

**After
Agenda**

**Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Work Session
Monday, February 16, 2015
9:00 A.M.
Meeting Room 108, Courthouse Annex**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session in Room 108 in the Courthouse Annex, Monday, February 16, 2015, beginning at 9:03 a.m. with Chairperson Rita Johnson, Bart Miller, Raymond Ray, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Donald F. Hawbaker present. Also present were County Manager, William P. Wilson Jr, Parks Superintendent, T.J. Imberger, Recreation Superintendent, Kelly Leger, County Attorney, Jim Fortune and Planning Technician, Cindy McDaniel to record the minutes.

- A. Opening (Call to Order)** led by Chairperson Rita Johnson.
- B. Invocation** led by Chairperson Rita Johnson.
- C. Pledge to Flag** led by Commissioner Bart Miller.
- D. Agenda Items**

1. Commissioner Flowers-Taylor has requested a follow-up discussion regarding the possible increase of the Hotel/Motel tax in Spalding County.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that in reviewing the information supplied to the group regarding the hotel/motel tax that at 5% the county would be able to receive the maximum amount of unrestricted revenue. She stated that the Commissioners need to decide what the goal is with regard to this tax. Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she feels the County needs to set a goal for the funds, if it is to be used to increase the General fund or create a revenue base for projects that would draw people to Spalding County.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she feels that we should better utilize the funds for what they are meant to do, create venues for people so that they want to come to Spalding County. She then recommended that the Board consider the 8% tax in that this would provide for the General Fund as well as provide additional funding for projects that would create the revenue base for projects and venues that would draw people to Spalding County.

Commissioner Hawbaker stated that he agrees with Commissioner Flowers-Taylor in increasing the Hotel/Motel tax in order to obtain funding to fund the projects and venues that would draw more people into Spalding County.

Commissioner Miller stated his concerns over the amount of the funds that would have to be routed to the Chamber of Commerce when the County needs lighting for

the soccer fields and we have already been told that those funds could not be utilized for the lights even though it would bring more traffic into Spalding County for soccer competitions if the park was available to be utilized at night.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then stated that according to the list of items that could be funded that improvements and maintenance of a sports complex would be allowed and that if we expended the soccer fields to make it a sports complex, the funds should be able to be utilized. She further stated that she would like to open a dialogue with the Chamber and negotiate the funding that could be made available.

William Wilson advised that Daa'ood Amin and Kenda Woodard made the same presentation to the City of Griffin at their goal setting session last week on the Hotel/Motel tax and he asked them if they had any idea of what direction the City of Griffin would be talking regarding the Hotel/Motel tax. Mr. Wilson then reminded the Board that this effort would have to be a joint City/County initiative and there would have to be local legislation introduced in order to increase this tax. He reminded the Board that we are currently about half way through the legislative session so if we are going to request legislation, we are going to have to make a decision.

Kenda Woodard stated that the presentation was made at the City of Griffin retreat last week. They have expressed their desire to raise the tax to the 8%, but definitely want to know what the County plans to do and the City Manager stated that they are open to having the conversation regarding the relationship with regard to the Welcome Center.

Chairperson Johnson stated that promoting Spalding County and bringing people into the County, the Hotel/Motel tax is just one means of revenue that the counties have available and that Spalding County can implement. She further stated that Spalding County is growing and we need to get the money in here and build a community where people can thrive.

Mr. Wilson then asked Jim Fortune, County Attorney, if the County would ask for introduction of legislation or would it need to be a joint City/County initiative.

Mr. Fortune advised that he felt that it would need to be a joint initiative in that the legislators would want to make sure that both governing bodies were in favor of the legislation prior to introducing for consideration. There would probably need to be a letter from both Boards asking that the legislation be introduced for consideration.

Daa'ood Amin, advised that the City Commission did not take a vote during the work session last week. He stated that the City is in favor of the 8%, they currently charge 7%, so this would only be an increase of 1%; however, they did want to see which direction the County planned to take before taking a vote on the matter.

Mr. Wilson advised that this is on the Spalding County Board of Commissioners Agenda for this evening. It is Item #4 on tonight's agenda, so we will be taking formal action tonight.

Markus Schwab, Director of Administrative Services, City of Griffin advised that the Welcome Center budget for FY2015 operates on \$111,000 in expenditures and \$68,000 Revenue, so it currently operates at a deficit of \$43,000.

Commissioner Ray asked if anyone had talked with the School System about the Auditorium. He advised that as part of the very first SPLOST the School System renovated the Auditorium for the community's use. Since that renovation it has been utilized by the citizens for weddings and other events that bring people into town. Commissioner Ray stated that the Boards would also need to open a dialogue with the School System to see what their needs would be.

Ms. Woodard and Mr. Amin stated that no conversations had been held with the School System with regard to funding they may need in this area.

2. Jack Poland with the City of Griffin to update the Board of Commissioners on how the City and the County can work together for a "state of the art" IT/Phone /Data network.

Mr. Poland presented to the Board the City of Griffin's proposal for bringing fiber optic service to the County. He reviewed the proposed route of fiber to the E911 Center. Mr. Poland stated that there would be a significant cost savings on maintenance between the current CAD system and the proposed new CAD system with fiber.

Mr. Poland stated that the implementation of fiber would be the true beginning for Spalding County to have their own network. Mr. Poland stated that he is willing to work with the county in implementing the fiber optic system. He stated that he is a City of Griffin employee, but he is also a resident of the county and he will work toward what we do both as an employee and as a citizen. He then invited the Commissioners to come over and talk with his staff. He stated that he would like to show everyone their current capabilities and where they started so that they can get a good idea on what can be done for the future.

Mr. Poland stated that the first thing he accomplished with the City of Griffin was the formation of a network, he advised that that is the foundation to work from. If you don't have a good network, you will end up with a circuit of little islands that are not connected.

Mr. Poland stated that if the City and the County are able to run fiber optic cable along the line as presented, the fiber would then become available to the annex and all of the other departments located along that line. From that point, the County could establish a network, utilize VOIP and reduce the telephone, DSL and cable, internet bills currently being paid.

Mr. Wilson stated that we are not talking about going onto the City's system, we are talking about the CAD System and implementing a fiber optic system. This is an opportunity for both the City and the County to spend \$200,000 and we will both get CAD. It will also allow us access to the City's fiber system.

Mr. Poland stated that the County would be set up under our own domain and run under our own security as far as the email system is concerned. Mr. Poland further stated that he would love to partner with the county in fiber, before going to partner in business.

Mr. Wilson advised that the first thing he would have Eric Mosley, the new Assistant County Manager work on with Mike Windham will be a communication audit.

***Commissioner Johnson recessed the meeting for a break at 10:20 a.m.
Commissioner Johnson reconvened at 10:30 a.m.***

3. County Manager to provide update on 800 MHz Radio System User Fees.

Mr. Wilson advised that he did attend the City of Griffin goals setting workshop last week and they did, briefly, discuss 800 MHz as you know, the Board has asked for a meeting today, but we were not able to arrange that with the City representatives. This meeting has tentatively been set for March 2nd and a facilitator/mediator from UGA Carl Vinson Institute has been asked to facilitate the meeting.

Calculations of this service have been provided through FY2014 for Option 4, which is the Option that the Board voted to present in November 2014. Mr. Wilson then reviewed the calculations for the Board. Mr. Wilson advised that based on the Option 4 that the Board voted to use, the four year total owed to the County is \$467,553.22.

4. Review of February 16, 2015 Extraordinary Session agenda.

Mr. Fortune advised that he would not be at the meeting this evening; however Janice Wallace would be attending in his place.

E. Adjournment

Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Ray to adjourn the meeting at 11:08 a.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.