

Debbie Bell and David Luckie represented Spalding County on the Economic Development Committee.

Rachel Conort was the Spalding County representative on the Achieving Prosperity Committee and unfortunately, she is no longer with the County so when we lost Rachel we also lost our representative for this committee.

Michelle Irizarry was selected to represent Spalding County on the Education Committee.

Major Dwayne Jones was asked to represent Spalding County on the Public Safety Committee.

Ms. Irizarry then stated that she, Ms. Windham and Major Jones are here to represent those committees and update the Board and give you some insight as to some of the items discussed during these meetings,

Ms. Windham then advised that a Strategic Plan is designed to be a living document and presents hopes and plans for the future of the community. We have assigned lead organizations and partners to hopefully keep these designs current and moving forward. As part of housing a number of topics were discussed, but they kept coming back to financial literacy as an important factor because it doesn't matter what your income is if you don't know how to manage money, then a steady home is not going to be something you can achieve. They also talked about having a decent stock of rental properties and that is very high on the list of priorities. Other items discussed included down payment assistance that can be understood by the citizen on the street. There are programs available, but they are very confusing. Also, possibly establishing home repair funds for low income owners, she added that Habitat is an avenue for this initiative as they are uniquely qualified for this type of service. They have also involved the Heart of Georgia Board of Realtors which is not just Spalding County Realtors, it includes Lamar, Pike and Upson counties as well. A lot of this committee's discussion was around quality housing and ways to make the slum and blight in this community that seems to perpetuate no matter how hard we try to eliminate it we still have people other states purchasing property sight unseen because someone has told them that they don't have to do anything to the property, and they can rent it for \$500 bucks a month. We need to change that mindset and we talked about it is not going to be able to be done separately we really need to keep all of these partners together to work toward better housing for the community.

Ms. Irizarry advised she would update the Board on the Education Committee. Education serves as the anchor, and the goal is as a community, we will support all of our students and their transformation into future ready learners and contributing members of society. The committee met a number of times and came up with four main objectives for the community: Increasing the percentage of K5 students, performance at a proficiency level, increase attention on students planning careers and attending higher education institutions, improve early childhood education, school readiness and support development and education of teachers. The one problem that you do run into with Education is the curriculum that is mandated by the State and in some areas identified, if it doesn't fit in with that curriculum it cannot be implemented. Spalding County and the City of Griffin have been charged with partnering with the School System to provide opportunities in local government.

Major Dwayne Jones, Spalding County Sheriff's Office advised that one of the things discussed was develop and implement tracking and notification systems

for persons released on bond or rearrested while on probation. There is something in place, but we are going to look in to tweaking the current process. Expand the program to increase neighborhood awareness of violent crime. Measure of success would include percent reduction in violent crime. Educating the public on securing their property, not leaving keys and guns in cars and locking their cars.

Debbie Bell, Community Development Director was present to talk regarding the Economic Development committee. The goal of this committee was to increase Economic Opportunities and the quality of life across the community. Objective #1 was to increase the quality of life some of the items in this category will be to complete the transit plan, to enhance the visual appeal of certain corridors, to increase miles of sidewalk and repair sidewalks in urban areas. Objective #2 was to increase skill training for workers. Objective #3, increase community awareness and support for Economic Development. Many people do not understand what the Development Authority does, what it really means to them and to their community. Finally, Objective #4, increase water and sewer capacity overall, which is a driving factor in all development.

2. Chairman Davis requests an Executive Session to discuss or deliberate on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a county officer or employee as provided in O.C.G.A. §50-14-3(6).

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Dutton to enter into Executive Session at 5:29 p.m. to discuss or deliberate on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a county officer or employee as provided in O.C.G.A. §50-14-3(6). Motion carried unanimously by all.

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Dutton to close the Executive Session at 5:44 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Dutton to adjourn the meeting at 5:44 p.m.