

**After
Agenda**

**Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Special Called Meeting
Wednesday, August 19, 2021
10:00 AM
Room 108, Annex Building**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex on Wednesday, August 19, 2021, beginning at 10:12 a.m. with Vice Chairman James Dutton presiding. Commissioners Rita Johnson, and Ryan Bowlden were present for the meeting. Commissioner Flowers-Taylor and Chairman Clay Davis were absent from the meeting. Also present County Manager, Steve Ledbetter and Community Development Director, Debbie Bell to record the minutes.

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER) by Vice Chairman James R. Dutton.

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.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Bowlden to appoint an ex-officio County Clerk for Kathy Gibson during her absence. Motion carried unanimously by all.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consider appointment of an Ex-Officio County Clerk to function when the County Clerk is unavailable.

Commissioner Johnson advised that in the past William Wilson was the County Clerk and Kathy Gibson functioned as Ex-Officio County Clerk in his absence. Ms. Gibson was named County Clerk upon Mr. Wilson's retirement and she is requesting that County Manager Steve Ledbetter be named as Ex-Officio County Clerk.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Bowlden to name County Manager Steve Ledbetter as Ex-Officio County Clerk for Spalding County. Motion carried unanimously by all.

2. Consider an agreement from Georgia Tech for the Partnership for Inclusive Innovation. We will need Board approval to move forward with the two year "working" grant that will support our community in quickly achieving our goal of delivering high-speed Internet to our community. The deadline for the grant was March 8th, 2021, and Georgia Tech has extended an offer specifically to Spalding County in support of the effort to deliver Internet to our community.

Dr. Ledbetter then advised that this grant would not only afford us student participation to support the County's working effort to deliver high speed internet, but also tenured researchers and tenured professors who have more than 35 years of experience in the market of delivering high speed internet to communities.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that Georgia Tech selects four (4) communities every two years for this effort and for 2021, Spalding County is one of those four. There is no money to be expended from Spalding County, but the grant provides researchers and professors to come, be a part of our community, work through stakeholder and engage with our community to understand what we currently have and what we need moving forward to delivery high speed internet.

With regard to COVID this last year, many in the community were unable to communicate from home, students were unable to connect to complete assignments, those who could work from home could not access service and the last big item is telemedicine. So as we go through this journey in determining how we accomplish this service for our community it will be niche to have this level of support from Georgia Tech moving forward.

Staff recommendation is that we do move forward with this working grant.

Vice Chairman Dutton then asked if the approach that will be taken is a holistic approach or is it geared to any specific mode of internet.

Dr. Ledbetter advised that it would be a holistic approach and every option currently on the marked would be looked at. Everything that is currently available will be on the table for consideration.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Bowlden to approve an agreement from Georgia Tech for the Partnership for Inclusive Innovation. We will need Board approval to move forward with the two year "working" grant that will support our community in quickly achieving our goal of delivering high-speed Internet to our community.

Commissioner Johnson then stated that they had moved us up on the list and asked Dr. Ledbetter if he had any idea what we are talking about?

Dr. Ledbetter advised that the award of the grant will be Monday, August 23rd, in the City of Woodbury and there will be more than 7,500 people online who have been invited to see four grantee awardees be presented this grant opportunity. Monday will be the award program and they are looking to start this program early in September. We should have a good plan for moving forward just after the first of the year with implementation and evaluation opportunities by the summer of next year.

Vice Chairman Dutton then asked who the other communities involved were.

Dr. Ledbetter advised that it is Spalding County, the City of Woodbury, City of Concord and Pike County. He further stated that one of the great things going for us is this is going to be a regional opportunity so we will get a lot more

involvement from Georgia Tech because they will not have to go all over the State, they will be able to be right here with us. Even to the point that we may actually locate an office space for the researchers to be right here with us. We are getting in at the right time for the right reason.

Motion carried unanimously by all.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Johnson/Bowlden to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 a.m.