

MINUTES

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held their Planning Retreat on Saturday, February 8, 2014 at the Spalding County Senior Center Conference Room beginning at 9:00 a.m. with Chairman Samuel Gardner presiding. Commissioners Raymond Ray, Rita Johnson, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Bart Miller were present. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson, Jr., County Attorney Jim Fortune, Administrative Services Director Jinna Garrison, Human Resources Director Bill Gay and Executive Secretary, Kathy Gibson to record minutes/actions.

The following Department Heads were also present: Terry Colling (Board of Elections), T.J. Imberger (Parks & Recreation) & Kelly Leger (Parks & Recreation).

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER) – Chairman Samuel Gardner

II. INVOCATION – led by Chairman Gardner.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG – led by Commissioner Raymond Ray.

IV. Agenda Items:

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Overview - Gordon Maner, Senior Public Service Associate, Governmental Training, Education and Development at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia.**

William Wilson, County Manager, introduced Gordon Maner of the Carl Vinson Institute to the group and then turned the meeting over to Mr. Maner.

Mr. Maner introduced himself and outlined his role as the facilitator for the meeting and then covered the Ground Rules for the day.

2. **Review of 2013 Retreat Goals and Objectives and Accomplishments.**

William Wilson reviewed the 2013 Accomplishments for the county including in his review the success of the Silver Sneakers Program at the Senior Center and the successful transition from semi-monthly to bi-weekly payroll for county employees.

2013 Accomplishments & Achievements

- Commissioners Johnson and Miller took office
- Spalding County Fire Department gave away free smoke detectors
- Commissioners held a two day retreat with Department Heads & Budget Review Committee
- Implementation of Novus Agenda- Cut cost of agenda preparations by approximately \$24,000
- Employee Incentive Program Announced
- Implementation of electronic Spalding County Application fillable form. Applicants can now utilize our website and digitally fill out and submit paperless applications
- Approved Minimum Housing Code – allowed for demolition and removal of over 50 mobile homes in Mobile Home Parks, 6 homes demolished by County and 2 by property owners
- Grand Opening of Spalding County Senior Center

- Negotiated distribution of final 1/3 of TAVT Tax
- Fire Department cleared of all charges in report issued by John Lowery
- Demolition of Old Fairmont High and opening of the Healthy Life Community Garden
- Eula Redding was awarded 2013 recipient of the Bain Proctor Award for Volunteerism
- Spring into Fitness employee and family health & wellness event at Wyomia Tyus Park
- Fairmont Community Center roof replaced and re-opened May 18th
- Chairman Flowers-Taylor received Platinum Certificated from ACCG for training
- Commissioners Gardner & Ray received Certified Commissioners Certificates
- William Wilson appointed as District County 4 County Manager – Administrators Section representative by ACCG
- Pest Control Services consolidated and awarded to lowest bidder
- Approved Intergovernmental Agreement with City of Griffin for construction of Public Safety Center Firing Range and approved utilization of timber sales proceeds for development of said Firing Range
- Relocation of HR to provide much needed privacy and secured space for Human Resource Records, two kiosks installed for paperless employment applications and a Conference/new employee orientation room added
- Larry Lillard appointed new Chief Appraiser by the Board of Assessors
- Tornado sirens purchased with FEMA Grant were installed, tested and fully operational. Sirens were placed at Blalock and L B Norton Stations.
- Silver Sneakers Program approved for Senior Center
- Spalding County employees⁴ raised over \$2,000 for Relay for Life.
- Approved agreement with ARC for Transit Feasibility Study and awarded contract to URS to conduct study.
- County awarded Certificate of Excellence in Governmental Reporting for 12th consecutive year.
- Approved agreement with ARC for funding of first joint Comprehensive Transportation Plan in cooperation with the City of Griffin.
- Four County employees' participants in the City of Griffin Leadership Development Institute.
- Storm Ready signage erected at Fire Stations and on State Routes.

3. **Update on Paperless Projects:**

Novus Agenda - William Wilson

Mr. Wilson stated that everyone present at the retreat is currently using Novus Agenda. The Water Authority as well as the Board of Appeals and Planning Commission has been asked to review this program for implementation within their respective areas. This would mean purchase of additional tablets for those members; however, it would reduce the cost of paper copying and man hours in producing Agendas and Agenda Packages significantly. An estimate of current savings realized by the Board of Commissioners is \$24,000 in time and materials for one year.

Rec1 - T. J. Imberger

T.J. Imberger, Supervisor at Spalding County Parks and Recreation, reviewed the Rec1 program for the group. Rec1 is a web based program that provides online registration for programs being offered by the County Parks and Recreation Department. All of the Senior Center Activities and memberships are routed through Rec1. All Special Events, Classes and School Break Camps are available on line. All facility rentals are done online and can be done from the comfort of the citizen's home with no man hours having to be invested.

Facility Dude - T. J. Imberger

Mr. Imberger also reviewed the Facility Dude program currently being used by Spalding County. This is a web based tracking program that provides work order systems for fixed locations. The Griffin-Spalding School System currently utilizes School Dude for their bus routing and other services.

The Facility Dude program is a web based work order system that can be utilized by all departments. The program will allow supervisors to review and assign requests, it will allow front-line staff to see, prioritize and schedule their work. Work orders can be shifted between departments and visibility is readily available to all parties involved.

In addition it allows front-line staff to review projects that have been completed, records costs for time, equipment, materials and labor. The program will also create preventative maintenance schedules.

CSI - Jinna Garrison

Ms. Jinna Garrison, Administrative Services Director, reviewed CSI Outfitters, the financial accounting software currently being used by Spalding County. We are currently using the purchasing module in every department in the Annex, Parks & Recreation, Public Works and Fire. In addition, it will be utilized for budget preparation this year. This will give Finance the ability to control purchasing by requiring that departments have line items funded prior to making a purchase. A department cannot key in anything that will take them over budget. Everyone in the County will be up and running on this software by the end of the fiscal year.

4. Needs and Expectations exercise by Facilitator Gordon Maner.

Facilitator Maner then asked all of the participants to respond to the following questions of the Commissioners, County Manager and Senior Staff.

For you to be successful what do you need or expect from your fellow commissioners?

Chairman Samuel Gardner

- Team work.

- Work through the County Manager

Vice Chairman Raymond Ray

- For the Board of Commissioners to be successful we have to have Trust. Trusting each other, experience and our knowledge. In not knowing each other we sometimes do not understand where we are coming from. We need to know each other better so that we can Trust each other. In order to build trust we need to spend quality time one-on-one so that we can get to know one another.
- Foresight – We need to be looking at the future.

Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor

- We need to look at the bigger vision. Not to concentrate on our immediate needs. Visioning session.
- Willingness to meet the goals of the community and the Board of Commissioners with some compromise.

Commissioner Rita Johnson

- Honesty and integrity. Professionalism.
- Communication and Respect for fellow Commissioners.
- Responsiveness by phone calls and emails to fellow Commissioners.
- No hidden agendas.
 - No surprises.

Commissioner Bart Miller

- Try to work together. Everyone should work toward the same goal. We are all on the same team.
 - If you are talking to an individual in someone else's district, you need to advise the Commissioner's whose district it involves.
 - Work through the Senior Staff to follow through with requests.

For you to be successful what do you need or expect from senior staff?

Chairman Samuel Gardner

- Updates and information.
 - No surprises!

Vice Chairman Raymond Ray

- Detailed and appropriate research
 - Costs
 - Pros and Cons
 - Unintended consequences in order to be prepared to make the decisions.
- Need their experience and knowledge.
 - Honesty opinion/feedback

Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor

- Staff practices timeliness in fulfilling the reasonable requests of the

Board.

- Establishing priorities of requests.
- Energy/enthusiasm/fearlessness
 - Looking out for staff. Be more proactive in looking out for their staff.

Commissioner Rita Johnson

- Accountability in leadership
 - Be accountable for things that go on in your department.
 - Knowledge of Rules
 - Expectations Lead by Example

Commissioner Bart Miller

- Assistance in understanding of how a particular County department would handle something.
- Being conservative with taxpayer's money.

Manager and Senior Staff

For you to be successful what do you need from the Board of Commissioners?

Jim Fortune

- Trust, Honesty, Fairness, thoughtful, Consequences of actions, consider the other person's situation.

William Wilson

- Please don't blind side us in meetings or in the public
 - Please give us a heads up as to what you will be bringing up in meetings.
 - Don't make it any harder than it already is.
- When the Board votes on an item, if you didn't agree with the vote, you still represent the Board and have to show support for the vote. Do not publically speak against the decision made.
 - It is perceived that the wrong decision was made.
- Just "Don't shoot the messenger."
- No surprises.

Bill Gay

- Ask questions before you come to the meetings.
- Planning vs. reacting
 - Being proactive instead of reactive.

Terry Colling

- Respect
 - Complimenting Staff
 - Recognition
- Understanding
 - We all have the same goals.

Jinna Garrison

- Recognize that it takes time to pull together information being

requested.

- Being considerate regarding the time it takes to accomplish a task.

T.J. Imberger

- Understand that the employees' goals are the same as your goals in providing services to our citizens.
- Recognition that we are on the same team.
- Remember everything done is the result of a citizen request. Citizens expect service, they don't care what resources are involved.

Kelly Leger

- Realizing that you have very committed staff
- We all have our citizens best interests at heart
- To provide us with the resources that we need to do the job
- Understand that the staff is the foundation of the services.
 - Invest on good staff
 - Create an environment where they want to stay

The conclusion drawn from this discussion was that the best practice would be for Commissioners' to stay out of operations and for the Staff to stay out of politics. Commissioners should focus on the bigger picture and raise questions to become educated on a facet of operations they have a question about.

For you to be successful at your job, what should you expect of each other?

William Wilson: Positive attitude. Don't tell me why you can't do something. Be a doer. Respect other staff members, both personally and professionally. Be a team player.

Bill Gay: Communicate needs in a timely fashion. Provide appropriate lead time in expectation of an answer.

Jinna Garrison: Recognition of what it takes for me to get my job done. Expectations of the position have changed and I need folks to understand that it takes time to do things.

Terry Colling: Cooperation and communication.

T.J. Imberger: I feel like I work for the best Department in the State. We are the best and we need to present ourselves as the best.

Kelly Leger: When a request is made, that the follow-up is done in a timely manner. I would like to have timely feedback which shows respect for the department making the request. Taking time to listen.

Bill Gay: Regular follow-up on projects. Prioritize expectations.

5. Presentation by Matt Bidwell of MSI Benefits regarding insurance and healthcare reform issues.

Mr. Bidwell gave the Commissioners a comprehensive report on the health insurance program currently offered to County employees.

6. Review of DRAFT Personnel Ordinance

Bill Gay, Human Resource Director, presented the Draft Personnel Ordinance to the group. The current personnel ordinance was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 1992. It has been amended over the years; however, at the base it remains 22 years old and needs to be updated. It is the County's desire to bring the Ordinance into compliance with current law and to have our Personnel Policies reflect the world in which we live. The County contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute to assist in bringing our Ordinance into compliance. This draft has been reviewed by the HR attorney and it is now time for the Commissioners to review the ordinance and adopt.

7. FY 2015 Budget Goals and Objectives

William Wilson presented a list of concerns of the employees as:

- Reinstatement of retirement match
- Reinstatement of unpaid holidays
- Reduction or elimination of pharmacy deductible
- Countywide Compensation & Classification study.

Chairman Gardner brought up the fact that the County currently has two department head vacancies with another vacancy coming up due to a retirement and wanted to know if any consideration had been given to filling these vacancies. A discussion was then held on consolidating these positions and hiring an Assistant County Manager to act as the Division head for several departments, replacing the department heads as they leave or retire. Each department would have a Supervisor who would handle the day to day operations of the department and they would report to the Assistant County Manager.

After significant discussion the following FY2015 Budget Goals were outlined:

- Reduction of millage rate
- If the funds are available, reinstate the unpaid holidays
- Inclusion of electronic time and attendance, software/hardware in the budget.
- Keep the 50% longevity funding in budget.

If at all possible:

- Reinstatement of the retirement match.
- Try to increase the minimum housing code demolition budget to \$20,000.

8. 2014 SPLOST Projects Discussion

Mr. Wilson presented the list of projects for the 2014 SPLOST to the Board of Commissioners. We have a total of \$76+ million in requested projects received to date. Based on the current revenues the most we can raise over the six year time period would be \$48-50 million.

After reviewing all of the projects presented, the staff recommended the following:

- Debt reduction in General Fund (county-wide).
- Upgrade to the CAD/911 system (county-wide).

- Pay off debt service in fire district fund
- 60 miles of road resurfacing @ \$100,000 per mile
- 8 miles of new roads surfaced @ \$1.5 million per mile
- Hill Street Bridge project (county-wide)
- Lights on the Soccer fields.

There are a series of projects that could be county-wide projects. The Board asked that the County consult with the City and develop a list of projects that could be agreed upon as county-wide projects where the budget for these projects be “taken off the top” before individual City and County projects.

Discussion was held on whether the Hotel/Motel tax could be used to purchase the lights for the soccer fields. Ms. Garrison explained that according to the Department of Community Affairs, the Hotel/Motel tax was to be used exclusively for projects that would promote tourism to bring people into the area who will use the Hotels/Motels within the area. The question was raised if the soccer lights brought in local tournaments to the area, the people involved in the tournaments would be renting Hotel/Motel rooms so would that not be considered bring in tourist? This question was posed to the county attorney and he is to report back with his legal opinion.

9. Short Term Goals for Calendar 2014

Short term goals outlined for the Group were:

- Plan to have a Visioning retreat that would encompass a comprehensive plan for Spalding County for 10-25 years.
- Pre-meeting work sessions before at least one of the Board of Commissioners Meetings.
- Sale of surplus real property currently on the books. If we are not utilizing the property and there is no plan to use the property in the future, the property should be sold to provide a possible revenue stream for the County.
- Conduct study on lowering the ISO rating for fire protection in coordination with the City of Griffin.
- Completion and implementation of the new Personnel Ordinance.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor wanted to take a few minutes to let everyone know about the legislative update that was covered at the ACCG Conference that we need to take action regarding.

- One is a State funded Assistant District Attorney’s and Assistant Public Defenders for Juvenile Court, this is legislations that provides a formula for the creation of Assistant District Attorneys and Public Defenders for Juvenile Courts cases based on the number of Juvenile Court Judges to be funded by the State. The only problem with this is that the State doesn’t pay for these salaries?
- Second is legislation that will affect the Hospital Authority. It gives the county commission the power to dissolve the authority if they don’t complete what their mission is and it also allows the Housing Authority to give money to private institutions, health care centers and different kinds of organizations that are not necessarily governmental or provide medical services or medical teachings.

- There is legislation being submitted by Representative Rich Golan to decrease the amount of interest that you can charge on overdue property taxes. Right now it is 1% per month or 12% per year and he wants it decreased to .25% per month which comes out to be 3% per year.
- The other legislation proposed would allow solar panel farms on conservation use property. If this passes then that will mean that you can pretty much put anything that you want on conservation property.
- There is also legislation to allow honorably discharged veterans to be able to obtain gun licenses for free. She personally feels that veterans should have to go through the same screening process as anyone else if they want to carry a gun.

We really need to let our representatives know that some of the upcoming legislation is not going to work for us as a county and will really wind up costing local taxpayers.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Ray/Miller to adjourn. Motion carried unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.