

After Agenda

Board of Commissioners of Spalding County Special Called Meeting Monday, October 6, 2021 2:00 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, October 6, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners James R. Dutton, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Rita Johnson were present for the meeting. Ryan Bowlden was absent from the meeting. Also present were County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter, County Attorney, Stephanie Windham and Administrative Secretary, Charlie Hearn 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 Gwen Flowers-Taylor, District #1, delivered the invocation.

III. PLEDGE TO FLAG

Commissioner Rita Johnson, District #3, led the Pledge to the Flag.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Flowers-Taylor to amend the agenda to include the adoption of the “Spalding County Pending Appeals-Other than Public Utilities for Tax Year 2021.”. Motion carried unanimously by all.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to amend the agenda to discuss a contract with Wav Com Internet, Phone and Television Service for the south portion of the county. Motion carried unanimously by all.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consider acceptance of the 2021 Revised Tax Levy.

Dr. Ledbetter then advised that the information that was initially provided in the Display Ad for the Tax Levy did not include the information for Tax Year 2016, this was a technicality, and it was corrected through publication of a second Display Ad containing this information. We have been informed by both legal counsel and the Tax Commissioner there was no need for additional Public Hearings, the only request is that the Board readopt the millage rate for 2022.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Davis to accept the 2021 Revised Tax Levy.

Commissioner Johnson then advised that the money resulting from the Board not accepting the rollback for the millage rate will go toward salaries for the first

responders and the County employees, none of that has changed this is just a technicality.

Motion carried 3-1 (Flowers-Taylor).

2. Consider adoption of the “Spalding County Pending Appeals-Other than Public Utilities for Tax Year 2021.”

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked if the Board could hear a public explanation for this request.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that the County’s obligation is to list those appeals other than Public Utility appeals at the time of our digest submission. If there are appeals from other tax years still pending, these appeals must also be listed and the tax years for each of these appeals must be reported to the Revenue Commissioner of the State of Georgia. The initial values in dispute total \$35,365,040. We are pleased to report that through negotiation and the hard work of our Tax Assessors Office, our current values in dispute have been reduced by 33% to \$23,397,459. The current goal is to have appeals value in dispute below 5% prior to September 1st of each year and our current rate is 1.92% compared to the net digest.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Dutton to adopt the “Spalding County Pending Appeals-Other than Public Utilities for Tax Year 2021.” Motion carried unanimously by all.

3. Consider approval of a contract with WavCom Internet, Phone and Television Service for the south portion of the county.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he had received a letter from WavCom and they are making an offer to start construction upon the completion of a grant application that WavCom is writing and administering to provide high speed internet to the southern part of our County along the corridor of 19-41. There are approximately 650 houses or businesses in this location.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then voiced her concerns regarding the company owning the equipment. She stated with the rates being proposed, she feels that the County should have a better negotiated rate. Currently, we don’t have a plan on which areas are to be connected to which EMC and that this matter was not advertised, and the public is not present to express their thoughts on this matter.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he has been in conversations with three EMC’s and Charter Spectrum and they are sharing with him that the numbers for Spalding County do not work for them and they are likely not to support Spalding County. The EMC responsible for the 19-41 area, the area indicated on the map presented is the only area that they will have responsibility for. Whether we approve to be a part of this grant program or not, there are actually going to be the ones to provide service and the Public Service Commission is the entity who sets the rates for these companies.

Both Pike and Upson Counties will be signing with WavCom in the immediate future, and they are investing a significantly larger amount into this project. It is

interesting how all of the bands of property across the State are being assigned to EMC's to provide highspeed internet across the State.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she would like to have more input on this matter before we take a public.

Dylan Watson with WavCom is looking to file the grant next Friday, October 15th, I will ask him if he can postpone until next Tuesday, so we will have the chance to vote on it at the next commission meeting.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Dutton to table the contract with WavCom Internet, Phone and Television Service for the south portion of the county until the next Commission Meeting. Motion carried unanimously by all.

Chairman Davis then stated that the next thing you know it is going to be January and we are going to be appointing people to Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Committees and this is the time we need to be thinking about the make up of these Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Committees. Are these entities doing what we as Commissioners have appointed them to do. Then start trying to find people to volunteer to serve.

Commissioner Johnson then asked if we need to schedule a work session to have this discussion.

Chairman Davis then stated that today we went through the Joint Strategic Plan, instead of us trying to take this document as a whole, it is his suggestion that each commissioner take one of those goals and be the "watcher" of that goal. He then stated that he would like Commissioner Flowers-Taylor to watch the "Prosperity" goal, Commissioner Dutton to watch the Economic Development goal, Commissioner Bowlden should watch the one on Public Safety, Commissioner Johnson would take Housing and Chairman Davis would take Education. Now these can be swapped around, but he is simply asking that we look at these goals and talk about them. He asked that the Board be able to respond to the goal they would like to follow at the next BOC.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Johnson/Davis adjourn the meeting at 2:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.