

**Upson County Board of Commissioners
September 22, 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 Wheeless and County Attorney Heath English were also in attendance. The Invocation was led by Commissioner Hudson and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Blackston.

Minutes

A motion is made by Comm. Spraggins, with a second from Comm. Wilder, to adopt the September 8, 2015 regular meeting minutes, September 10, 2015 and special called meeting minutes. The motion carries.

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

Public Comments

Sandra Chambles, 717 Old Talbotton Road, stated that she wanted to be a face for Lincoln Park on the water rate increase. She explained that in July bill increased by 65%. She has already spoken with Comm. Wilder and Chairman Blackston about this, adding that it is devastating to her budget. Her hope is they can find a way to reduce the water rates because she does not get increases on her job the way her bill has increased. She added that she has been told that she could find her own source of water, but that is not an option for her at the current time.

Mrs. Chambles stated that there has been discussion on moving the volunteer fire department away from Lincoln Park due to vandalism. She stated that she would be willing to join in a watch to make sure the fire department is not vandalized.

Commissioner Hudson stated the biggest thing is to find a new water source. An engineer has been hired and they are checking to see if a new well can be drilled at the location of the old well. If they are able to drill a new well the money will have to come from the SPLOST.

Commissioner Wilder has spoken with the Lincoln Park Fire Chief about some property for a building and there will be further discussion in executive session.

New Business

- a. Mr. Wheeless stated several months ago he was asked to look into the retirement for the employees. Currently employees must work 10 years or after 65 years of age before they become vested with the county. He is recommending to amend the vested period to 7 years. The cost will be around \$5800 per year for the change. This change will be effective as of July 1, 2015.

A motion was made by Comm. Spraggins with a second from Comm. Ellington to amend the employee's retirement plan. The motion carries.

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

A motion was made by Comm. Wilder with a second from Comm. Ellington to approve the resolution to amend the employee's retirement. The motion carries.

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

- b. Mr. Wheeless explained to the board that the employee committee discussed giving fulltime employees 4 weeks vacation as the maximum amount of vacation. Currently the maximum vacation hours is 120 hours after ten years. Mr. Wheeless recommended giving the employees 160 vacation hours after 15 years of service.

Commissioner Hudson wanted to have time to think about the change and asked to table the discussion to the work session.

County Manager, Commissioners and County Attorney Comments

County Manager Jim stated that a meeting will be held in Jekyll Island and they will need a delegate to vote. Currently he is the appointed delegate, but due to his back surgery he will not be able to attend. The board agreed to appoint Commissioner Wilder as the voting delegate.

A bid was put out by Atkins for the closure of the Inert Landfill on Pobiddy Road. The lowest bid was from Murphy Clearing and Grading at \$94,930.

Comm. Spraggins ask Mr. Wheelless to check to see if the county could be reimbursed for any of the work.

A bid was put out for painting and floor covering for Hightower Memorial Library. Only one bid came in for the flooring from Middle Ga Carpet at \$19,259.94. Martie Murphy Contracting for the painting at \$19,870.

Georgia Department of Revenue has approved the ad valorem tax digest has been approved.

Commissioner Spraggins asked if there is any way the county could use old computers to set up a place for senior citizens to learn basic computer skills. He stated that he has had several requests and that this is something that was done in the past at the Civic Center and the Senior Center. He understands that financial reasons are why this was stopped, but he would like to see if they could get volunteers to teach the classes.

Commissioner Hudson stated that some citizens on Sandy Brook Circle some citizens were concerned about the negative impacts on property value, the noise and the smell where Wilson Chicken Farm is located. Currently no ordinances are in place the will not allow this. Below is a letter that was that was written by.

Wilson Chicken Farm is located on Mrs. Brenda Wright's property. The farm was purchased from Mrs. Wright by the Wilsons. Ever since the Wilsons purchased the farm they have been using Mrs. Wright's driveway for access to the farm. The Wilsons also purchased an access that comes down the edge of her property and exits onto Burkett Road. In the last month there has been construction on a driveway at the end of Sand Brook Circle. I along with several neighbors have been curious as to what was taking place. My neighbor across the street stopped to talk to someone working on the driveway. The person he spoke to stated that they were planning on taking the chicken trucks in and out of the drive because Mrs. Wright no longer wanted them using her driveway as an access to the farm.

The neighborhood is concerned about the trucks using the back dirt road as an access to the farm. Our concern is that the trucks make a lot of noise on the bumpy dirt road. Also, there will be a large amount of dust that will be stirred up during dry months by large trucks using the road. It's not like the noise would only be in the day time because the feed trucks arrive in the day and the chickens are picked up late at night by large trucks. The smell is also a concern because of the chicken waste coming out of the trucks. We are also concerned with mud getting onto the paved road after a hard rain. Last but not least, this negatively impacts the value and ability to sell my house and others in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Hudson added that he would like to attend the district meeting in Carrollton. He spoke with Wayne Sandefur and the board should be able to commit to giving each volunteer fire department \$60,000

Commissioner Wilder encouraged the citizens to attend the volunteer fire department meetings and volunteer their services.

Commissioner Ellington had no comments.

County Attorney Heath English had no comments.

Chairman Blackston had no comments.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Comm. Spraggins with a second from Comm. Wilder at 6:35 pm to recess for executive session.

A motion was made was made by Comm. Wilder, with a second from Chairman Blackston at 7:15 pm to exit executive session and back into regular session.

Adjournment

Comm. Hudson made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 pm, with a second by Chairman Blackston to enter back into regular session.

Comm. Spraggins made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 pm, with a second by Comm. Ellington to adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Rusty Blackston

Commissioner Steve Hudson

Commissioner Frank Spraggins

Commissioner Lorenzo Wilder

Commissioner Ralph Ellington

Jim Wheelless, County Manager