



Agenda
Board of Commissioners - Special Called Meeting
June 27, 2023 5:00 PM
Room 108, Annex Building

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Tuesday, June 27, 2023, in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex Building, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners James Dutton, Gwen Flowers-Taylor, Ryan Bowlden and Rita Johnson were present for the meeting. Also present were County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter, County Attorney, Stephanie Windham, Community Services Director, Charles Reese and County Clerk, Kathy Gibson to record the minutes.

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

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR CELL PHONES AND ALL OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

II. INVOCATION

1. Commissioner James Dutton, District #2 delivered the Invocation.

III. PLEDGE TO FLAG

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

Motion/Second by Bowlden/Johnson to amend the Agenda to include a new item #1 under Agenda Items to accommodate a Public Hearing on the FY2024 Budget. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Dr. Ledbetter then asked that the Agenda be amended to introduce two new employees for Spalding County.

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Dutton to amend the Agenda before the Consent Agenda to include introduction of two new employees. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Dr. Ledbetter then introduced MeAeyko Saunders, the new Human Resource Director.

Ms. Saunders stated that she is excited to be in Spalding County, she can see numerous opportunities and is looking forward to working with the employees and the Board.

Jinna Garrison introduced Erica Dye who will be training to replace Ms. Garrison as the Administrative Services Director. Ms. Dye is a local person, she is from Orchard Hill and graduated from Griffin High School and she has all of educational background required for a Finance Director. She simply needs to learn how Spalding County does things.

Ms. Dye stated that she appreciates the opportunity and is looking forward to working with everyone.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Davis advised that all of the items on the Consent Agenda have been approved on first reading. He stated that he would read the items on the Consent Agenda and then ask the Board for a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. If there are any items that need to be discussed, those items can be considered once the remaining items have been approved.

1. Consider approval on second reading a Resolution A-23-01 to Amend UDO, Article II, Definitions of Terms Used to replace Section 202(RRR) – General Definitions – Use, Non-conforming; to Amend UDO, Article II, Definitions of Terms Used to add Section 203(DD') – Housing Definitions – Planned manufactured home community, non-conforming; to Amend UDO, Article IV, General Procedures to replace Section 403, Continuance of Non-conforming Lots, Uses and Structures.
2. Consider approval on second reading an Ordinance A-23-02 to Amend the Unified Development Ordinance of Spalding County, Georgia, Article 21 Sensitive Land-Watershed Protection District: Section 2103 – Definitions to amend subsection (E) to define “Perennial Stream;” to Amend Section 2106 – Uses Exempt from S-2 Criteria to add subsection (E) to identify “Master Planned Developments.”
3. Consider approval on second reading an Ordinance A-23-03 to Amend the Unified Development Ordinance of Spalding County, Georgia, Article 4, General Procedures; Section 411 – Variances; Section 413 Special Exceptions; Section 413(A)-(G), (H)-(N); Section 414 Amendments to Comply with the requirements of House Bill Section 1405, as codified in Georgia Zoning Procedures Law, O.C.G.A. § 36-66-1, et se
4. Consider approval on second reading an Ordinance A-23-04 to Amend the Unified Development Ordinance of Spalding County, Georgia, to amend Appendix D – Spalding County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance by replacement in its entirety.
5. Consider approval on second reading an Ordinance A-23-05 to Amend the General Code of Spalding County, Georgia, to amend Chapter 4.-Illicit Discharge and Connection Stormwater Ordinance
6. Consider approval on second reading Ordinance A-23-06 to Amend the General Code of Spalding County, Georgia, to amend Appendix D – Spalding County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance and add to the General Ordinance.
7. Consider approval on second reading the FY 2023 Year-End Budget Amendments.

Motion/Second by Johnson/Bowlden to approve the items on the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

V. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Conduct a Public Hearing on the FY 2024 Budget.

***Motion/Second by Dutton/Flowers-Taylor to open a Public Hearing.
Motion carried by a unanimous vote.***

Brittany Cobb, 1205 County Line Road, Griffin, GA, expressed her concerns regarding Orchard Hill remaining a City within Spalding County.

***Motion/Second by Johnson/Dutton to close the Public Hearing.
Motion carried by a unanimous vote.***

2. Consider adoption of the FY 2024 Budget Ordinance on second and final reading.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that we have covered the budget a number of times and at this time he would be happy to answer any questions the Board may have with respect to the FY24 Budget. Dr. Ledbetter then added there were three items of particular concern: Spay and Neuter to relieve the overcrowding at the Animal Shelter, insuring that we have adequate funding for the Land Bank Authority in support of reducing the inventory of current properties owned by LBA and then funds for programming of the Economic Prosperity Initiative Program.

Dr. Ledbetter then stated that staff has reviewed these requests and provided two options for the Board's consideration.

Option #1

Griffin + Spalding Development Authority funded at: \$400,000
(a reduction of \$100,000 from recommended budget)

Placed into the following areas:

- Spay & Neuter to relieve overcrowding at Animal Shelter \$ 25,000
- Land Bank Authority in support of reducing current (total)
- Inventory of houses owned by LBA (in addition to the current funding level of \$35,000) \$ 65,000
- Programming for Economic Prosperity Initiative to be Placed as a line item in the Recreation Budget \$ 10,000

Option #2

Griffin + Spalding Development Authority funded at \$450,000
(a reduction of \$50,000 from recommended budget)

Placed into the following areas:

- Spay & Neuter to relieve overcrowding at Animal Shelter \$ 25,000
- Land Bank Authority in support of reducing current (total)
- Inventory of houses owned by LBA (in addition to the current funding level of \$35,000) \$ 15,000
- Programming for Economic Prosperity Initiative to be Placed as a line item in the Recreation Budget \$ 10,000

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that her preference would be Option 1. The reason she requested this reduction for the Development Authority is because at

one point we weren't funding them at all, and we have worked our way up to funding them at \$200,000. After a meeting with David Luckie we were under the impression that if we could get to \$500,000 they would be able to purchase more land and that is how we got to where we are now. Currently, they have not been able to secure that piece of land.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that the direction we are hoping to take with the Land Bank Authority is going to require more than the \$35,000 we currently have budgeted and she would like to have some in reserve should the City notify us they need additional funding for the Land Bank. She added that many people don't know what the Economic Prosperity Initiative is, this is made up of a group of people who did all the community work at Rosenwald. They help UGA oversee the garden. They currently have electricity and water bills that are being paid by the Housing Authority. She is asking for this funding so the County can become an active participant in this group.

Commissioner Dutton agreed that all these initiatives need funding, but his concern with Option #1 is that it would actually lower their current budget. We would be moving from \$450,000 to \$400,000. Keeping them at the same budget makes a lot of sense, but how do we get the Land Bank Funding to where we want it to be. This is something he has been working on for a while. He then introduced the possibility of reducing the Elections budget. Commissioner Dutton then outlined a possibility of going from the electronic machines to paper ballots. The issue is, can the Board of Elections do that? He advised that Lamar, Athens/Clark County and other Counties have implemented paper ballots and instead of increasing the budget by \$483,000 we ask the Elections Board to consider paper ballots and reduce their budget to \$433,000 and we move that difference into the Land Bank. Then take Option #2 and move that \$50,000 from the Development Authority.

Commissioner Johnson then asked if we could defer to the County Attorney for her guidance here?

Ms. Windham stated that as a Lamar County resident and voter she can tell the Board that they have never used paper ballots in the 15 years she has lived and voted there. Including in the last election. Perhaps the City of Barnesville or the City of Milner have used paper ballots, but laws guiding municipalities are different. The law is clear and unambiguous OCGA 21-1-300(A)(1) reads: The equipment used for casting and counting votes in County, State and Federal Elections shall be the same in each County in this State and shall be provided to each County by the State as determined by the Secretary of State. That is currently the Dominion Voting Machines which are certified by the Georgia Secretary of State and until the Secretary of State determines that we do not use those machines, we are required by law to remain uniform as a County government. Municipalities are treated differently.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked how the Elections Representative feels about this?

Ms. Windham advised that the Elections Supervisor is here this evening and we have talked about the many unfunded mandates that have been passed on to our Board of Elections by the State Legislature and the numbers are staggering in the amount that we are required to provide the services. The costs are astronomical for things as simple as the security paper that we have to purchase. The enabling legislation and the most recent revision to that legislation, HB 769, basically reiterates that the County pays for elections out of its budget. So, regardless of whether you reduce the elections budget or reduce someone else's budget if the Board of Elections budget goes over you will still be responsible for paying it.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated what she doesn't understand is if we are already using Dominion machines why has the budget increased by almost \$500,000.

Ms. Windham stated that in FY24, there will be more elections than there have been in the last three election cycles.

Kim Slaughter, Elections Supervisor, stated that every county is funded differently. Many of the counties do not include items like utilities, pest control and storage of files in their budgets. To answer the concern about the increase in our budget. We are currently staffed properly. When she came there were two full-time positions, the Elections Supervisor and one other full-time worker. We now have four full-time positions in the office of Elections and Voter Registration. The reason why it is still taking several weeks to do a voter registration audit is issues are still being corrected from a period of time where we were understaffed, and the employees belonged to a prior Election Administration and were not properly trained. The department is almost all the way up to speed currently. If you are properly staffed, your staff is properly trained and educated, you don't have those types of errors and you can move forward with properly executed elections.

Ms. Slaughter stated that in recent years we have not had the number of elections we are looking to have in 2024. In 2020, runoff elections were not included in the fiscal year ahead. Both the primary and the runoff elections in 2024 come earlier than they did four years ago. The budget request also includes a request for a Special Election, that we may not have. There is a Special Election accounted for in the budget.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that with finances what they are right now she would rather the Elections Board come back and ask for funding for a Special Election. If she thought we could do a paper ballot, she would be all for it, but that would be asking for total chaos and that is why she is not willing to ask for a paper ballot election. She then asked if the Elections Board would allow us to be responsible for any additional costs for a Special Election.

Ms. Slaughter stated that is up to the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Dutton then asked Ms. Slaughter to send him a copy of the list she had provided the County Manager and Administrative Services Director that gave a breakdown of the Elections Budget.

Dr. Ledbetter then advised that for the Special Election, September 19, 2024, \$85,330 has been allocated in the Elections Budget.

After much discussion it was determined that the following changes would be made to the FY2024 Budget according to a revised Option #2:

Griffin+Spalding Development Authority will be funded at \$450,000.
Board of Elections (Line Item 521900) to be deleted and the Department to be funded at \$373,330.

- Animal Control – Spay & Neuter to be funded at \$25,000.
- Land Bank Authority to be funded at \$103,400.
- Economic Prosperity Initiative Program Only, to be added as a line item to the Recreation Budget to be funded at \$10,000.
- \$35,330 to be removed from the budget.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Flowers-Taylor to approve on second reading the FY 2024 Budget Ordinance with the changes as outlined in the revised Option #2 above. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

3. Consider approval of a Resolution to create a new department in the FY 2024 Budget entitled "Spalding County Probation Services" and authorizing funding for the newly created department. This department will have no financial impact on the FY 2024 budget.

Judge Josh Thacker introduced Marty Matthews who will be the Director of the new department. Judge Thacker stated that this has been a passion project of his for more than six years. For a very long time, misdemeanor probation was handled by the State of Georgia. Approximately 15 years ago, it was handed off to each county with direction that we could either create a department or hire a private company. Spalding County chose to hire a private company and Judge Essary handled that for many years.

Judge Thacker stated that he feels it is important that we not pass people that he is placing on probation over to a private citizen and a private company who needs that payment to be made to perform the duty. This project has been six years in the making. Moving forward, effective July 1, the people who are on probation with the Spalding County State Court will now be supervised by a Spalding County Department. The reason why this is budget neutral is because the money that the defendants pay to the probation office stays with the probation office. By adding the department, the money paid by the probationers will come to Spalding County.

Judge Thacker then introduced Director Marty Matthews to the Board. We are bringing in somebody who truly understands how to do this job. She will be a wonderful addition as a department head.

Ms. Matthews stated she has been in the probation field for six years. She loves seeing people come from different walks of life. She loves helping people and seeing what the probationers' weaknesses and struggles are and helping them to work through those weaknesses and struggles. Probation is so much more than people see on the outside, most people don't get to see the inner workings of the things we do for the people.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked Ms. Matthews what sort of Customer Satisfaction Feedback they had planned. She stated that she would also like to get some numbers on what the recidivism has been for the last three years and what we project it to look like with this new department. Third, she would like to know how people get to Accountability Court if they end up on probation? She then stated that a large percentage of the people on probation are people of color and asked what percentage of your staff represent people of color.

Ms. Matthews stated that right now she has four employees and half of her staff is African American. One of her African American employees is also half Hispanic.

Chairman Davis asked Judge Thacker and Ms. Matthews to plan on coming back and give the Board an update by the end of the year.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Johnson to approve a Resolution to create a new department in the FY 2024 Budget entitled "Spalding County Probation Services" and authorizing funding for the newly created department. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

4. Consider approval of an Amplification Permit for the New Era Baptist Convention to hold the Congress of Christian Education at 6229 Green Valley Road in Griffin, Georgia on July 16-19, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on all four days.

Dr. Ledbetter advised that this is an annual event and that all departments have reviewed the permit and approved the amplification for the event.

Motion/Second by Dutton/Flowers-Taylor to approve an Amplification Permit for the New Era Baptist Convention to hold the Congress of Christian Education at 6229 Green Valley Road in Griffin, GA on July 16-19, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Chairman Davis then asked for any comments from the Board:

Rita Johnson – No Comment.

Ryan Bowlden – Thanked the Board for passing the Manufacture Home Ordinance, this will give us some teeth to keep an eye on these businesses.

Gwen Flowers-Taylor – Advised that she had attended a Three Rivers Meeting that included State funding available for work force housing and she would be further investigating that and seeing what needs to be done for the county to qualify for those funds.

James Dutton – He feels the county is moving in the right direction even in the economic downturn we are in. He also wanted to remind everyone of the parade scheduled for Tuesday.

Clay Davis – During our town hall meetings he had three gentlemen walk up to him and ask him where the County's crystal balls were located when it came to development within the county. He was saddened to learn that the three of them didn't understand how we do development. We have a Comprehensive Plan that is very specific regarding where we want development and what kind of development we want in the areas of our county.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Dutton to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 p.m.