



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

T. PAGE THARP GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING  
102 STARKSVILLE AVENUE NORTH, LEESBURG, GEORGIA 31763

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024 AT 6:00 P.M.

T. PAGE THARP BUILDING  
OPAL CANNON AUDITORIUM  
WWW.LEE.GA.US

MEETING MINUTES  
WORK SESSION

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### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Luke Singletary, Chairman	District 2
Chris Guarnieri, Vice-Chairman	District 4
Dennis Roland, Commissioner	District 1
Billy Mathis, Commissioner	District 3
George Walls, Commissioner	District 5

### COUNTY STAFF

Christi Dockery, County Manager  
Kaitlyn Good, County Clerk  
Jimmy Skipper, County Attorney

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The Lee County Board of Commissioners met in a work session on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. The meeting was held in the Opal Cannon Auditorium of the Lee County T. Page Tharp Governmental Building in Leesburg, Georgia. Those present were Chairman Luke Singletary, Vice-Chairman Chris Guarnieri, Commissioner Dennis Roland, Commissioner Billy Mathis, and Commissioner George Walls. Staff in attendance was County Manager Christi Dockery, County Clerk Kaitlyn Good, and County Attorney Jimmy Skipper. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live. Chairman Singletary called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

### CALL TO ORDER

### INVOCATION

Pastor Aaron McCulley, Philema Road Baptist Church, led the invocation.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and the audience said the Pledge of Allegiance in unison.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- (A) **Consideration to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for April 23, 2024.**  
Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for April 23, 2024. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri voting yea.
- Commissioner Mathis entered the meeting.
- (B) **Consideration to approve the minutes from the Budget Workshop held April 23, 2024.**  
Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the Budget Workshop held April 23, 2024. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

### CONSENT AGENDA

NONE

### NEW BUSINESS

- (A) **Doug Collins, County Extension Coordinator, to introduce new personnel.**  
Doug Collins introduced several new employees to the Board of Commissioners: Leila Baxter - 4-H Agent,

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

- (A) **Wetherald Behavioral Health (Z24-004) have submitted an application requesting to rezone a total of 12.391 acres from R-1 (Single-Family Residential District) to C-4 (Traditional Office District). The property owner is CG Boyd Properties, LLC. The subject property is located at 552 US HWY 82 West, parcel number 017A002, in Land Lot 191 of the Second Land District of Lee County, Georgia. Planning Commission recommends approval, with the condition that the permitted uses in C-4 should not be allowed to include personal care homes, child-welfare facilities, and hospital use.**

Chairman Singletary opened the Public Hearing at 6:08pm.

Mr. Henry Jones spoke in favor of the rezoning and voiced support for the project.

With no further comments or questions from the Board, staff, or audience, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:09pm.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to waive the second reading for the request to rezone a total of 12.391 acres from R-1 (Single-Family Residential District) to C-4 (Traditional Office District). Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve the request to rezone a total of 12.391 acres from R-1 (Single-Family Residential District) to C-4 (Traditional Office District) with the condition recommended by the Planning Commission. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (B) **Lee County Emergency Response Department (Z24-005) has submitted an application requesting a conditional use to allow a communications tower and related appurtenances, being greater than 100 feet in height. The property owner is Lee County Board of Commissioners. The subject property is located at 2345 US 19 North, Smithville (Fire Station #4), parcel number 020003, in Land Lot 38 of the Thirteenth Land District of Lee County, Georgia. Planning Commission recommends approval.**

Chairman Singletary opened the Public Hearing at 6:10pm.

There were no public speakers.

With no comments or questions from the Board, staff, or audience, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:10pm.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to waive the second reading for the requested conditional use to allow a communications tower and related appurtenances, being greater than 100 feet in height. Commissioner Mathis seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the requested conditional use to allow a communications tower and related appurtenances, being greater than 100 feet in height. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (C) **Lee County Emergency Response Department (Z24-005) has submitted an application requesting a variance to allow a reduction of setback requirements for a communications tower and related appurtenances, from a 50-foot rear setback and 20-foot side setback to 10 foot for the rear and side. The property owner is Lee County Board of Commissioners. The subject property is located at 2345 US 19 North, Smithville (Fire Station #4), parcel number 020003, in Land Lot 38 of the Thirteenth Land District of Lee County, Georgia. Planning Commission recommends approval.**

Chairman Singletary opened the Public Hearing at 6:11pm.

There were no public speakers.

With no further comments or questions from the Board, staff, or audience, the Public Hearing was closed 6:12pm.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to waive the second reading for the requested variance to allow a reduction of setback requirements for a communications tower and related appurtenances, from a 50-foot rear setback and 20-foot side setback to 10 foot for the rear and side. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve the requested variance to allow a reduction of setback requirements for a communications tower and related appurtenances, from a 50-foot rear setback and 20-foot side setback to 10 foot for the rear and side. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (D) **A request to amend the zoning ordinance Chapter 70, Article III, Section 70-84 (T24-001) of the Lee County Code of Ordinances with respect to accessory building allowance for lots of five acres or more, located in Residential Districts. Planning Commission recommends approval with the following changes: (a) The maximum number of accessory buildings to be five for lots 43,561 square feet to five acres, (b) seven maximum number of accessory buildings for lots five acres to 25 acres, (c) seven maximum number of accessory buildings for lots 25 acres or more, (d) the accessory building square footage for lots 43,561 square feet to five acres to be 1,000 square feet for the first five acres, plus 750 square feet for each additional ½ acre, not to exceed a total of 7,000 square feet of floor area, (e) accessory building square footage on lots five acres to 25 acres to be 7,000 square feet for the first five acres, plus 250 square feet for each additional acre, not to exceed a total of 12,000 square feet of floor area, and (f) accessory building square footage for lots 25 acres or more to the maximum total allowable floor area shall be determined in accordance with AG-1 requirements.**

Chairman Singletary opened the Public Hearing 6:13pm.

Interim Planning Director Joey Davenport spoke regarding the Planning Commission's discussion and decision during their meeting. Mr. Davenport informed the Board that they were being presented with both the staff's version of the text amendment and that version of the text amendment following the Planning Commission, with their suggestions. Planning Commission member Johnny Golden addressed the Board stating that after some thought, he would like to remove (c) from the abovementioned changes from the Planning Commission.

With no further comments or questions from the Board, staff, or audience, the Public Hearing was closed 6:22pm.

Final vote on this Text Amendment will be held Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

## **DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS**

### **Parks & Recreation**

- (A) **Consideration to approve a quote for a concrete pad for the installation of playground equipment at Pirate's Cove. HANDOUT**

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve a quote for a concrete pad for the installation of playground equipment at Pirate's Cove from Zane Grace Construction for \$20,493.00 to come from SPLOST funds. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

### **Planning, Zoning, & Engineering**

- (B) **Review of the minutes for the April 4, 2024 Planning Commission meeting.**

The minutes were reviewed as presented.

(C) **Discussion of implementing a new phone system. HANDOUT**

Upon request of staff, this item was tabled.

**CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS & GOVERNMENTAL BOARDS/AUTHORITIES****Utilities Authority**(A) **Discussion of providing funds in support of the completion of the meter project.**

Chairman Singletary summarized the Joint Meeting held on May 8, 2024 with the Development Authority and the Utilities Authority. He asked Utilities Authority General Manager Chris Boswell to address the Board regarding the meter project. Chairman Singletary said that he wanted to bring this to the Board about the possibility of helping to fund some of this project.

Mr. Boswell stated that the Utilities Authority has been replacing old meters and that is currently their sole revenue every month. They currently try to replace a couple hundred per year. He stated that they use the bond money since it is an immediate revenue. The current meters are around 25 years old. The Utilities Authority has spent around \$2,000,000.00 replacing the old meters so far. To follow EPD and EPA regulations, backflow preventers have been installed on the meters. These new meters help to give a more accurate reading, which helps customers be accurately billed. With meters, as they age, they begin to turn slower so they are no longer as accurate causing some citizens to not have accurate billings causing revenue loss for the Utilities Authority.

Mr. Boswell added that Phase III is nearly complete in replacing around a third of the meters. Right now they have retrofitted the devices with their contractor. All materials are being purchased directly from Consolidated Pipe and Equipment at the Industrial Park. The Authority has advertised for a vendor to complete only the labor; the Authority has gone out to purchase all the materials. The Authority staff is doing the construction observation, no one was needed to be hired; therefore, the Authority is saving more money. They are currently at the point where the Utilities Authority stated they could only spend close to \$2,500,000.00, after receiving an estimation, they would need an addition \$815,435.90 to finish all of the meters.

Chairman Singletary stated that he wanted to add this to the agenda to see what the Board thinks as everyone benefits from the utility system whether they are customers or not as commercial business operations run on this system. He stated that he understands that the Board does not fund the Utilities Authority, and he is not looking at a continuing funding, but this seems like a project worthwhile.

Mr. Boswell added that right now, the new budget that is currently being worked on reflects 41% as debt service. He stated that this would help on the revenue side and every March the Authority has to submit to the State of Georgia, Department of Natural Resources, and EPD a water loss audit. A water loss audit is the water that is pumped through Authority wells versus what is metered and sold to customers. These meters can help a more accurate reading, even if citizens were to cut back on water usage, this would save the Authority money.

County Manager Christi Dockery asked Mr. Boswell if this could be done by the end of the fiscal year to which Mr. Boswell replied that the contractors could finish approximately 94% of the project by June 30, 2024. Ms. Dockery added that it could be funded out of contingency.

Mr. Boswell added that any amount of funding towards this project would be appreciated. He stated that on the old meters, in the Canuga Subdivision the consumption in April 2023 was 381,557 gallons but on the new meters in April 2024 it was 854,777 gallons.

Commissioner Roland asked about water and sewage. Mr. Boswell explained the billing with water and sewer. He stated that there is water and sewer in some of the newer subdivisions like the Groves, Hill Ridge, and Oakland. Chairman Singletary thanked Mr. Boswell for his time and asked the Board to take some time to think on this subject.

## COUNTY MANAGER'S MATTERS

(A) Updates on County projects.

County Manager Christi Dockery discussed ongoing projects in the County: (1) New York Road bridge repair project has been completed; (2) the Oakland Library roof repair has been completed; (3) the road resurfacing projects are on-going; and (4) the engineering of the Coston Road paving project is in progress.

(B) Consideration to approve repairs to the parking lot of the Main Street Governmental Building.  
**HANDOUT**

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve repairs to the parking lot of the Main Street Governmental Building from Blackout Sealcoating for \$11,956.70 to come from General funds. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarneri and Commissioner Mathis voting yea.

(C) Consideration to approve a short-term lease for property located at 103 Laramore Road for the use of a Fire Substation and Polling Place.

This lease would have an effective term of January 1, 2024 – May 30, 2024. County Attorney Jimmy Skipper stated that this would cover through the May 21 Election. Election Director Veronica Johnson added that there was no lease from 2008-2013 and it is up to the Board if they would like a lease now.

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to approve a short-term lease for property located at 103 Laramore Road for the use of a Fire Substation and Polling Place to expire May 31, 2024. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarneri and Commissioner Roland voting yea.

(D) Consideration to approve a purchase agreement for property located at 103 Laramore Road.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve a purchase agreement for property located at 103 Laramore Road at a cost of \$17,500.00 to come from General funds. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarneri and Commissioner Mathis voting yea.

(E) Consideration to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Secretary of State's Office.

Elections Director Veronica Johnson stated that this agreement is for storage of Elections equipment and is the same agreement as was completed last year.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Secretary of State's Office. Commissioner Mathis seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarneri and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

## COMMISSIONER'S MATTERS

(A) Discussion of 2024 Local Road Assistance Administration funds (LRA) and potential projects.

Chairman Singletary stated that approximately \$855,000.00 is available but the application is due by June 15, 2024. Commissioner Walls mentioned Grave Springs Road. The Board stated that they would bring roads to the May 28 meeting.

(B) Consideration to approve hiring Phillips Consulting to put out an RFP to thin timber on the 100 acres.

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve hiring Phillips Consulting to put out an RFP to thin timber on the 100 acres at a cost of \$591.20 to come from General funds. Commissioner Mathis seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarneri and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(A) **Discussion of Lumpkin Road East.**

Stormwater Engineer Mike Talley of Flint River Consulting addressed the Board regarding Lumpkin Road East. Mr. Talley stated that there is currently no standing water today after the large amount of rainfall we have had recently. The water table is currently down, therefore, it absorbed the majority of the recent rainfall. Mr. Talley noted that with more continued rainfall, the problem will still be there and has not gone away. As discussed at a previous meeting, the dam is currently down, however, the owners are discussing repairing it.

Commissioner Roland asked about getting a pump and pumping the water into the nearby creek. Mr. Talley responded that is something that can be looked into, however, it does have some drawbacks. The pumps would not keep up with the rainfall and would work best for pumping the water afterwards. They do tend to bind up due to debris, meaning a force main would be needed. Any damage during the event would still happen with these pumps, it would just prevent the water from sitting there. Problems with this pump could be loss of power and the possibility of binding with debris meaning Public Works would need to regularly check the grates possibly before, during, or even after storms, causing a manpower issue. Mr. Talley stated that the County would possibly need two pumps in the event of one pump failing, there would be another. Mr. Talley said that sizing and pricing can be looked into.

He noted that maintenance is very important because if you don't maintain the pumps they can fall apart very quickly due to not being able to handle big debris load. Mr. Talley said that this is something that can be done, if the Board would like to see. He said that another option would be laying the force main dry pipe down now and quick connect, so if water is there, it can be excavated out of the area quickly. This water would go in the County right-of-way where a AG pump could pump it down. Mr. Talley reiterated that this is helping after the event, so any damage done during the event is not preventable.

Commissioner Mathis asked if that is a way of saying it won't work. Mr. Talley responded by saying to prevent damages, it won't work. Chairman Singletary added that he is unsure about every event, but over the last couple of days with the large amounts of rainfall, it doesn't all soak in to the ground. Mr. Talley agreed that there have been those types of events, especially from the nearby fields, and it usually depends on what time of the year these events occur on how extensive it is.

Mr. Talley said that the pumps would be more affordable and it would just need to be understood that this is to help after a storm event, there is no guarantee of protecting or fixing property. This is just to help drain the standing water after a storm event. There is benefit with using this device but it is not necessarily solving the problem. The two different options in this scenario is the whole station or the quick connect. The quick connect is something County staff currently knows how to do as it is done with various ponds.

Commissioner Roland asked if the water starts at the road and then travels to the citizen's house. Mr. Talley responded it ponds at the road, but the citizen gets a majority of water from the farm fields behind their property. Commissioner Roland asked if building a new holding pond with a pump would help, Mr. Talley stated the problem with doing that is it cannot pump fast enough due to how fast the rainfall is. Although, it can help and this has been proposed in other various locations.

Chairman Singletary asked if they don't repair the dam, if it changes the limitations that were set. Mr. Talley responded yes it does but that would be hoping they did not repair the dam. If they did not repair the dam, then ditches could be dug and there would be no reason that would not work. Commissioner Roland asked that the best solution is to run piping down the road, place a pump, and pump it down. Mr. Talley responded it would be the most cost effective way, but it needs to be understood that this will help after the storm event and not during.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY'S MATTERS**

NONE

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

NONE

**PUBLIC FORUM**

*Citizens will be allowed to address the Board of Commissioners regarding any issues or complaints. Individuals should sign up prior to the start of the meeting.*

Paul Clayton – State of Old Leslie Road  
Sam Johnson – State of Old Leslie Road

Chairman Singletary asked if anyone else would like to speak.  
With no further comments or questions from the audience, the Public Forum was closed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (A) In honor of National Public Works week, we would like to cordially invite all employees, their families and citizens to join us on Friday, May 24, 2024 from 1pm – 4pm, for an open house at the Public Works Department, located at 759 Hwy 32 East.
- (B) The offices of the Lee County Board of Commissioners will be **closed Monday, May 27, 2024** in observance of Memorial Day. County offices will reopen Tuesday, May 28, 2024 for regular business hours. **Residential garbage services will be delayed one day for the rest of the week.**
- (C) The next regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting is **Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 6:00pm.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Mathis made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Guarnieri and Commissioner Roland voting yea. The meeting adjourned at 7:03PM.

Facebook video link: <https://www.facebook.com/leecountyga/videos/1858340767965150>

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY CLERK

*Lee County is a thriving vibrant community celebrated for its value of tradition encompassing a safe family oriented community, schools of excellence, and life long opportunities for prosperity and happiness without sacrificing the rural agricultural tapestry.*

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language interpretation should contact the ADA Coordinator at (229) 759-6000 or through the Georgia Relay Service (800) 255-0056 (TDD) or (800) 355-0135 (voice). This person can be contacted at the T. Page Tharp Building in Leesburg, Georgia between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice of seven (7) working days. The meeting rooms and buildings are handicap accessible.