

After Agenda

**Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Special Called Meeting
Thursday, July 28, 2022
4:00 PM
Room 108, Spalding County Annex Building**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Thursday, July 28th, 2022, in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex Building, beginning at 4:00 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners James Dutton, Ryan Bowlden and Rita Johnson were present for the meeting. Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor was absent from the meeting. Also present were County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter, County Attorney, Stephanie Windham (who arrived at 4:30 p.m.) and Spalding County Water and Sewerage Facilities Authority Office Manager, 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

The Invocation was delivered by Commissioner James Dutton, District #2.

III. PLEDGE TO FLAG

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

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion surrounding the percentage of IMPACT fees to be charged.

Dr. Ledbetter introduced Page Hatley and Bill Ross to make a presentation to the Board.

Ms. Hatley stated that when we were last before the Board she advised that the Impact fees study is progressing and the Capital Improvement Element would be coming back for a Public Hearing. The CIE drills down to the projects that are eligible for project funding as part of this update to your program. As we progress forward, the CIE will be approved and submitted to the State for final review.

Then they will come back and refine some key parts, one is an update to your development impact fee ordinance. Because of the age of the current ordinance they have already drafted some redline copies for the attorney's review to make sure it is consistent with the State Development Impact Fee Act. The fees that are to be adopted will need to go into the Impact Fee Ordinance, so you will have to amend that to consider a change in your fee schedule.

Ms. Hatley stated that they are here today to discuss what needs to be considered in adopting the fees. The first part of this process was the methodology report and included in that report was a maximum fee schedule that says "based on our

calculations, based on population projected to come on in the next 20 years, employment, housing growth and based on the type of capitol projects needed to serve future growth, then what are the associated impact fees that could be charged to pay for the capitol facilities.” There is a table in the methodology report that establishes the ceiling and that is what this briefing is framed around.

The methodology report includes a maximum fee schedule for all land uses. The trigger is when building permits are issued there is an associated fee that would be assessed as to what the impact fee would be for new development. She then gave examples based on the fee schedule in the methodology report.

Ms. Hatley then explained there are two fee schedules in the methodology report one for development inside of the City of Griffin and one for development in the County. The only difference in the two is the impact fee is lessened for those living inside the City of Griffin as the City provides fire services within the city limits.

Mr. Ross then discussed pricing relative to construction costs. He stated that you are looking at the maximum fee when you are looking at the numbers in the report. He then asked if the Board wanted to go with the maximum fee or go lower. The idea behind this is if you charge the maximum impact fee for a single family house, then the average single family house being built in this county within the last 12 months has averaged about \$318,000. He then used the example of a maximum fee applied to a single family house. The \$7,000+ would be a little over 2% of the cost of the sales price. The impact fee is what it costs the builder over and above the construction costs for a project.

Ms. Hatley then presented how their costs projected are compared to other counties. Henry County is currently undertaking a major amendment to their program, so they don't have their final numbers at this time. Their fee that has been on their books for about 20 years for a single family home is about \$1,600.

Mr. Ross added that with inflation they are currently losing money at this rate. This is not news to anybody, they are aware they are losing money. Mr. Ross then stated it looks like they may be looking at adopting a fee around \$5,000 for a single family house or a little more than that. We won't know until Tuesday when their commission meets. This is a compromise number, much less than they could charge, but it seems to be a number that everyone is happy with. In the old program, roads were not included; however, now roads are to be included as an addition. Their road plan is now in there and on the maximum fee schedule it accounts for about 40% of the maximum fee that they could charge.

Ms. Hatley stated there are categories for Parks & Recreation, Libraries, Public Safety and Roads which Spalding County does have.

Commissioner Dutton then asked why roads are not included as part of the Impact Fees?

Ms. Hatley stated they are currently utilizing the categories that are already in place. That is not to say that roads can't be added to the program. Because its inception did not identify roads, we have simply updated the categories that are

already in place.

Commissioner Dutton then stated that is a change that the Board would make?

Ms. Hatley responded yes and if there ever is a desire to address this then we need to be clear it says roads and that is what it means, it is not a transportation fee. It simply adding capacity.

Ms. Hatley then advised that Parks & Recreation in every community is always very high because there are typically a lot of projects and they all have higher prices associated with them. Then for public safety, especially in Spalding County there are sub-categories that we looked at like the detention facility and its needs for expansion. The price tag for that really shot up that number. What you don't see and what we don't know is what the maximums are in the other communities methodology reports. The numbers reflected are the numbers that are adopted, so they could have had higher maximum ceilings that were established.

Ms. Hatley then stated that Cherokee County was updated approximately a year and a half ago. Walton County went from collecting zero to the numbers presented approximately two years ago. Dawson County was updated in 2018 and they are currently working on another update there. Rockdale County updated their fees and program in 2019.

Commissioner Dutton then asked if we could add roads to this.

Ms. Hatley then stated that it would require updates to the methodology report and they would have to go back and change the scope and produce the same documentation to do that.

Mr. Ross stated that he would recommend that we go ahead and adopt this plan as presented and get started on getting things done then later add the addition of roads. The difference between what you are currently charging and what you could be charging is a pretty major step. He would suggest that the Board go ahead and get that one in place, then ask them to turn around and add roads.

Ms. Hatley stated there is no deadline for the Impact Fees, they have been tracking with the Comprehensive Plan that does have a deadline. When a CIE is amended it automatically updates the Comp Plan. She agrees with Mr. Ross that the Board should go ahead and get this done and track it with the Comp Plan. She just wants to make it clear the county is not under any deadline as far as the Impact Fee is concerned, it is only the Comp Plan that the State mandates must be adopted by the end of October.

Ms. Hatley stated that they could come back and look at animal control and roads and that amendment could happen at a later date because the Impact Fee is not tied to anything that the State will be looking at with a target date.

Chairman Davis then stated that this is something that we can go ahead and approve at this time and at a later date, once the information has been compiled revisit.

Mr. Ross then asked if the County has a recent Transportation Plan.

Ms. Hatley stated that Spalding County's Transportation Plan is currently being updated as well.

Mr. Ross stated that he would like to take a look at how many of the road projects in the Transportation Plan would be eligible. If the proposed projects create capacity then they can be considered.

Ms. Hatley then stated that in some communities where they have a robust multi use path system or greenway plan then that is something that we can account for under Parks & Recreation. It would be a sub-chapter.

Dr. Lebetter stated that we have included the Trail Outline to Blue Cyprus for consideration.

Mr. Ross confirmed that they are in the Parks & Recreation section.

Chairman Davis then asked Ms. Hatley to tell us what are our options and what is the number?

Ms. Hatley stated that this goes into the Impact Fee Ordinance and the ordinance has to have two hearings. If we want to try to capture that with an adoption in early October, that is why we are asking for a decision now.

Chairman Davis then asked Dr. Ledbetter to give his perspective.

Dr. Lebetter stated that running an analog against the adjoining counties he feels is well in line. What we don't want is to discourage growth within our community. What we do want is to make sure we are in line with those counties surrounding us and we are on parity with them. We need to make sure that we can do what the Board of Commissioners want us to do with these impact fees. We need to be able to take care of the Library and Parks & Rec and he does agree with the Board that we need to add in either now or as a change order to continue on after we adopt what we currently have. He agreed that we need to include roads on the impact fee so that we don't overburden our taxpayers for the roads that we put in. He would encourage the Board of Commissioners to use Henry County as the analog for what we use as an impact fee.

Dr. Ledbetter then stated that Mr. Ross and Ms. Hatley are looking at around \$5,300 for a single family home as an impact fee charge. With the number of houses that will be moving into our community in the next 3-5 years, that will be a significant amount of money in support of the projects that we have in play and that would be his recommendation to the Board.

Chairman Davis then asked what the current impact fee is in the County.

Ms. Hatley advised that currently it is approximately \$1,700 for a house.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that making that jump would allow us to maintain the level of services that we currently have with the all of the new growth that is coming into our community. If we don't make a significant jump today, it is going to be hard to catch up as we move forward. He further stated that he is concerned about this.

Commissioner Johnson then asked what it would mean for the average taxpayer if we decide to make this change today.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that it is not a tax on the individual, it is in line with the development process on the cost of a house going in. The increase in housing shouldn't be a burden on the current taxpayer, it should be a burden on those who come in to our community and build a brand new home so that we can continue to provide the level of service that we currently offer.

Commissioner Dutton then stated that the current residents have paid money to get the services to the level they are today. If new people move in and don't contribute equally to that, then it would diminish what the people who are currently living in the county have paid into it and it's not fair to those people.

Chairman Davis then asked the Board to talk about a number. The maximum is \$7,414 and Dr. Ledbetter's recommendation is \$5,300.

Mr. Ross stated that we can wait until Tuesday to see what they do in Henry County since many of the developers who work in Henry County also work in Spalding County. We are talking 2% which the builder will tack onto the cost of the house. The home buyer pays the impact fee, the builder pays interest on his construction loan to get to the point of sale.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he feels Tuesday will give us a good idea on what the analog will be between Henry and Spalding County. He doesn't see this as running the developers away, it sees it as an opportunity to take care of those citizens who move into our community much better than if we keep the impact fee the same as it is today.

Ms. Hatley stated that once we know what Henry County does we can get the information back to Dr. Ledbetter who can send it out to the Board. Ms. Hatley stated that there are opportunities for exemptions that are already in the ordinance. If there are extenuating circumstances with regard to economic development, the ordinance does give guidance on how to address those scenarios.

2. Update for the Board on the LOST Renegotiation.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he and City Manager, Jessica O'Connor are working through the LOST and updating the Service Delivery Strategy Intergovernmental Agreements and their next meeting is tomorrow morning. He is pleased with the cooperation we are experiencing with the City and the City Staff. We are looking to bring back a good report to you on or about September 1st.

3. Discuss dates to perform a performance evaluation on County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter and County Clerk, Kathy Gibson and the format to be used for these evaluations.

Chairman Davis advised that he would like to for the evaluations to not be done in conjunction with a regular scheduled meeting. He wants to set a separate date to do the two evaluations. August 16th is the County Manager's one year anniversary, his contract with us is for 18 months and we could wait until the

end of the contract. He is against that, every year he needs to be evaluated as that is what we do with our employees and then he has six months to be able to address his contract.

Consensus of the Board is to set a separate time to do these evaluations.

Chairman Davis then presented the Board with the format that regular employees are graded on and he feels it important that Dr. Ledbetter be considered in the same format. We can do the two evaluations back to back.

Consensus of the Board is to hold the evaluations on August 24th at 5:00 p.m.

4. Consider discussion on additional funding needed for the Fairmont/Heritage Park Gymnasium.

Dr. Ledbetter advised that several years ago the Board reviewed the funds received from SPLOST and learned that there would be extra funds available through the collection of the SPLOST. At that time the Board agreed to spend \$4 million to complete the Fairmont Gymnasium. The architect and engineers moved forward and in the next few weeks the RFP will go out to bid the work. The intent is to inform the Board that we continue to hold that \$4 million for the completing of this project. He wanted to make sure that everyone is still in agreement this what we need to do.

5. Discussion surrounding the possibility of future development of Splash Pads in Spalding County and possible funding sources for this initiative.

Chairman Davis then stated that he wants to make sure that the Board is in agreement with doing a Splash Pad. The issue at this point is location.

Commissioner Dutton stated that he feels we need to try to do this in more than one spot. He feels we should try to do one at the Aquatic Center and another next to Fairmont or on Carver Road. He does feel one needs to be placed more convenient to kids either at Fairmont or Carver Road.

Commissioner Johnson stated that we can go ahead and do one now and possibly look at doing one in the future with Impact Fees. We can't do one with Impact Fees now because we would not be expanding a service we currently have. If we have one then we can talk about other locations.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that is correct, we would have to have one in place then we would have to go back and do an amendment to our Capital Improvement Element for the Impact Fees do add an expansion of splash pads to the list of projects. We have to get one in the ground first. He stated that he only has enough money in the Parks & Recreation budget that he can squeeze out for one splash pad.

Chairman Davis stated that he would like to get one in the ground. He is in agreement with Commissioner Dutton on others, but we have to get one in the ground.

Dr. Ledbetter then added that he feels we could push hard with the civic clubs to participate as a sponsor for an additional splash pads. He thinks Rotary may be inclined to support this. Let's get one in the ground and push on the civic

clubs to add an additional splash pad.

T.J. Imberger stated that he did a cost estimate on one approximately 45' x 45' and the cost for that was approximately \$160,000. If we look for sidewalks around it, trash cans, benches and that type of thing, he believes it would run about \$200,000.

Chairman Davis then wanted to make sure that the Board was in agreement on location. Commissioner Johnson is talking Carver Road. We've talked about Carver, Fairmont and City Park, he then asked for everyone's thoughts on where it should go.

Commissioner Bowlden stated he is in agreement that we need to get one on the ground and we can work in the other two. Put it in a location where it would be best suited for the most people to get to and he is leaning toward Carver Road or Fairmont.

Commissioner Dutton stated we should look where we can get more bang for the buck and we don't have to put up fences or whatever.

Chairman Davis then asked if Carver Road would be the best place for reduction in costs for fencing, parking, bathrooms and other considerations?

Mr. Imberger advised that restrooms and parking are already in place.

Commissioner Johnson stated that she has talked with Commissioner Flowers-Taylor and she is also okay with Carver Road.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he has instructed Mr. Imberger to take a look at multiple locations to install splash pads. Whichever location the Board decides to move forward with, just know that we have multiple locations and we will be coming to you with costs for splash pads at other locations. We can establish a priority list for where we can start installing splash pads across the community.

Chairman Davis stated that he would like to make sure that we look for space around fire stations as well.

V. ADJOURNMENT

***Motion/Second by Johnson/Dutton to adjourn the meeting at 5:04 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously by all.***