

MINUTES

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held Special Called Meeting in Room 108 in the Courthouse Annex, Thursday, July 9, 2015, beginning at 4:00 p.m. with Chairperson Rita Johnson presiding. Commissioners Bart Miller, Raymond Ray, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Donald F. Hawbaker were present. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson Jr., Assistant County Manager, Eric Mosley and Executive Secretary, Kathy Gibson, to record the minutes.

- A. Call to Order** by Chairperson Rita Johnson.
- B. Invocation** led by Commissioner Donald Hawbaker.
- C. Pledge to the Flag** led by Commissioner Bart Miller.
- D. Agenda Items**

1. Finalize projects to be included in the 2015 SPLOST Referendum to be held November 3, 2015.

William Wilson, County Manager, advised that a 6 year SPLOST will generate approximately \$54.4 million. The City of Griffin has submitted their request; however the City Board of Commissioners have not voted on the \$22,344,000 noted on the spreadsheet of projects. He stated that he had spoken with Kenny Smith, Griffin City Manager, earlier and he advised that although this has not been voted on it was the direction that he was given by his Board. He wanted make sure the Board of Commissioners know that the City's Board has not yet voted on the proposed projects, but this is the best numbers that we have for the City of Griffin at this time. Mr. Wilson further stated that the Cities of Sunny Side and Orchard Hill had presented their projects to the Board and they are basically the same as the projects submitted for the 2014 SPLOST.

Mr. Wilson advised that if you take the amount for the projects proposed by the cities and subtract that from the projected revenue for the SPLOST, it leaves approximately \$27,212,118 to be disseminated between the \$59,945,470 in project requests that the County has received for consideration on this SPLOST.

He stated that the Board had expressed an interest in issuing bonds for the Debt Service payoff, E-911/CAD-Phone System, the Senior Nutrition Program, Judicial Computers and software upgrades and the issuance and interest costs for the Bonds. He advised that the proposed \$3 million in Debt Service would reduce General Fund and Fire District Fund each by approximately half a mil each which could potentially result in a reduction on property tax millage rate by .94 mils.

Mr. Wilson then reviewed the list of projects currently to be considered by the Board of Commissioners for the 2015 SPLOST.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked Mr. Wilson to explain how the expenditures for the Cities are determined.

Mr. Wilson stated that there are no set amounts for the Cities, in order to have a 6 years SPLOST there has to be an intergovernmental agreement between the three cities and Spalding County on the distribution of funds but there is no set amount to be allotted to any individual entity.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she would like for the Carver Road Dog Splash Park be removed from consideration. She stated that there are other items of more immediate concern in the community that needs to be looked at and this is one item that should be removed from consideration.

Commissioner Hawbaker stated that he is in favor of bonding the indebtedness because if this is done it can result in a decrease in the millage rate by almost a full mill. He stated that with the understanding that if the SPLOST passes and these projects are bonded the tax savings will result in a millage rate decrease.

Mr. Wilson advised that by bonding the debt service we could reduce the Fire District millage rate approximately .56 mills and the General Fund approximately .37 mills. He stated that the savings would come strictly from the reduction in debt service.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor expressed here desire to have the splash component of the Aquatic Center, the Rosenwald School and the Pickleball Facility added to the bonded projects. She stated that the splash component of the Aquatic Center and the Pickleball Facility upon completion could start generating money for operating expenses immediately. She also feels that the Rosenwald School should be bonded to restore this structure due to the historic significance to the African American community. The structure is in really poor condition and needs to be addressed before it deteriorates any further.

Commissioner Hawbaker stated that there is no facility available on this side of Metro Atlanta to accommodate Pickleball tournaments. He advised if this project is approved and not bonded the County may lose the window of opportunity as Fayette County, Henry County or Peachtree City may build a facility to offer a venue for this sport. He feels this is an opportunity to get in on the ground floor for hosting these tournaments and it could result in increased revenue through hotel/motel tax and increased tourism to this area.

Commissioner Ray stated that staff analyzed data from the maintenance and operating budget for the next five years and tried to designate items that would remove costs from the M&O budget which then removes it from the taxpayer. He stated that he wanted to look at priorities that would make the biggest impact for the largest number of Spalding County Citizens who may or would support the SPLOST. He sees those projects being Public Safety, Roads, Debt Payoff, the 911/CAD system, transportation, the judicial system upgrades and the IT portion of the list of projects under consideration. These projects will impact every citizen of the County. He asked that the Board look at the projects that would best cover the current needs for Spalding County and not the projects that we want for Spalding County.

Chairperson Johnson stated that she agrees with Commissioner Ray; however, she also feels that there is a quality of life for the citizens of Spalding County that we also need to provide. There are some projects that will assist in the economic development of this county that we need to consider in order to bring more people into our community, that will put money back into the community and something that we can be proud of and she feels there should be a shared component of both of these aspects. She encouraged the Board to look at not only service to the community, but quality of life as well.

Commissioner Miller stated that he wishes there were enough money to fund all of the projects under consideration; however, he is not in favor of anything that is going to become a burden on the taxpayers of this County. Any project where

we will have to hire additional employees or at some point in the future have to raise the millage rate to fund the upkeep or staffing of any of these projects should not be considered for the 2015 SPLOST.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that the money collected during the SPLOST is collected from individuals who purchase goods and services in Spalding County. This money is not collected from homeowners or taxpayers in Spalding County unless they purchase goods and services. Anyone who doesn't own a home in Spalding County, but comes into the County to purchase a car, clothing, groceries, gas or any other goods and services, the tax money on those sales and services go into this fund.

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Johnson to approve bonding the Debt Service Payoff (\$3,070,000), E-911/CAD Phone System (\$1,000,000), Senior Nutrition Program (\$ 120,000), Judicial Computers/software upgrades (\$675,000), Pickleball Facility (\$957,000), Fairmont/Heritage Park Improvements (\$1,915,000), Wyomia Tyus Soccer Lights (\$460,000) and the Issuance and Interest Cost for bonding these projects.

Mr. Wilson asked that the Board consider relocation of the 800 MHz tower from Highway 155 as a bonded project as it will save the County the current rental on that tower of \$95,500 annually.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked to amend her motion to include the relocation of the 800 MHz Equipment from Highway 155 (\$426,400) Chairperson Johnson seconded the amendment and asked Mr. Wilson to review the items to be bonded.

Mr. Wilson then reviewed all of the items for consideration to be bonded.

- Debt Service Payoff
- E-911/CAD Phone System
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Judicial Computers/software upgrades
- Pickleball Facility
- Fairmont/Heritage Park Improvements
- Wyomia Tyus Soccer Lights
- Relocation of 800 MHz Equipment from Highway 155
- Issuance and Interest Cost for bonding the projects

These projects plus the issuance and interests costs for bonding should be approximately \$9,253,400.

Commissioner Ray stated that although he does support the majority of the projects presented for bonding, he cannot support the Pickleball Facility as part of the bonding package as he does not feel this project should receive priority over other projects that would benefit the county as a whole; therefore, he will be voting against this motion.

Commissioner Miller stated that he wanted everyone to know that if the SPLOST doesn't pass that many of the items being bonded are going to have to be purchased by the County so the cost of these items will have to come out of the General Fund which means it will be taxpayer money.

Mr. Wilson confirmed that the E-911/CAD Phone System upgrades and the Judicial Computers and software upgrades will be done regardless of whether

or not the SPLOST passes because they have to be done. If the SPLOST does not pass then we will be forced to lease/purchase these items which will place additional debt service on the County.

Motion carried 4-1 (Ray).

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she would like to review the ACCAB projects. The ACCAB board presented two projects, one was to build a new facility and one to add on and update the current facility. Considering the laws that we have in place and the Spay and Neuter Ordinance being considered she feels that increasing the size of the shelter should not be necessary as the goal of these initiatives is to decrease the stray pet population in Spalding county; therefore, she would ask that the Board consider option 2, which involves renovation and expansion of the current facility for a projected cost of \$1,185,000. She stated that the goal is not to make room to accommodate more animals, but to be able to accommodate the animals in a more human environment.

Motion by Flowers-Taylor/Miller to approve Option II as presented by the Animal Care and Control Advisory board for renovation and expansion of the current Animal Shelter in the amount of \$1,185,000. Motion carried unanimously by all.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she really feels bad regarding the requests from the Griffin-Spalding County Library Board. She stated that there is simply no way that we can build a new facility.

Motion/second by GFT/Hawbaker to approve the request for Materials and Technology updates in the amount of \$250,000.

Commissioner Ray advised that he had talked with Tommy Hopkins who is on the Board of Regents, because there was concern over the amount of money that was being requested for new construction of a library. He advised that the State of Georgia has just funded a new library for Milner, Georgia. The money was allocated by the legislature, and the Governor's Office through the Board of Regents and they just cut the check to start that process. He stated that the Board should send our need for a new library at a new location to the State and request the funds. He advised that the funds are there and we can't receive them if we don't ask for them.

Mr. Wilson stated that a new library versus a replacement library funding may have something to do with our not considering this avenue before, but he will find out.

Motion carried unanimously by all.

Motion by Ray/Hawbaker to approve the Spalding County Fire Department requests for: the Pumper Tanker (295,000), Heavy Rescue Truck (\$425,000), (2) Brush Trucks (\$114,000) and Extraction Tools (\$54,000) be placed on the pay as you go projects for the 2015 SPLOST.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked what the Heavy Rescue Truck was and why it needed to be replaced.

Jamie Clark, Deputy Chief –Operations, Spalding County Fire Department

advised that the frame on the Heavy Rescue truck broke approximately 5 years ago and it had to be sold for surplus and we haven't had the funds to replace it. We have been trying to replace it and are currently having to use a pick-up truck to serve this purpose.

Motion carried unanimously by all.

Motion by Commissioner Ray/Hawbaker to approve the Gang Reduction/ Intervention Program Vehicles and Equipment be added to the pay as you go list in the amount of \$270,000. This would give the County six years to appropriate the money to staff a Gang Reduction/Intervention Program and this would provide for the vehicles and equipment needed by this taskforce. Motion carried unanimously by all.

Motion by Ray/Miller to utilize the remaining funds to meet the transportation needs in Spalding County. Motion failed 2/3 (Flowers-Taylor/Johnson/Hawbaker).

Motion by Ray/Flowers-Taylor to fund the Parks and Recreation Projects as follows: AMBUCS Park (\$429,000), City Park (\$125,000), Dundee Lake Park (\$255,000) Thomaston Mill Park (\$152,000) and Wyomia Tyus Park (\$525,000).

Commissioner Hawbaker stated that he would be fine with eliminating the amounts requested for Dundee Lake Park and Thomaston Mill Park and have them considered at another time.

Motion failed 2-3 (Flowers-Taylor/Hawbaker/Miller).

Motion by Hawbaker/Flowers-Taylor to approve the Parks and Recreation request for Projects at AMBUCS Park (\$439,200), City Park (\$125,000) and Wyomia Tyus Park (\$400,000).

After discussion it was the consensus of the board that a Pavilion be built at Dundee Lake Park to replace the Pavilion near the bathroom facility that was damaged during a tornado and had to be torn down.

Motion by Hawbaker/Flowers-Taylor to amend the motion to add a pavilion at Dundee Lake Park to replace the one damaged at that location in the amount of (\$67,500). Motion carried 4-1 (Miller).

Motion by Flowers-Taylor/Johnson to approve the Aquatic Center on the pay as you go project list at \$4,690,000.

Commissioner Hawbaker expressed his concern over the difference in the quotes on the Aquatic Center from the 2014 SPLOST projections and the operating costs that will be incurred by this center.

Commissioner Miller stated that he is concerned about this Center becoming a burden on the Spalding County Taxpayer. He had hoped that the school system or the local swim teams would step up to be a part of this Center and offer assistance, but this hasn't happened and he is concerned that the citizens of Spalding County are going to be the ones to pay if this Center is built and does not provide sufficient income to cover the operating costs.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated this is a project that is going to make a mark in Spalding County. We are always talking about economic growth and offering something in the community that will encourage people to move and bring their families into this area.

Commissioner Johnson stated that this is one of those projects that you want to see come to fruition for the community. She feels it is something that everyone would benefit from, from the children in the community to the seniors. She feels that this could bring some economic development as well. This will definitely better the quality of life for our citizens, but I don't want to put the County in a deficit to fund the maintenance and operating costs.

Motion failed 1-4 (Ray/Miller/Hawbaker/Johnson).

Commissioner Hawbaker asked that he be marked in favor of the motion not against.

Chairperson Johnson the asked that the vote be taken again.

Motion carried 3-2 (Ray/Miller).

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Hawbaker to apply the remaining proceeds (\$9,701,018) from the proposed 2015 SPLOST to Transportation projects on a pay as you go basis. Motion carried unanimously by all.

E. Adjournment

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Ray to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.

/s/ _____
Rita Johnson, Chairperson

/s/ _____
William P. Wilson, Jr.,
County Clerk