

**Upson County Board of Commissioners
September 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

Call to Order

Chairman Blackston calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. All Commissioners are in attendance. County Manager Jim Wheelless and County Attorney Paschal English were also in attendance. The Invocation was led by Commissioner Wilder and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Blackston.

Minutes

A motion is made by Comm. Wilder, with a second from Comm. Spraggins, to adopt the August 20, 2015 special called meeting minutes, August 25, 2015 regular meeting minutes, August 27, special called meeting minutes and September 1, 2015 work session meeting minutes. The motion carries.

Commissioner Wilder – Yes Commissioner Ellington – Yes
Chairman Blackston – Abstain Commissioner Hudson – Yes
Commissioner Spraggins – Yes

Public Comments

Chris Biggs, 275 Marcey Drive, president of the Lincoln Park Citizens Coalition, thanked the board for their services/support. He stated that he was there to represent some of the citizens of district 1 for the increase on water rates. He add that the citizens are confused about the increases in there water bill. He stated that the base rate went from \$17.50 which included the first 2000 gallons to \$23.07 and this does not include any gallons. The bills are almost doubling. He understands that the water supply is from the city of Thomaston and the rates must be passed on to citizens. He asked if it is possible in the future for the Lincoln Park community to have its own water system, because whenever the city increases their rates that will pose an increase on the citizens. He asked if this was an across the board increase? He also discussed the water line stopping at Indian Trail, he is sure that if a survey was done 90% of the people will sign on to the water system. He stated that he is only asking for a fair shot for the citizens in Lincoln Park.

Chairman Blackston stated that the rate increase was the same for everyone, adding that the line down to Indian Trail is a city water line.

Commissioner Hudson stated that they have contacted an engineer and he is looking at a site where the old wells are located to see if a new well can be dug. Money is in the 2011 SPLOST and proposed in the 2016 SPLOST. They are also looking into grants.

Commissioner Wilder stated that a survey had been done on Mauldin Road and very few responses came in. He has the results if anyone would like to see them.

New Business

- a. Mr. Wheelless stated that there has been some concern about what a capital outlay project is. A letter addressed to all the volunteer chiefs has written explaining how the process will work. The County Manager and the County Auditor will decide if the requested purchases are capital outlay. He stated that \$63,000 already came out for excursion equipment. RCE is currently working on a quote for radio system. A pump for Yatesville Fire Department is currently on order. The SPLOST funds can be held for 5 years after the SPLSOT closes June 31, 2016. Commissioner Ellington has a wish list from Yatesville and Salem. They do not currently have a request list from Lincoln Park or Rock Hill. Rock Hill will like to use their portion for builing a building. If a department is going to build a building it has to be owned by the county and leased back to the department. Mr. Wheelless doesn't believe the amount that will be available and set aside is going to be enough to build a building.

County Manager, Commissioners and County Attorney Comments

County Manager Jim Wheelless reminded everyone that the meeting to officially set the millage rate will be Thursday, September 10, 2015 at 10:00 am.

Commissioner Spraggins had no comments.

Commissioner Hudson had no comments.

Commissioner Wilder had no comments.

Commissioner Ellington

Press Release Commissioner Ralph Ellington District 3

I was elected three years ago as Commissioner of District 3 of Upson County. I was honored with the confidence the community place in me that day. I'm still honored to serve today.

I feel it is my responsibility as a leader in this community, to try to bring forth some closure to the ongoing issue about providing funds for our volunteer fire departments in the county. The community overwhelming supported this endeavor, by passing a SPLOST in 2011.

Since that day, we have had issues dispersing the funds and communication on when, how, who, and what, but that shouldn't have happened.

As commissioners, we all know our focus should be the vision for our county's future. We should keep an open mind, maintain high ethical standards, and know the issues we face as a board, know our constituents and the people we work with, focus on what's best for the county, be honest with the public, the media, and other officials, and be able to separate our emotions from our responsibility.

I have seen over and over again stumbling blocks in regards to dispersing funds that would help our volunteer fire fighters. The SPLOST funds are needed for necessary equipment to keep them and our community safe. I have seen efforts being made to prevent those trying to make this a reality.

It's time these efforts stop; I challenge us as a board to not allow anymore stumbling blocks to develop. If they occur we need to be the leaders this community has chosen us to be, and make this a reality to truly support our volunteers, they deserve our support.

I want this statement recorded into the minutes of this meeting tonight Thank you.

County Attorney Paschal English had no comments.

Chairman Blackston thanked IDA Director Kyle Fletcher for her work on the Highway 36 turn lane project at Ben Hill Road. He added that an additional \$60,000 has been added by the stat for this project.

Adjournment

Comm. Spraggins made a motion to adjourn at 6:25 pm, with a second by Comm. Wilder to adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Rusty Blackston

Commissioner Steve Hudson

Commissioner Frank Spraggins

Commissioner Lorenzo Wilder

Commissioner Ralph Ellington

Jim Wheelless, County Manager