

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on **Thursday, January 11, 2018**, at **6:00pm** in the courtroom. Those present were Chairman Walker T. Norman; Commissioner Virginia T. Williams, District One; Commissioner Larry Collins, District Two; Commissioner Cooper Cliatt, District Three; Commissioner H. Lamar Wade, District Four; Mr. Ben Jackson, County Attorney; Mrs. Traci Bussey, Finance Director and Ms. Sherry E. McKellar, County Clerk.

1.

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Norman called the meeting to order.

2.

Invocation

Rev. Tripp Goodwin of Lincolnton Baptist Church opened the meeting with prayer.

3.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Following the invocation Commissioner Cliatt lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

4.

State of the County Address

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to give our State of the County Address this evening. I want to take a moment to thank each member of the Board of Commissioners for their energetic and forward thinking leadership as they perform the duties required by them. Commissioner Williams, Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Cliatt, Commissioner Wade, I want you all to know I consider it an honor to have the privilege to work with each of you as we work together to make Lincoln County a better place for generations to come.

I want to recognize our county department heads for their valuable contributions and commitment to this commission and for their vision to serve our citizens. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the employees of Lincoln County for all you do to keep this government running on a day to day basis.

I would like to talk on the issues facing Rural Georgia and Lincoln County in particular. I am concerned about the future of Georgia's rural counties and I could not agree more with Georgia House Speaker David Ralston and some of the other members of the Georgia House who are exploring the idea of using income tax breaks to help repopulate rural Georgia with counties that continue to lose population. I read an article in a newspaper just a few weeks ago that I want to speak about that is part of the concept of the House Rural Development Council. The Rural Relocate and Reside Program, which is a part of it, states that the program would offer a one-time 10 year state income tax deduction of up to \$50,000 to new residences of certain Georgia counties. There are currently discussions about helping rural areas involving 124 of Georgia's 159 counties that have experienced less than 5% growth over the last 5 years. The proposal to repopulate rural Georgia is partly aimed at attracting high income residents who can help spur economic growth. Only 11 rural counties in Georgia have a larger population now than in **1860**. Lincoln County's largest population was in 1920 at 9,739; in 1970 it was 5,895; in 2000 it was 8,348 and 2010 it was 7,996. With that said, Georgia's population has doubled from 5.46 million in 1980 to 10.5 million in 2017, with most of Georgia's growth being in the metropolitan Atlanta area, now over 5 million. Studies

have shown that the economic development climate has become more and more technology based, relocating companies to where the millennial talent lives and works and often prefers commuter rail.

This past November, I finished a four month class at the Georgia Academy for Economic Development and one of our speakers told us that 80% of all new manufacturing jobs that came to Georgia in 2016 located in Georgia's metropolitan areas leaving Georgia's rural counties with only 20%. When you break that down, Lincoln County is competing with over 100 Georgia counties. To bring that in perspective, if 100 manufacturing jobs came to Georgia, Lincoln County is competing for the other 20 companies trying to get new investments and jobs. Lincoln County has no four-lane or interstate highway system, no natural gas and no rail, which makes it more difficult.

I do want to promise you that John Stone, the Development Authority and Government leaders are continually working to fulfill our hopes of obtaining jobs for our county.

As most of you know, we got the announcement in December that Jintex Yarn was closing its Lincoln facility in January leaving over 60 people without jobs. This was devastating news to those employees and to this community.

I made a statement several years ago that Georgia's counties would never legislatively consolidate but financial restraints could force consolidation. I believe the time has probably come for our Community, City and County to start the discussion of consolidation of our City and County governments.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with all this said, we know that we have a lot of work ahead of us, but together we can accomplish many of our goals and our future will continue to be bright.

I want to mention some of the things we have done this past year. We have replaced the roof on the jail at a cost of \$103,062, painted the exterior of the courthouse \$57,500, painted the exterior of the Library for \$11,175, and repaired the parking lots at both the courthouse and the Lincoln Center for \$48,118, for a total of \$219,855.

We have initiated the restoration of the County's Geographical Information System, and began work on the County's Website, in house, with IT Director Austin Dockery.

I look forward to the challenges that 2018 brings. In 2017 Lincoln County provided:

- 1441 building inspections
- Issued 687 building permits
- Issued 26 new residential home permits, for a total of \$6,812,000; an average of \$262,000 per home

Lincoln County's new residential permits of 26 can be compared to McDuffie at 30 and Wilkes County at 4 in 2017.

Lincoln County's Fund Balance as of December 2017:

- General Fund \$999,922.99
- Payroll \$105,000.26
- Emergency Fund \$320,917.12

- Drug Education Fund \$ 22,344.87
- E-911 Fund \$ 86,620.19
- SPLOST Fund \$175,637.34
- Solid Waste Fund \$177,583.59
- T-SPLOST Fund \$522,611.10
- Water Fund \$ 89,420.34
- Water Reserve \$125,448.61

5.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Commissioner Collins, seconded by Commissioner Williams, the Board approved the minutes as presented.

6.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Collins, seconded by Commissioner Cliatt, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

7.

Departmental Reports

A. Office of Emergency Services Department

Director Broom was absent as he has pneumonia. Wanda Duncan sent in his report. OES responded to 370 calls and the average response time was 8 minutes. E-Bill Gross billing for November was \$32,190 with total revenues of \$30,687. OES installed Cradle Point Seamless Backup Internet System of the EOC which will allow for internet access if wired internet goes out in a disaster/emergency. Handled the transfer of ownership of the Cell Tower and T-Mobile is the anchor tenant. The tower will provide a nontax based revenue stream for the county with the potential to add additional leases. OES hosted multiple local, regional and state meetings in the EOC training room.

B. Recreation Department

Director Glaze was absent as he was at the Recreation Department for basketball practice. Basketball season started January 10, 2018.

C. Finance Department

Director Bussey presented the Finance report. Audit is complete and a copy was given to the Chairman and each Commissioner

D. Public Works Department

Director Seymour presented his monthly report. They serviced 2,069 water customers; installed four (4) service connections; repaired 10 leaks on system; continued maintenance on hydrants, valves and meters; preformed locates for utilities; and maintaining Savannah Bay water system and Pointe Shores water system.

E. Planning and Zoning Department

Director Seymour presented his monthly reports. They issued one (1) new and 58 renewal business licenses; issued 48 building permits and performed 125 building inspections, 126 on-site evaluations; 10 plan reviews; 40 solid waste activities; 15 code violations site visits and eight (8) notices of violation.

F. Development Authority

Director John Stone commended and concurred with the Chairman's State of the County Address and consideration of consolidation of City and County governments. He then gave an update on the Campgrounds Project. He has been working with KOA who stated that improvements are needed and he is currently seeking bids to present to his Board for possible approval. He is also looking into grants/loans to help pay for those improvements. He has two other parties interested in the campgrounds and will work further with them.

Director Stone is working with Jimtex/Martex to bring another business into the facility that closed in December. He is also working with five (5) other manufactures to help bring jobs to the County.

In regards to the Signage Project, more signs are to be up by the end of this month.

The Board also received the Lincoln County Library Yearly Report for 2017.

8.

Updated Drug & Alcohol Policy

On a motion by Commissioner Wade, seconded by Commissioner Williams, the Board voted unanimously to approve the updated Drug & Alcohol Policy. Clerk McKellar informed the Board that the Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance has issued an update to the USDOT's drug and alcohol testing regulation that became effective January 1, 2018. Therefore the Lincoln County Transit drug and alcohol policy needed to be updated accordingly.

9.

Alcohol Beverage License Renewals

On a motion by Commissioner Wade, seconded by Commissioner Collins, the Board voted to approve the new license for Kara Collins, Sissy's Bar & Grill. Commissioner Cliatt abstained.

10.

Senior Center & Transit Director

On a motion by Commissioner Cliatt, seconded by Commissioner Collins, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Chairman's recommendation to hire Nancy Blount as the Senior & Transit Director.

Director Blount thanked the Board for believing in her and shared with them some new activities the seniors would like to do that they had shared with her. In-house movies, trips, in-house library including movies to take home and watch, go to the movies, and learn computers.

11.

Board Appointments

A. Board of Elections

This appointment was tabled until next month.

B. CSRA Unified Development Authority

1. At-Large

On a motion by Commissioner Cliatt, seconded by Commissioner Williams, the Board voted unanimously to re-appoint John Stone to the CSRA Unified Development Authority Board.

2. At-Large

This appointment was tabled until next month.

C. Was inadvertently skipped.

D. Department of Family & Children Services

1. District 4

On a motion by Commissioner Wade, seconded by Commissioner Collins, the Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Gayle Flanigan to the Department of Family & Children Services Board to represent District Four.

E. Planning Board

1. District 4

On a motion by Commissioner Wade, seconded by Commissioner Cliatt, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Bobby W. Strozier to the Planning & Zoning Board to represent District Four.

F. Recreation Advisory Board

1. At-Large

On a motion by Commissioner Collins, seconded by Commissioner Wade, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Kelli Campbell Robertson to the Recreation Advisory Board.

2. District 1

On a motion by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Cliatt, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Godfrey Zellars to the Recreation Advisory Board to represent District One.

3. District 2

On a motion by Commissioner Collins, seconded by Commissioner Wade, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Beth Antonakos to the Recreation Advisory Board to represent District Two.

4. District 3

On a motion by Commissioner Cliatt, seconded by Commissioner Collins, the Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Lisa Willingham to the Recreation Advisory Board to represent District Three.

5. District 4

On a motion by Commissioner Wade, seconded by Commissioner Cliatt, the Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Woody Duncan to the Recreation Advisory Board to represent District Four.

12.


Adjourn

On a motion by Commissioner Cliatt, seconded by Commissioner Williams, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm.



Walker T. Norman, Chairman

Attest:



Sherry E. McKellar, County Clerk