

**After
Agenda**

**Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Special Called Meeting
Thursday, January 28, 2016
3:00 PM
Meeting Room 108, Courthouse Annex
119 E. Solomon Street**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting in Room 108 in the Courthouse Annex, Thursday, January 28, 2016, beginning at 3:00 p.m. with Chairperson Rita Johnson presiding. Commissioners Bart Miller, Raymond Ray, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Donald Hawbaker were present. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson Jr., Assistant County Manager, Eric Mosley, Community Development Director, Chad Jacobs, Superintendent of Parks and Grounds, T.J. Imberger, Superintendent of Leisure Services, Kelly Leger, County Attorney, Jim Fortune and Executive Secretary, Kathy Gibson to record the minutes.

- I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER)** by Chairperson Rita Johnson.
- II. INVOCATION** led by Commissioner Donald Hawbaker.
- III. PLEDGE TO FLAG** led by Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor.
- IV. AGENDA ITEMS:**
 1. Staff presentation on possible locations for Aquatics Center and Pickleball facility.

William Wilson, County Manager, staff has been working on this presentation for about 30 days. What you are about to see is very innovative, we will be presenting numerous possible locations for a Pickleball and Aquatic Center. The presentations will be by Chad Jacobs, T.J. Imberger, Eric Mosley and myself. We ask that all comments and questions be held until the end of the presentation. The purpose of this Special Called Meeting is to present to the Board, there is no Citizen Comment set up during this meeting. He thanked everyone for coming today and he thanked everyone who supported the SPLOST.

Chad Jacobs, Community Development Director, thanked T.J. Imberger and his staff, especially Ms. Lauren Brown for all of their hard work in pulling this presentation together. He stated that due to the amount of information that he wants to make sure is relayed, he will be depending on a written script to make sure that he covers all of the information that needs to be covered during this presentation.

Mr. Jacobs thanked the Board for allowing them to present today. He then thanked the voters of Spalding County, City of Griffin, Orchard Hill and Sunny Side for their support of the 2015 SPLOST. He stated that it is the

opinion of staff that we should not jump into site selection without taking a number of factors into consideration before making a final selection. He added that of all the sites talked about here this evening, it is possible that the site ultimately chosen will not be one of the ones discussed here this evening. We have included suggestions from many different entities, but this is not an all-encompassing list. He then asked for the Boards patience and indulgence as he started the presentation.

He then challenged the Board to “Think Out of The Box” when it comes to site selection. He asked the Board to be “Open Minded” and “Not Afraid to Dream Big.” Mr. Jacobs feels that we have a golden opportunity before us and he hopes that as a community that we can make the most of it. He asked that while looking at the sites the Board keep in mind and dream in the context of 10 to 20 years from today and not be bound by the chains of today.

He stated that once they begin exploring the sites, they will not be telling you where you should place these two projects, but instead encourage you to consider the impact of these two projects not on a micro scale, but on a macro scale. What kind of impact can they have on the community as a whole? Can they help to bring about change and growth depending on their placement?

Mr. Jacobs then presented the list of 2015 SPLOST projects stating that the Aquatics Center and the Pickleball Facility are separated out from the remainder of the list. What makes them different from the rest? The majority of this list is fixed in predetermined areas due to the basic nature of the projects; but these two projects represent approximately \$5 million for an Aquatics Center and \$1 million for a Pickleball Facility or collectively \$6 million into an area that is yet to be determined. These projects represent choice, opportunity and excitement, because you are able to choose where to place them that will do the most good and affect the biggest change within our community. He challenged the Board to leverage these projects where they will have the greatest impact for change, future tax base and added growth.

The then asked the Board to consider where we are now, he presented statistics regarding the County that included population trends, which included all of the border counties in the Southern Crescent (Spalding County, Butts County, Pike County and Lamar County) contrasted with the Northern Crescent (Henry County, Fayette County, Clayton County and Coweta County). The slides compared population, median household income, and persons currently living below poverty level in these counties. He stated that these counties represent our immediate competitors for future industry and development, he then asked what we are willing to do to make us stand out more than our competitors for these valuable resources.

He then reviewed the Graduation Rate of Griffin-Spalding County students verses the State of Georgia ratings which indicated although Spalding County has improved in overall percentage, we still fall below the State of Georgia's overall Graduation rate. Additionally, he added that Spalding County ranks 103 out of 159 counties in overall health ranking.

Mr. Jacobs then addressed Law Enforcement funding in Spalding County. He wanted everyone to know that he is not picking on law enforcement, these individuals do a thankless job every day and they do it extremely well. The point he wished to make is that law enforcement is essentially a reactive measure and we are currently spending 17% of the General Fund to accommodate those needs, if you add in the cost of the Jail this number rises to 36% of the General Fund Budget. This represents a lot of money and we need to think about possible ways to minimize these costs in the future.

Why have these numbers been presented and why are these numbers important. According to all of the published studies, the built environment has a significant impact on a county's overall health, obesity, socio-economic, education system, crime rate, employment base, etc. Therefore, anything that we can do to improve the built environment greatly impacts our ability to improve these numbers and possibly lower costs.

He then stated that everything is not doom and gloom. The County is doing a lot of great things. He then listed the following recent accomplishments:

- Passage of the 2015 SPLOST
- The Archway Partnership with UGA
- The Lakes at Green Valley Industrial Park which currently includes three new industries that are either in operation, under construction or about to break ground.
- The new airport.
- The College and Career Academy.
- Georgia Film Academy at Southern Crescent Technical College.
- The food PIC at UGA
- The turf grass research facility.
- 1888 Mill staying here and more importantly expanding.
- Residential building permits grew by 35% this year in Spalding County, representing over a 20% growth over the previous year.
- Meriwether Homes redevelopment
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Grant for two early warning sirens.

These are all fantastic accomplishments that we should all be proud of.

How do we build off of the momentum that has begun and even magnify it further. Continue to think big, make positive changes to our built environment now and in the near future that can produce positive outcomes later.

Mr. Jacobs then asked that everyone look at the revitalization of the community along the Atlanta Beltline. He feels that this same revitalization can be replicated on a smaller scale in Spalding County with similar success. The Atlanta Beltline is transforming the city with a combination of rail, trail, green space, housing and art that will ultimately connect 45 in town neighborhoods. The beltline is not simply a means to get somewhere but is a destination unto itself, it offers the chance for Atlanta to redefine what it is to be a neighbor, to be a community, to be a region and to share all that it has to offer.

A Strategic Implementation Plan for the Atlanta Beltline was adopted in 2013 which laid out a framework for how the project would be funded through a mixture of public and private sources such as the Atlanta Beltline Tax Allocation District (TAD), the City of Atlanta, private investment and philanthropic contributions, county, regional, state and federal grants, and public/private partnerships.

There has been approximately \$400 million from multiple public and private sources that has been invested since 2006 to implement the Atlanta Beltline and deliver tangible results.

Mr. Jacobs then added that everyone is wondering what all of this has to do with an Aquatic Center and a Pickleball Facility and he would argue everything. It is staff's opinion that this process should not be grossly oversimplified to include just the basic functions of a swim center and pickleball facility. They can be so much more than that if we choose to let them. If we creatively work them into a fabric of a bigger vision that speaks to persons both inside and outside of our borders. He asked that keeping all of this in mind, let's consider some sites.

- The Spalding County Senior Center
 - 👍 Pros: No Acquisition Cost
 - 👍 Existing Parking
 - 👎 Cons: Not enough acreage available for either facility
- Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park

The main concern with this location is there is only one way into the facility and one way out.

 - 👍 Pros: Existing infrastructure
 - 👍 Some parking exists (not all)
 - 👍 Proximity to restaurants, retail and hotels
 - 👎 Cons: Adequate space for only one project
 - 👎 Available location currently being used for overflow parking, baseball and soccer tournaments
 - 👎 This location now houses a nationally ranked disc golf course
 - 👎 SPLOST will build an expanded pavilion rental area and two additional picnic areas.
- City Park
 - 👍 Pros: Appropriate land space possibly available
 - 👍 Existing parking

-  No acquisition costs
 -  Cons: Adequate space for only one project
 -  Several successful existing rentable pavilions (a majority of the current parking is occupied on the weekends)
 -  Area is in transition from residential to medical/seniors
 -  Lack of utility infrastructure.
- Old Akins Feed & Seed Property
 -  Pros: Convenient location to established retail and restaurants
 -  Central business district
 -  Unique location with unique architectural capabilities
 -  Cons: Adequate space for only one project
 -  No on-site parking
 -  Pedestrian corridor needed to access parking
 -  Acquisition may not be an option
- Solomon Street
 -  Pros: Convenient location to established retail and restaurants
 -  Central business district
 -  Utilization of existing original jail facility
 -  Parking nearby
 -  Adjacent to amphitheater
 -  Cons: Adequate space for only one project
 -  Acquisition Costs
 -  No on-site parking
 -  Adjacent to amphitheater
 -  Possibility of ADA concerns with original jail facility
 -  Amphitheater plans would need to be modified
- Dundee Mills Headquarters Property (24.369 Acres)
 -  Pros: Remaining concrete floor of facility can be used for parking
 -  Proximity to retail and UGA-Griffin Campus
 -  Space for expansion and multiple use facility
 -  Existing utility infrastructure, including County Sewer
 -  Linkage to possible greenways including Roosevelt Railroad
 -  Cons: Potential environmental concerns
 -  Possibly too far from UGA-Griffin Campus to create a usable walkway system
 -  Acquisition costs
- Dundee Mills Property Mill #1 (12.28 Acres)
 -  Pros: Appropriate acreage for multiple facilities
 -  The ability to reserve outparcels for future income
 -  Potential direct pedestrian link to UGA-Griffin Campus
 -  Proximity to existing County-owned property (Quilly Street)
 -  Proximity to Roosevelt Railroad
 -  Existing location within a residential district that can easily be transformed into a small city center
 -  Proximity to retail, restaurants and hotels
 -  Proximity to become a greenway hub to North Griffin and

Downtown Griffin

- 👍 Possibility of being center hub of a County-wide greenway system
- 👍 Existing Utilities
- 👍 Ideal location for revitalization concept
- 👎 Cons: Possible acquisition costs
- 👎 Lack of parking facilities

Mr. Jacobs then displayed a map containing the City of Griffin's Revitalization Area plan and how the Dundee Mill Property Mill #1 would complement the revitalization effort of the City of Griffin. He then showed how this property would fit into the overall "Big Picture" for Spalding County and compliment the future plans for property currently owned by the County.

Mr. Jacobs then presented the board with a mock-up of "The Village @ Dundee Springs" which accommodated the Aquatic Center, the Pickleball Facility, parking, commercial and retail areas and would spark a revitalization in the area.

Mr. Jacobs then opened the floor for questions and discussion:

Commissioner Ray asked if we had spoken to the School System about the 35 acres that they own adjacent to Wyomia Tyus Park.

T.J. Imberger, Superintendent of Parks and Grounds, advised that he had talked with Mr. Ballard at the School Board and he indicated that he would be willing to talk to the Board about the County being able to use this property especially if the school system would have access to the swim facility.

Commissioner Miller asked if this property could be accessed from Hwy 92 so that the traffic would not be routed down Cowan Road. There is already a problem with traffic in the area and the addition of two new attractions in this part is going to increase the traffic even more.

Mr. Imberger advised that this piece of property does include access to Hwy 92; however, additional property to each side of the access road would have to be purchased or right-of-way would have to be given to provide an acceleration and deceleration lane for access to the property from this state highway.

Mr. Wilson added that significant improvements would have to be made on Hwy 92 to allow for ingress and egress for this location.

Commissioner Miller expressed his concern regarding adequate parking for these facilities. The Senior Center and Wyomia Tyus have existing parking where the other locations parking would have to be added to accommodate the facilities.

Mr. Imberger advised that the budget for the Aquatic Center did include approximately \$700,000 for parking which should provide approximately

300 parking spaces. The Pickleball proposal included approximately \$60,000 for parking which would be approximately 45-50 parking spaces built into that budget.

Commissioner Hawbaker then advised that there had been \$120,000 built into the Pickleball Facility budget for parking.

Mr. Wilson stated that these sites are for discussion, there are additional sites that can be considered. These sites are to get the discussion flowing. He stated that there is a site over on Airport at Everee Inn Road that is 9.5 acres.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she doesn't like taking property off of the tax rolls no matter the amount. She feels that we should be able to build an awesome facility on property that is already owned by the county or can be acquired through another governmental entity such as the school system or the Development Authority. She expressed her concern over having to spend money on land that would take away from the funds available to build the actual facility.

Chairman Johnson asked if the Dundee Mills property is the only property presented that would accommodate both locations.

Mr. Jacobs stated that within the last 24 hours there have been sites added. There are other sites out there, these were presented to try to make the biggest impact possible.

Eric Mosley, Assistant County Manager, advised that even though the purchase of the Dundee Mill #1 property would remove that property from the tax base; however, it is hope that this investment would have an economic impact on the area that the tax base would increase with improvements to existing homes and new homes that would be built in that area.

Mr. Jacobs added that at the In-Rem hearings at 6:00 p.m. the Board would be looking at three houses in that area to potentially condemn for the County to tear down. He stated that he is totally cognizant of the fact that there is a certain amount of money that has been set aside for these projects provided through the SPLOST vote. He stated that it is the staff's hope that we can leverage these funds to get the maximum amount of benefit for the citizens of Spalding County.

Mr. Jacobs stated that to revitalize an area and get a number of properties that are currently severely undervalued back on the digest at a proper value the purchase of the land and the loss of the taxes could be a wash. Improvements to the area could assist in the reduction of crime rates in the area and could help the community in other ways. By giving a child in this neighborhood a better area to live it, it could prompt them to perform better in school.

Mr. Mosley stated that the effect of this could have a ripple effect, like a

pebble being dropped into water. A positive pebble in this area could have a ripple effect for the entire neighborhood. When we were talking to neighborhoods about the SPLOST, we emphasized that there are places where something needs to happen, this could be that first pebble to be dropped into the water so that we can see that ripple effect over time in these communities that need a jump start.

Mr. Jacobs added that everyone gets really excited about the development of Meriwether Homes, it is a fantastic project. This is going to be a jewel in Spalding County for years to come. This developer could have easily gone in there with a very functional plan for the area, but he commends Mr. Dull and his board for going big on that project because when you drive down that road, it is amazing and he feels that it is making a huge impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked how close the Dundee Mill location is to the property owned by the County.

Mr. Imberger advised that it is approximately one block away from the property currently owned by Spalding County and there was a road in the design going into that property to tie the two properties together.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked why we are not trying to utilize some of that property that already belongs to us.

Mr. Imberger stated that it would be difficult to build the Aquatic Center on existing because of the rock. There is other things on the front of the property that we can do, for example soccer fields, playgrounds and pavilions. He is hopeful that in six years we can look at an adult softball complex in this area which will utilize more of the property.

Commissioner Hawbaker asked if Mr. Wilson could advise as to the discussions regarding the Dundee Mill #1 property.

Mr. Wilson stated that Springs is aware. Springs still has a presence here in the U.S. in North Carolina. He advised that he has been working with someone local who is connected with Springs and they got the master plan about an hour before the Board received the plan. They wanted to see what we had planned for the area. Our improvement of this piece of property will make their second piece of property in the area much more valuable.

Commissioner Hawbaker stated that when the proponents for the Pickleball Facility made their presentation on June 9th, 2015 the location was based on the Wyomia Tyus Park location. He added that Pickleball is considered the fastest growing sport in the United States right now and in order to capitalize on this growth we need to make a decision as quickly as possible and get this facility constructed.

Preliminary drawings were presented to the Pickleball representatives and if the facility was available we could host events beginning in June of this year. These are national events that would bring in hotel/motel dollars

and additional revenue to the merchants and restaurants in this area. He stated that he understands and appreciates the vision presented by staff and the need for revitalization, but the Pickleball Facility location was sold to the citizens during the SPLOST presentation as being located in Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park and this is where he would like to see this facility built. The Pickleball Facility was in no way tied to the Aquatic Center and that is what the voters passed.

The reason the Pickleball Facility was proposed as a bonded project was because of the narrow window of opportunity for Spalding County to become known as the tournament capital of Georgia for this weirdly named sport. If our facility can be open by April 2017 we have a firm commitment to host the Atlantic South Regional, which is one of the five largest of these tournaments in the U.S.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor agreed with Commissioner Hawbaker that during all of the discussion the Pickleball Facility seemed like something that could be done pretty quickly due to the fact that this facility is being bonded. She further stated that she also thought that the Pickleball would be at Wyomia Tyus.

Chairperson Johnson thanked Chad for giving an awesome presentation on where Spalding County is today and presenting a vision of what is possible in the County. She stated that she can get very excited over the proposal for the Dundee Mill location. This paints a tremendous picture of the future of this area and she is a full proponent of if you build the facility the people will come.

Commissioner Miller stated that he did remember the mention of Wyomia Tyus Park as the location of the Pickleball Facility, but he never thought it was definitive. He stated that his concern is with the traffic in the area, that park currently has only one way for entry and exit and that is onto Cowan Road. The traffic going into and out of that park can get very congested and adding another sport to this complex is just going to increase the problem in the area.

Commissioner Miller further stated that if there is a soccer tournament, a baseball tournament and Pickleball tournament at the same time, it is going to be a traffic disaster there. If we are going in that direction than he would like to see us talk to the school system and work out something to have the traffic routed onto Hwy 92.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she would like to see the services spread out more. She stated that she would love to see this area of her district revitalized and maybe the Dundee location could be an Aquatic Center and soccer field combination.

Mr. Wilson asked for next steps. He stated that if the Board wants Pickleball at Wyomia Tyus to let us know, if the Board wants to continue to look at the Springs property to let us know. We have made our

presentation, now we need direction from the Board.

Mr. Wilson reminded everyone that the Archway Retreat is next week and all of the Board members are going, representatives from the City will be there, representatives from the School Board will be there as well as representatives from the Development Authority. There is a discussion on the Agenda regarding the SPLOST. Chad and TJ will be there to talk about the SPLOST and to give an overview of what Pay As You Go means versus bonded projects.

Chairman Johnson asked the Board to take a day or to two to review the information presented and to send William and the staff an email regarding the direction you would like to go or if there is any locations that you would like to rule out of consideration. Responses need to be made prior to the Archway Retreat in Carrollton.

The Board decided to move to Item #3 on the Agenda then to come back and address Item #2.

3. Review of recommended SPLOST Project funding and construction timeline.

Mr. Wilson stated that a copy of the timeline has been posted on Novus Agenda. The way we structured the SPLOST debt service is different this time. In every past SPLOST it has been structured to pay off the debt service first. This SPLOST is different in that we have built in funding for pay-as-you go projects on an annual basis along with paying off debt. Every fiscal year we will have a little over \$4 million available for pay as you go projects each year with the exception of year one because the SPLOST collections will not be until April.

He advised that we will look at the bonded projects first.

- Pay off Debt – March 2016
- Acquisition and Installation of CAD and Phone System for E-911. Phone system will be in March 2016 and the CAD System should be in by March of 2017
- Judicial System Computers and Software Updates – December 2016
- Construction of Pickleball Facility (location dependent) – December 2017. Commissioner Hawbaker would like to see this completed by no later than March 2017 if possible
- Fairmont/Heritage Park (total completion from start to finish)– December 2018
- Wyomia Tyus Park Soccer Lights – December 2016
- Senior Nutrition Program – This project is complete and we will be reimbursing the General Fund for the expenditures as soon as the bonds are sold.
- Relocation of Site Equipment from Hwy 155 – January 2017. With the construction of the new airport, it is possible that the Wild Plum Tower may need to be relocated. We will try to leverage costs on the

two towers to maximize funds available.

The time line for these projects is dependent on our internal work force. We did not budget to outsource many of these projects and therefore we are working with the crews that the County has, there was no money in the budget to hire additional help. He stated there are some things that we can't do and those items will be contracted out, but the items that can be done by staff will be. Mr. Wilson advised that we will be trying to utilize the mobile construction crews and possibly a contract detail officer from the CI for these projects.

Now the Pay As You Go Projects:

- Resurfacing, paving and repair of roads, streets and bridges.
 - LMIG Match \$500,000 a year for 6 years = \$3 million

Mr. Wilson advised that \$3 million will be reserved to pay the LMIG match over the next six years. The County is required to match DOT funding by 30%. This should supply funding to do approximately 10 miles or resurfacing per year for the next six years. Leaving approximately \$6,115,923 for other transportation projects.

- Fire Department Pumper Tanker is on order, it should arrive by December 2016.
- Fire Department Heavy Rescue Truck should received by December 2017.
- Fire Department (2) Brush Trucks we have one of the trucks now and the other should be coming around June 2017.
- Fire Department Extraction tools should arrive by December 2016.
- Renovations to the Animal Control Facility has a projected completion date of December 2018. This is simply a guess as the renovation will be conducted by internal staff and we will have to work it into the schedule when the funding becomes available.
- Griffin-Spalding Library System Materials and Technology – December 2016.
- The other parks which include pavilions, playgrounds, redoing the fields, backstops, chain link fencing. Most of this will be done by our staff so we will have to schedule these improvements our as the funding is available and we have staff available to complete the projects.
- The largest Pay As You Go project is the \$4.6 million Aquatic Center, this is location dependent and we hope to have it completed by December 2020. It is anticipated that it will take a year to do the design and engineering on this project once the site is picked and it will probably take 12 to 18 months to build.
- We said that we would the Sheriff's Departments Vehicles and Equipment for the GRIP program once we are able to staff that program. We have a projected date of FY2018 for this project.

You may also recall that the City of Griffin and the County agreed that since the cities of Orchard Hill and Sunny Side had very few projects that we would fund their projects with the first collections from the SPLOST so that the remaining funding will be divided between the City of Griffin and Spalding County.

Many of the Cities' park related projects will be done by the county work force as well.

The early warning sirens requested by the cities will be combined with the grant funding received by the county for early warning sirens in hopes that by purchasing four systems we will be able to get a better deal. Projected date of completing for the early warning sirens is December 2016.

All of the figures reflected on this list are staff estimates.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked if a project is under \$100,000 that it be moved up in the schedule so that people in the neighborhoods will be able to see all during the SPLOST that progress is being made.

Mr. Wilson advised that once the timeline is finalized a copy of it will be posted on the website.

Mr. Wilson stated that beginning in March there will be a SPLOST update included in the County Managers report at each meeting.

One item on the agenda is utilizing funds from the 2015 SPLOST for the Bridge over Cabin Creek in the Flats at Intersection #2. Cost estimates for this project is approximately \$1.2 million.

At this point the Board went back to Item #2 on the Agenda.

2. Consider request from Commissioner Hawbaker to allocate funding for replacement of the Hill Street Bridge over Cabin Creek from the 2015 SPLOST transportation funds, and restore the state funding to the Jordan Hill Bridge project that the Board requested be moved to the Cabin Creek Bridge earlier this year.

Mr. Wilson stated that Commissioner Hawbaker has tried to move funding from the Jordan Hill Bridge fund to this project so that the bridge could be constructed at the same time as the Intersection #2 project which was funded under the 2008 SPLOST project. Unfortunately, moving those funds would result in delays due to environmental and historical studies required by the State.

Mr. Wilson stated that what is being requested is \$1.2 million of the remaining \$6.1 million in the transportation funds be assigned to construction of the Cabin Creek Bridge so that construction can be done at the same time as the intersection construction.

Commissioner Miller stated that he has no problem allocating the money for the Cabin Creek Bridge, but that there are people in his District that were promised their roads would be paved in the 2008 SPLOST and it

didn't happen. He is requesting that the Teamon Road repaving be removed from the 2016 LMIG consideration and that Moreland Road, which is in much worse shape than Teamon Road, be scheduled for resurfacing instead of Teamon Road.

Mr. Wilson advised Commissioner Miller that the roads for the 2016 LMIG had been submitted to the State; however, he would check to see if Teamon Road could be replaced by Moreland Road on the 2016 LMIG.

Motion/Second by Hawbaker/Ray to utilized approximately \$1.2 million from the 2015 SPLOST funding for roads to replace the bridge over Cabin Creek in the Flats. Motion carried unanimously by all.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Ray to adjourn the meeting at 5:32 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.