

After Agenda

Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Work Session
Wednesday, February 16, 2022
6:00 PM
Room 108, Annex Building

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex on Wednesday, February 16, 2022 beginning at 6:00 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners Rita Johnson, James Dutton, Ryan Bowlden and Gwen Flowers-Taylor were present for the Work Session. Also present were County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter, County Attorney, Stephanie Windham, Citizen Engagement Specialist, DeAndre Smith and County Clerk, Kathy Gibson 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 James R. Dutton, District #2, delivered the invocation.

III. PLEDGE TO FLAG

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

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discuss the proposed FY2023 Budget and focus for ARP Funding.

Dr. Ledbetter advised the Board that staff has been reviewing the FY2023 budget with the departments. There are two things that we need to schedule is to have one or more discussions with the Board members on the draft budget for FY2023 by department, so that we can have your must haves and it would be nice to have the Board of Commissioner's input into what is going on.

Some of the things that staff has been discussing include: First, not bringing any additional personnel on unless it is absolutely essential. Second, looking at plans that have been in play for the last few years, a new fire station location on the northeast side of the County is one of the considerations this year from the Fire Department. This location is being considered because the owner of the property is looking to donate a piece of land in the area of Teamon Road just south of Heron Bay. The donation will include the cost of grading the property and preparing it for a pad to be poured. This would save the county approximately \$700,000 and would reduce the amount required for the building to approximately \$2.06 million which is the estimate the Fire Department has for that facility. In order to outfit that fire station with an engine and a mini pumper would be approximately \$1.9 million. If we are going to erect this fire station then we need to go ahead and begin the process of purchasing the two pieces of equipment that would be needed to go into that fire station, as delivery of equipment is 18-24 months after it is ordered.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked for a map showing the current location of every Fire Station in the Spalding County system. She feels there are areas in the County that currently are not being served. She feels like before any decision is made, we need to sit down and look at the County as a whole.

Brian Davidson did offer property closer to Sun City Peachtree. He actually offered two pieces of property. The Fire Department sat down and did an evaluation of what they felt would be the best piece of property for response time and the piece of property located on Teaman Road in between SR155 and Jordan Hill seemed to be the best place for this station in light of all of the new construction currently underway and the proposed construction in this area for the near future.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that the County is behind in the establishment and building of fire stations. According to his calculations we are currently about three fire stations behind. The County's plan indicated that fire station eight should have been built two years ago, nine was to be built last year and station 10 should be on schedule to be built this year. The one being discussed would be fire station eight.

Chairman Davis asked Dr. Ledbetter to get a map showing the current fire stations and the areas they cover and then have Chief Polk and Chief Byrd come in and talk with the Board about their recommendations and why they are recommending the Teamon Road location.

ARP Funding – Spalding County received a total of \$13 million for ARP Funds. The initial directions for these funds were for Broadband, Water, Sewer and the Lost Revenue. The first part of this money has been received, we have \$6.5 million budgeted in a special account. The second installment is expected between June and August of this year.

Three weeks ago, we received the Treasury's final rule, and in the final rule Counties can forego the Lost Revenue Calculation formula and instead use the standard allowance up to \$10 million towards provisioning government services. There are still some stipulations around the money, it has to fit within certain guidelines, and we are still working through those guidelines, but we feel confident that what we have heard from the Board will fall into place.

Dr. Ledbetter then stated that what staff has heard from the Board so far is we have approximately \$175,000 that has already been utilized for broadband, to provide for the wireless mesh ring going around the County. The City of Orchard Hill is also looking to utilize this wireless mesh system and put an antenna on the silo in Orchard Hill. This will not cost the County any money as the City of Orchard Hill is funding that installation.

Additionally, \$3 million in proceeds will go to the repair of the jail. We have had discussions around the City Park Pool, splash pads, the possibility of a morgue and we have had discussions on how to engage sewer in parts of the County to stimulate economic growth. The subtotal brings us to \$7.85 million with a remainder of almost \$2 million for additional projects.

Community Schools was then introduced as a discussion point. Commissioner Flowers-Taylor feels that the programming for these schools should be the Griffin-Spalding School Board's responsibility and that Spalding County needs

to hire two part time people to make sure the Community Schools are open on the days they are supposed to be open and set up to receive people, but the programming should be handled by the School Board.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor also expressed her concern regarding the school that is being proposed for this program to start in. It is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from the Fairmont Community Center and will have an effect on the programming currently being offered at Fairmont. Why would you offer this program at a school where Parks and Recreation already has community programming? She doesn't feel this would be fruitful because there is so much going on over there already. She feels the programming at a location where there is not currently anything going on would provide more benefit to the community.

Dr. Ledbetter stated he is looking for the Board to approve his moving forward with this program. He further advised that he has a meeting with Mr. Simmons on Monday to discuss the Community Centers. Dr. Ledbetter also advised that we need to establish a job description for this position and once we have a job description, he will then ask Mr. Neville to find the funding required for the position so that we will know what the range is going to be for the position and that is what staff will bring back to the Board.

Chairman Davis then advised that he wants to have \$500,000 per year for the next two years from the ARP funds to establish this program, then the program will need to be budgeted through the County funding going forward.

Dr. Ledbetter then stated that one of the things we have been talking about for the last six months is economic development and how we move forward with economic development. Having had the opportunity to sit through the water and sewerage facility authority meetings for a number of months. It is interesting to hear how sewer is progressing or not progressing in the County, and this is a big economic opportunity for us. How do we push forward with sewer, recognizing that \$3 million above the \$10 million is earmarked for broadband, water and sewer. It is not earmarked for lost anymore because they took that away from us. We have good momentum with broadband right now for a very small amount of money. There is a Phase 2 grant application being released in the next few weeks and more money will be allocated for broadband from the Governor's Office in October. He feels broadband is really being funded statewide.

After considerable discussion consensus of the Board is to increase the Road Resurfacing Budget to \$1.2 million for the FY2023 Budget Year. The intention of the Board is to raise this amount incrementally until it is to a point where it can manage road projects in Spalding County.

Consensus of the Board is to allocate up to \$500,000 out of the ARP money to establish and implement an effective Code Enforcement Program for Spalding County.

2. Discussion to focus on the "Raising the Bar" initiative, what staff has prepared so far and what the Board is looking for in this area.

Dr. Ledbetter advised he has sent information to the Board regarding "Raising the Bar" and what that would mean. Design standards, construction standards, roads, infrastructure, and codifying ordinances before the end of 2022, which he heard loud and clear from Commissioner Dutton who asked for a timeline.

One of the things we have talked about over the last few months is providing Brad Vaughn in Community Development some support. We do have a Community Development Director coming in, Mr. Harmit Bedi, who will be joining us on Tuesday of next week. This will afford us the opportunity to invest in Brad Vaughn as well and building out that legacy opportunity.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he did have a conversation with Bill Ross on Monday and he asked if he could point us in the right direction to begin updating and upgrading our zoning ordinances for the County. Recognizing that our zoning ordinances are a little dated. Mr. Ross asked if we could spend some time together and have this discussion because he is very interested in performing that level of work for us. He has done this type of work on a significant number of projects. We do have the funding to move this forward and the funding would come directly from what was allocated for the Comprehensive Plan, we budgeted \$250,000 and we are only expending \$207,000 so there is money sitting there to engage Bill Ross and his group to move forward in upgrading the zoning ordinances for Spalding County.

Consensus of the Board is to contract out the update of the Zoning Ordinance so that we can get this done.

Commissioner Dutton left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

3. County Manager to give a high-level overview of the following projects:

SDS

Dr. Ledbetter then gave an overview of Service Delivery Strategy and what it does. Without SDS and it being verified by the Department of Community Affairs, the local representative authority will not be eligible to receive any state permits or financial assistance. Staff is working very hard to make sure that we meet the deadlines for Service Delivery Strategy. Our deadline this year is October 31, 2022.

Dr. Ledbetter then asked Chairman Davis to give a short overview of what was discussed during the 3-G plus meeting last week.

Chairman Davis stated that listening to Jessica O'Connor, the City Manager and Dr. Ledbetter, the County Manager, talking about individual SDS Intergovernmental Agreements was absolutely comforting to him that we are on the same channel. His belief is that there are a number of issues that if you consider them individually, isn't the best thing for us, but if you go to the next level it would work against us. There is some give and take in there depending on budget restraints and what we are willing to do in certain areas. He feels that we are in great shape. At this time, it looks like we are not going to have to do any mediation and Mayor Hollberg stated that he is confident in the results of this exercise and he believes we can do it individually. The City will approve, the County will approve, and it will be done. He feels we are that far along and Chairman Davis is very pleased with what is happening as far as SDS. The three areas of interest are Animal Control (Duo function for us), 800 MHz and the Parks, and we will talk more about this later on.

LOST

This is a discussion that Dr. Ledbetter and Ms. O'Connor are going to have. Some of the things that are being done in the background is that we are looking through

all the options on how to do formula calculations for LOST, whether it is population, property tax receipts, government expenditures, States percentage allocations or LOST equalization funds. He has included a highlight of what each one of those are doing and he is working the formulas so he will be well prepared for the discussion he will be having with the City. Dr. Ledbetter then stated that through the discussion that he and Ms. O'Connor are having, they are very close to an agreement to bring back to the respective boards for consideration, and then we can move forward with the LOST negotiations.

Comp Plan

Dr. Ledbetter advised that under the current County Ordinance, if you look at Section 604(d) the Planning Commission is responsible for maintaining and updating the Spalding County Comprehensive Plans so that it may provide a current database on which decisions on proposed amendments to this Ordinance may be made and utilize sound planning principals. The Planning Commission is mandated to be part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Dr. Ledbetter then asked other than the Planning Commission, how would the Board like to place members of the community into the Steering Committee? Members of the Steering Committee are responsible for bringing the right community leaders into the discussion around our Comprehensive Plan. He then asked how the Board would like to allocate members to the Steering Committee?

Chairman Davis stated that he has recommended 5 individuals be appointed by the County and 5 individuals be appointed by the City of Griffin.

Stephanie Windham then suggested a robust application for those who want to be on the Planning Commission.

Chairman Davis stated that he feels that 10 people, the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners are a good number. Anything larger would be too big to work, but when the Public Hearings happen, those are the opportunities when the citizens have their opportunity.

SPLOST Close-Out

The debt service is \$3,049,500, and it is sitting in the bank and is due July 1st of this year. We have zero monies remaining in the Bond account and there is \$10,217,429 in the project funding to continue the projects that we currently have underway. The Rosenwald School is funded through the end of the project with what is expected through their final build.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked where is the funding for the Gym? Where was that money to come from?

Ms. Windham advised that the funding for the gym was to come from the prior SPLOST where the project for that funding was not able to be done.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated she would like for that money to be placed somewhere, where we know this is what that funding is for.

Dr. Ledbetter advised he would work to get the 2008 SPLOST Funding into a category that will provide full transparency. The request for this meeting was only for the 2016 SPLOST Close-Out so that is what we are presenting this evening.

Chairman Davis then advised it is his understanding that there are no unfunded SPLOST projects going on right now. Dr. Ledbetter stated that is correct. We are only funding the projects that are part of the SPLOST program.

TSPLOST Start-Up

Dr. Ledbetter advised we are well underway with the TSPLOST. He has met with Paragon and asked that they go ahead and draft Task Order Forms to begin the bid process for Phase I road resurfacing and the sidewalk projects. The plan is to open award bids for resurfacing and sidewalks the week of April 4th. This will be the first week that we take monies in under the TSPLOST program.

We are in the process of bonding the money for the first two years of projects. All the paperwork will be presented to the Board at the Regular Meeting in March for consideration and signature so that we can move forward with the Bonding.

Chairman Davis expressed the importance of getting the word out on social media about the TSPLOST and what is happening with the funding. We have asked the citizens to trust us, and we need to make sure they are aware that we are doing what we promised.

4. Update the Board of Commissioners on the upcoming Appreciation Luncheon for appointments to Boards, Commissions or Committees.

Dr. Ledbetter advised that we would meet Monday, February 21st, at the Senior Center for our Appreciation Lunch and Learn. Ms. Windham and Dr. Ledbetter have worked to put together the training. The lunch will begin at noon, community members will sit in the district where they live. So, you will get the chance to meet with those members who are a part of your district. The training session is scheduled between 1:00 and 3:30 p.m. and will include mock and role play sessions. Then we will do an out briefing between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m. and the Board will again have the chance to ask and answer questions from those who are in your districts that are a part of our boards and commissions.

5. Consider request from County Manager Steve Ledbetter to go into Executive Session to discuss the future acquisition of real estate as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(4) and discussion or deliberation 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/Johnson to enter into Executive Session to discuss the future acquisition of real estate as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(4) and discussion or deliberation 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) at 7:41 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Johnson to close the Executive Session at 8:14 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Bowlden to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.