



**After Agenda
Board of Commissioners - Special Called Meeting
July 6, 2023 2:00 PM
Room 108, Annex Building**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Thursday, July 6, 2023, in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex Building, beginning at 2:00 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Rita Johnson were present for the meeting. Commissioners James Dutton and Ryan Bowlden were absent from the meeting. Also present were County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter, Attorney, David Penland, for County Attorney, Stephanie Windham and County Clerk, Kathy Gibson to record the minutes.

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER)

The meeting was called 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 #2, led the Pledge to the Flag.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

1. The Spalding County Board of Commissioners will be meeting to discuss the Heritage Park Gymnasium.

Dr. Ledbetter asked Brian Upson with Paragon Consulting to share with the Board staff's thoughts and concerns regarding the Heritage Park Gymnasium project and to afford the community an opportunity to hear and be a part of this discussion as we move forward. Kyle Epstein is the Architect and Mr. Upson is the Engineer for this project.

Dr. Ledbetter then advised that a Request for Proposal was placed for bid and as a part of the bid process a pre-bid meeting was scheduled for contractors to participate and ask questions about the project. We received no interest at all in the bid. This is very disheartening, and we wanted to share this with the Board and our Community and see if we can push this program to move forward.

Brian Upson, Paragon Consulting, stated they have been working on the design for this project approximately nine months. The design incorporates a lot of items that have been discussed in prior meetings for rehabbing the gym and making it more functional. Providing some type of catering facility within the structure, seating and making it as multi-purpose as possible with the existing structure. As Dr. Ledbetter stated, Kyle Epstein was the Architect for this project, and he has a lot of historical experience in rehabbing old buildings.

Mr. Upson advised that they completed the plans and advertised the details of the project approximately three weeks ago and were slated to have a mandatory pre-bid meeting with contractors last week. Staff reached out to a number of the contractors who have bid on recent projects and if they did not submit a bid had expressed interest in prior projects, they were notified of the opportunity. There were approximately ten contractors who were contacted, the bid was posted on the Georgia Procurement website, which is a statewide website that contractors review daily, and it was on the Spalding County website. It was advertised through every network available.

Last week at the pre-bid meeting, we had no contractors show up. We have since reached out to some contractors who didn't come but have expressed an interest in the project. The contractors are telling us that there is so much new construction going on right now, they can pick and choose between new construction with very few unknowns versus a rehab and unfortunately in the times we are in right now they are going with the easier projects. We're not giving up, but this is simply how we have gotten to where we are currently.

Mr. Upson then stated that their intent is to rebid the project, extend the time frame to a two-month bid, extend the mandatory pre-bid out a month and start reaching out again to try to find suppliers and any other network we can utilize to generate interest from contractors and continue in our efforts to obtain bids. Unfortunately, right now the market is such that the contractors don't want to do a rehab project when they can do new construction.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he had reached out to County Managers in surrounding Counties regarding construction projects they had bid out. He was told they had received bids from construction companies in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Florida. So, the Georgia Procurement System reaches nationally. He then advised that this is not a project that staff is "dragging its feet" on, we have been actively trying to access resources to push the project forward and we could use some help in trying to engage contractors to bid on the project. How can we move this project forward so that we can get construction started and work toward completion.

Mr. Upson stated that Option 1 would be rebidding the project and they would be contacting suppliers and asking what contractors they would recommend. We are

trying to “cast the net” as wide as we can to find any interest in the project. Currently there is no other option available. There has been talk about totally replacing the structure with a new structure with some of the facades replicated in the new structure, but this is a discussion the Board will need to have. Currently, we need to exhaust Option 1. His goal is to get it bid, then you have a lot more tools with which to plan. If he can come back to the Board with a number, the Board can decide as to the feasibility of doing the rehab, or could we get more benefit out of building a new structure.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she is troubled by Mr. Upson’s use of the term “rehab” as she thought this project was a restoration. She thinks that when you make a bid, it is looked at differently if it is a rehab of the building versus a restoration. If it is a restoration, then it would appeal to a different type of contractor who would do the work. If it is rehab, you have something different.

Mr. Upson stated that rehab was his wording the documents say renovations to the structure.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that if there is any change in what we are going to do with this building there needs to be multiple conversations with the community about any proposed changes. Before anything is changed, we need to walk through the changes with the community. We shouldn’t deviate from this path without public input.

Mr. Upson stated that they would be taking direction from the Board with any change that may or may not be made. We are plotting along with the original plan, which has been designed based on all the meetings we have had with the community. We are just trying to find contractors who are willing to do the work.

Chairman Davis stated that he is in favor of moving this project forward. It’s been a while since the Board approved this, and it could take another six months for this to get started.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that the decision today is that this project be rebid.

Mr. Upson advised that within the next 5 weeks he will be able to advise the level of interest in the project again. He will come back and update the Board. Let him re-advertise, cast the net out wider and see if we can’t get interested parties to bid and he can report back on the progress.

Dr. Ledbetter then stated that he would like for the new bid to have the wording restoration instead of renovation. He feels restoration would be a more accurate word for this project moving forward.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 2:27 p.m. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.