

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA, HELD ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2003, IN THE COMMISSION MEETING ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE CHATHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE, LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, 124 BULL STREET, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Billy Hair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Friday, January 10, 2003.

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II. INVOCATION

Commissioner Jeff Rayno gave the invocation.

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III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

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IV. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll.

PRESENT:	Dr. Billy B. Hair, Chairman Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas, Vice Chairman, District Eight Frank G. Murray, Chairman Pro Tem, District Four Jeffrey D. Rayno, District One Joe Murray Rivers, District Two John J. McMasters, District Three Harris Odell, Jr., District Five (arrived approximately 9:20 a.m.) David M. Gellatly, District Six B. Dean Kicklighter, District Seven
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IN ATTENDANCE:	R. E. Abolt, County Manager R. Jonathan Hart, County Attorney Sybil E. Tillman, County Clerk
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YOUTH COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Hair introduced the following Youth Commissioners who were in attendance: Jonathan Helmken, a Junior at St. Andrew's; Sandy Hoang, a Senior at Jenkins High School; and Shane Johnson, a Senior at Bible Baptist.

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V. PROCLAMATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

1. PROCLAMATION FOR SONNY HARPER AND JUAN AYALA ON THEIR RETIREMENT FROM THE JUVENILE COURT.

Chairman Hair presented the following proclamation to Judge Juan Ayala:

WHEREAS, it takes an exceptional person to wear the title of judge and fairly adjudicate legal issues involving youths; Judge Juan Ayala earned that distinction; and

WHEREAS, Judge Ayala began his career with Chatham County on June 10, 1968, as a Probation Officer and with hard work and strong determination became Judge Pro-tem of Juvenile Court on April 14, 1980, and Associate Judge on June 9, 1990, all while pursuing a degree at Armstrong and John Marshall Law School; and

WHEREAS, he is considered a “history encyclopedia” and has taught part-time at Savannah State University and Armstrong Atlantic State University;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dr. Billy B. Hair, Chairman, on behalf of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, do hereby salute:

JUDGE JUAN AYALA

for dedicated service to the Juvenile Court of Chatham County and extend best wishes for a prosperous retirement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of Chatham County, Georgia to be affixed this the 10th day of January, 2003.

Dr. Billy B. Hair, Chairman
Chatham County Commission

ATTEST:

Sybil E. Tillman, Clerk

Judge Ayala said, I really appreciate this recognition. We started here in 1968 in this same building on the fourth floor with the Juvenile Court, and it's coming to an end here in the same building. It's an honor and a privilege to be here today and receive this proclamation, and I don't know where my compadre is. We started the same day. We both interviewed with —, before Judge B. B. Heery and were hired the same day, and we were supposed to be here today to get this proclamation together. I don't know where he is, but in any event I do appreciate it. Thank you.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Judge, and we'll make sure that Mr. Harper gets his.

Ms. Sandra Lusk said, on behalf of Juvenile Court we just want to say that we won't be the same out there without Judge Ayala. He's been a friend for many years and certainly no one will be able to fill his shoes because no one will be there to tell us what we're worth our weight in gold.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Judge. I wish you a happy retirement.

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Chairman Hair said, Mr. Harper has arrived. If he will join me down front, we'll do his proclamation. Chairman Hair presented the following proclamation to Joseph “Sonny” Harper:

WHEREAS, employees who have provided dedicated service for citizens of Chatham County deserve to be commended; today we express our appreciation to Joseph “Sonny” Harper; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Harper began his career with Chatham County on August 26, 1968, as a Probation Officer. He worked his way through the ranks and retired as a Deputy Court Administrator I; and

WHEREAS, he is known for his caring supervisory skills and wealth of knowledge and is considered the “Foundation of the Court”.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dr. Billy B. Hair, Chairman, on behalf of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, do hereby salute:

JOSEPH “SONNY” HARPER

for his dedicated service to the Juvenile Court of Chatham County and extend best wishes for a happy and long retirement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of Chatham County, Georgia to be affixed this the 10th day of January, 2003.

Dr. Billy B. Hair, Chairman
Chatham County Commission

ATTEST:

Sybil E. Tillman, Clerk

Mr. Harper said, thank you. I just want to say that I'm sorry for getting here late. I misunderstood the time, and maybe that's what happens when you get retired. But thank you, I appreciate it. I've enjoyed working for the County.

Chairman Hair said, we wish you a long, healthy retirement.

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VI. CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

None

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VII. COMMISSIONERS' ITEMS

1. ANTHONY AND KAREN STASTNY, 904 WOODRIDGE DRIVE (COMMISSIONER MURRAY).

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray asked, do we have anybody from the Tax Assessor's office here? Can we --. Chairman Hair asked, somebody to address that issue? Commissioner Murray said, yeah, somebody from there was supposed to be here and I don't know what time they will get here. If it's okay, we'll --.

Chairman Hair said, we'll come back. That will be fine.

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Commissioner Murray said, I got a call on Monday of this week from the Stastny, and it concerns their --, and I had requested that a member of the Tax Assessor's Board and also a member of the Tax Assessor's office be here, and I see we've got Mr. Vestal, who's Chairman of the Tax Assessor's Board here so maybe we can get some questions answered. But what has happened they purchased their home, if I'm not mistaken, in May of 1995 on Woodridge Drive on Wilmington Island. Everything was going fine, their taxes were being paid through an escrow account through a mortgage company. In 1999 their mortgage company called and said their escrow was going up because the taxes had gone up so much. That didn't make a lot of sense to them so they started calling to find out what was going on and they found out that the Tax Assessor's office had dropped their homestead exemption and had been sending the bill to another address rather than the Woodridge address and told them that they had moved. They have not moved. They still live in the same house they've been living in on Woodridge Drive and they said there was not --, they said everybody up there has been real nice when they've talked to them, but there's not a whole lot they could do about it. They are here today. I don't know if y'all want to make some comments on anything that I have not talked about, but what I want to try to find out is what do we need to do to resolve it to reimburse those taxes that you have paid that you shouldn't have had to pay and also to make sure that your assessment on your house is based on what it should have been when the homestead exemption went in and the Stephens-Day Bill went in.

Mrs. Stastny said, everybody --, everyone we have talked to has been very nice. We've talked to Angela Watkins, Sheryl Snider and Martha Johnson in particular have been very polite and they've helped us as much as they could, but they said it's out of their hands, and we just want to know --, we know now that they dropped the homestead exemption. They told us they dropped it and then they reinstated it, I guess. I don't know. We can't find out. They haven't told us. We just want to know why they dropped it, why we can't --, how do we go about getting it back, and

since we've overpaid our taxes, obviously we did what we were supposed to do, and we know clerical errors happen, but when something is done wrong, it should be corrected, and that means we should get back the overage we've paid since we didn't do anything wrong. We're not asking for the sun, the moon and the stars.

Chairman Hair said, I think what you're asking is reasonable. Mrs. Stastny said, good. Chairman Hair said, Mr. Hart, we've just got to figure out how to do it. County Attorney Hart said, I have -, we've got limited information on it, but, you know, if they dropped it, I don't know why we don't put it back and allow them just to come back like you do a lot of people and ask for reimbursement of the spread. Chairman Hair asked, it's less than three years or more than three years? County Attorney Hart said, I mean, unless there's some technical reason that I'm not aware of -.

Commissioner Murray said, if I'm not mistaken, didn't you say it was dropped in 1999? Was '99 paid at the lower rate or -. Mr. Stastny said, I think it was '97. Mrs. Stastny said, we think they sent us -, what we've been told now is they dropped it in '97. Commissioner Murray said, well, I do know, as I explained to you on the phone, that we have a State law, which I certainly don't agree with -. Mrs. Stastny said, and we understand that. Yeah, we understand that. Commissioner Murray said, - that we can only go back for three years on reimbursement, but we can do also some interest too on that. Mrs. Stastny said, okay. Commissioner Murray said, we've done that two different times in the last year so I know we can do that.

Chairman Hair asked, are you going to make the motion -? Commissioner Murray said, I make a motion to -, I make a motion that we do that, but further than that before I make that motion, Joe [Vestal], could I -, Mr. Vestal, could I ask you a couple of questions please? Mrs. Stastny asked, could I say one thing? Commissioner Murray said, and I apologize for not getting in touch with Mr. Vestal or our County Attorney, but I have not been in a position where I could do that this week too well, but anyway -.

Chairman Hair said, before Mr. Vestal, she wants to say one other thing. Commissioner Murray said, excuse me.

Mrs. Stastny said, what we would like to do is have the assessment rolled back to where it was before the -. Commissioner Murray said, that was what I was getting ready to talk about, what has to be done. Mrs. Stastny said, thank you.

Commissioner Murray said, I'm sure that we have to have some legal guidance on it, too, but to me it seems like if in fact that was dropped and it's an error, and we're not trying to point a finger at anybody because we all know we make errors, but what I want to find out is what do we have to do to in order to move back to whenever that was dropped. I think the Stephens-Day Bill took effect in 2000. Is that correct? Mr. Vestal said, property year 2001. Commissioner Murray said, well, whenever that was. Their property value should be valued at whatever it was when that went in effect because they thought they had it until all this came up.

Chairman Hair said, Mr. Vestal, if you would step to the mike so we can record your -.

Mr. Vestal said, I'm sorry. Commissioner Murray said, I should probably make that part of the motion. Chairman Hair said, you don't need to do that. Mr. Vestal said, first of all, any mistakes that are made we like to find out. Particularly what we do is if the taxpayers have problems, if they can't get them resolved with the staff, they can just ask to be on our agenda and we'll look into it and get an answer for it, so I was kind of surprised that that wasn't done, but that's okay. Basically after I heard about this and did some research, the -, we weren't able to find the homestead application card, but we also saw an account correction for one year where it was put back on and then it was taken off, and we pulled out the boxes from storage and we couldn't find that, but what I would like to do if it's okay with you is a recommendation to -, for 2001, 2000 -, 2002, 2001 and 2000 we'll give them back the Stephens-Day exemption, but when these things happen we like to find out -, our Board likes to find out, so if there is some mechanical problems, we like to fix those. Commissioner Murray said, well, I think the reason was -, the reason they called me is the people in the office told them there was nothing they could do about it, that they didn't have the authority to do anything -. Mr. Vestal said, right. Commissioner Murray said, so that's why they called me and I knew that we had dealt with some of these in the past with these reimbursements. As a matter of fact, in the last year we've dealt with two of them. Mr. Vestal said, right. Commissioner Murray said, and that's why I put it on the agenda and requested either you or somebody from your Board and somebody from your office be here so we could find out exactly what needed to be done and how it does now. I guess what needs to be done is you and the County Attorney and the Stastnys work together to come up with those figures to do it. We just -, we as the Commission are the ones that have to authorize the reimbursement, I think, and I can make a motion to do that and the rest of it needs to go together too.

County Attorney Hart said, yeah, I'm going to have to -, pardon me -, have to get the Tax Commissioner to give us some of those numbers because I don't think either Mr. Vestal or myself have them. Mr. Vestal said, we could calculate those, but it would be better for him to do it.

Commissioner Murray said, but I think the main thing they're concerned about is getting that homestead and the Stephens-Day Bill -, the exemption back at a place like it needs to be. Chairman Hair said, Mr. Vestal said, he can take care of that. Mr. Vestal said, that's no problem, but what I would like to do is I try to work with my Board. I'd just like to pass that to the Board. I don't think there's any problem, but I like to make sure that we're all on the same page and -, but that's how -, I would like for the people listening on the channels and stuff to say that if you have a problem and staff can't resolve it or they don't have the authority to, if you'll just write me a letter to the Board of Assessors and ask to be put on the agenda so we can look at it because I like to find those things out because what I'm finding is sometimes it's a procedural problem, the staff's following the procedure but they can't really do anything about it. So when we find out those things, we can make the changes and also -. Chairman Hair said, sometimes it takes longer

if it comes to us than if it went to y'all directly. Mr. Vestal said, sure, okay. You know, something like this, what really caught me there was an account correct made and then –, and then it was changed and that put up some flags right there. Commissioner Murray said, well, maybe –, I will certainly refer people that way from now on, too, but it might be a good idea for your staff and your staff people when they say they can't deal with it, that they make a recommendation and give the name and address where this needs to –, this letter needs to go and that will save time, too, but I will make a motion now that we reimburse whatever we can reimburse legally back to them along with the interest that was involved to help offset some of that.

Chairman Hair said, I have a motion. Do I have a second? Commissioner Rayno said, second. Chairman Hair said, okay, second. Now we have four people, Commissioner Rivers, Commissioner Odell, Commissioner McMasters and Commissioner Rayno. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Rivers.

Commissioner Rivers said, Jon [Hart] –. County Attorney Hart said, yes, sir. Commissioner Rivers said, let me ask you something. We have a request in to the Legislators to allow us to go back further. Is that a statewide or is that –. County Attorney Hart said, yes, and it's a frequently requested thing from not just this Commission but other Commissions, and it pops up about every other session in the Legislature. Last –, year before last it came up, they wanted to extend it to seven years, and every year it dies in the Legislature and the Legislature just doesn't change the law. Commissioner Rivers said, I think if we push real hard and get actively behind that. I don't know all the particulars, but I had a call last night from a lady who her homestead exemption has been dropped, and I'm beginning to wonder how widespread this thing is, and certainly this lady is about 80 some odd years old, and I know she's not going to be able to pay the amount of money that they're asking here to pay because we dropped her homestead exemption.

Commissioner Odell said, Mr. Vestal. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner –, Mr. Vestal, you're not –, is he leaving? Commissioner Rayno said, no, he's going to stay. Chairman Hair said, okay, because I suspect some of these questions are going to be for him, I guess. Commissioner Rivers, are you finished? Commissioner Rivers said, yeah, I got –, but I would have asked him –, but I'll pass that on to him anyway. Chairman Hair said, I'm going to allow Commissioner Murray to make a comment related to that and then we'll go –.

Commissioner Murray said, yeah, just on what Commissioner Rivers was saying, I know when we had this come up in the past, when the last two came up, my concern then was how many people is this affecting that they don't know it's affecting that really don't look at their tax bill because it's being paid through escrow and, consequently, when your taxes go up or something happens, then your escrow goes up and most people just pay it and don't pay a lot of attention to it, and that's how these people so far have been able to catch it. They have seen that.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Odell.

Commissioner Odell said, I've got a couple of questions for Mr. Vestal. Chairman Hair said, Mr. Vestal? Commissioner McMasters asked, do you want to take my question and then –. Chairman Hair asked, is yours related to –. Commissioner McMasters said, just a suggestion. Chairman Hair said, I think he needs to –, Mr. Vestal, we need you at the podium please, sir. Mr. Vestal said, I'm sorry. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Odell has a question. Commissioner Odell said, part of it has been answered by Mr. Murray. These good people were able to determine that there had been an error and the error appeared to have been made by Chatham County. I guess my question is, do we have an auditing system in place so that those people who –, I know Frank [Murray] has said it –, some people don't catch it, and I think everyone would agree that we don't want people to pay more than their fair share of the taxes. We want them to pay their fair share of the taxes, but not more. I don't think that this is an isolated case, and I guess my question is, and without criticism, what can we do to ensure that we have some kind of auditing system in place so that if these things happen, that they won't necessarily have to bring it to us, we can identify them, and that's part one which doesn't require a response as of this point. Part two is that –, Jon [Hart], I think as far as changing the law where there's a scrivener's error –. County Attorney Hart said, yes, sir, this falls within that. There's an exception for that, so we're in good shape there. Commissioner Odell said, okay, and –, because hopefully some of that would correct this. When you say that you would like the first bite at the apple rather than them coming to us, I agree wholeheartedly with that. I don't want Frank's [Murray] comments to just not be taken –, to be taken lightly because they're very profound and need amplifying. Your people sent them to us. Your people told them the way to come was to the Commission. I understand that what needs to happen is that all individuals in the Tax Assessor's office who have public contact, that those individuals are notified hopefully by letter that if there's a problem and staff can't resolve it, then here's the Board and you need to send your request to the Board. Yeah, I think you guys are doing a good job. I personally would like to see you handle all these and when it comes to us it be rather clean slated because we've got more than our plateful, but can that be communicated, not necessarily –, I don't know how y'all communicate, but I'd like to see a memo or something so that everyone realizes that. Mr. Vestal said, that's no problem. I wasn't aware of that. Talking to Mr. and Mrs. Stastny one thing that was interesting as I was talking to them, they had a problem with their mailing address. Evidently, their mail was going to the wrong address, and so when they put in a change of address, that kicked off that they had moved. So we wouldn't know at that point, so unless they told us –.

Commissioner Murray said, the mail originally was going to the right address and they never did a change of address until after it started going to the wrong address, and they did a change of address to get it back to the correct address. Mr. Vestal said, so I mean what happened –. Commissioner Murray said, so it's just a –, it's a mistake and we aren't trying to point a finger and say who did it and why did you do it and all that. We're just trying to correct, and I do appreciate the job y'all are doing, too. Mr. Vestal said, in that light I probably sometimes get three to five calls at my

home and problems not exactly like this, but similar problems, and we try to get those addressed pretty quickly. Sometimes the answer they hear is not what they want to hear, but whatever the law is is what we go by.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner McMasters.

Commissioner McMasters said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. To facilitate the best possible communications and policies to taxpayers, our customers, I know Joe [Vestal] and I have discussed this and here is it now the 10th of January, but in watching Channel 16 we did not yet have up, and we should have had up even the last week of December, an advisory piece about the time frames of January 1st to May 1st for homestead exemptions and the PT50 return. Is that April 1st? Mr. Vestal said, yeah. That's what we've been working on right now is to try to get something about filing your return. Commissioner McMasters said, okay. I would like, and I don't know if this requires a motion or not, but I would like Pete Nichols to be proactive and as soon as possible meet with Mr. Vestal and get up and running for taxpayers that vital information relative to all policies and the deadlines.

Chairman Hair said, I don't think it requires a motion. In fact, is Pete –, is Pete [Nichols] here? He normally sits in. I don't know if he's here or not. He's probably listening in the control room, but –. Commissioner Murray said, just give him the information to put on there. Chairman Hair said, yeah, we just need to make sure that –. Commissioner Kicklighter asked, may I add to that something. Chairman Hair said, sure.

Commissioner Kicklighter said, I don't know if you are this. Y'all were appointed, not elected, and I'd like that they would run your pictures with your numbers. Mr. Vestal said, well, I don't believe that's necessary because everybody calls me at home. I'm listed in the phone book. Commissioner Kicklighter said, but I mean, you know, something with the staff's numbers and on there information that if they can't –, I mean, we can utilize that channel to help people. Commissioner Odell said, something like the overdue child support people.

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner McMasters made an excellent suggestion. I think we need to do that. I don't know that –, we just need to follow up with Pete [Nichols] and make sure that has been done. Commissioner McMasters said, they're swamped, and if Pete would go to them instead of waiting for them to come to Pete, I think we'd all be happy about it. Chairman Hair said, we'll take care of that. We'll make sure that Pete gets –, Mr. Vestal, do you him to meet with you as far as –, do you want them to meet with you personally? Mr. Vestal said, yes, sir, that would be fine. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Rayno.

Commissioner Rayno said, you mentioned Pete [Nichols], he's been doing a fine job lately with all the new programming he's been putting out, and we had suggested about a year ago the possibility of televising the Board of Assessors meetings and one of the hindrances to that was the fact that it was small room over there, there was a logistic problem of bringing all the cameras and everything, but we suggested you coming here to this room and using this room. It's a bigger room and you could get more of the public in and televise the meetings so that when people have a problem, there might be people watching on Channel 16 and say, hey, you know that's a problem that I'm having, too, and they can learn from that and realize that they would come to you. We had already unanimously approved televising these meetings and the use of this room, and again I extend the invitation to you. I think it's a great idea to come here and use this room, and let Pete [Nichols] film what you do so people know because I think people want to know what's going on in the BOA and I think it would reduce the suspicions that something, you know, evil is going on back there when it's not. You guys have done a great job since you've taken over. Mr. Vestal said, the only problem with that, I've got a face made for radio. Commissioner Rayno said, you're fine.

Chairman Hair said, Mr. Helmken has a question.

Youth Commissioner Helmken said, I was wondering if there's like a website that people could go to if they have questions. It could save money for having to pay people to talk to people and they could get easy questions –, you know, easy to get on the Internet and look it up. I was just wondering if there's such a site. Mr. Vestal said, yes, there is a site. Youth Commissioner Helmken said, and if you could possibly put that on the TV.

Commissioner McMasters said, on Mr. Helmken's question though, if I could ask, is your website such that they can actually E-mail a question and someone routinely checks that E-mail in your office and responds electronically? Is that what you're suggesting, Mr. Helmken? Youth Commissioner Helmken said, yes. Commissioner McMasters said, yes, I thought so. Is that going on, Joe [Vestal]? Youth Commissioner Helmken said, a question like a definition of something they don't understand, you know, something they can look up themselves.

Commissioner Rayno said, there's a document called "What Every Taxpayer Should Know" and you should read that. It's got a lot of that information on it and it's on the website. If you go to the Chatham County website, which is www.chathamcounty.org, and they go to the Board of Assessors website, which is a link off of that, you'll find frequently asked questions and you'll find the document, "What Every Taxpayer Should Know" and it will give you that information; if you go to the departments and E-mail information, you can send a direct question to the head tax appraiser and they should get back to you as soon as possible. Youth Commissioner Helmken said, it would be my guess that there's not many people that know that.

Chairman Hair said, I think your suggesting that we publicize that, I think that's a great suggestion, Mr. Helmken. Chairman Hair said, Mr. Vestal –. Commissioner Kicklighter said, put that on the channel, too. That's good.

Chairman Hair said, thank you very much, Mr. Vestal. We appreciate you being here. Mr. Vestal said, thank you.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Murray moved that the County reimburse to Anthony and Karen Stastny, 904 Woodridge Drive, whatever we can legally reimburse to them and reimburse the interest that was involved to help offset the amount they overpaid in taxes. Commissioner Rayno seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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2. AMENDING SIGN ORDINANCE (COMMISSIONER KICKLIGHTER).

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Kicklighter.

Commissioner Kicklighter said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can someone call Jon Hart in here. I just saw him out in the hall. Chairman Hair said, Mr. Hart is here. Commissioner Kicklighter said, Jon [Hart], this –, the sign ordinance here. Could you kind of explain please?

County Attorney Hart said, yes, sir. We got an inquiry from several of the hotels. We have a sign ordinance that was established several years ago involving electronic signs and at that time we decided in our sign ordinance that we would not allow flashing electronic signs or running message board signs unless they served some type of public announcement. Primarily that was for a traffic safety issue. If you're driving down the road and you see a flashing light, you get distracted and have some sort of accident. Several of the hotels, especially out on I-95 and probably at the 204 Exit and then up there towards the airport, have very nice expensive signs and they have underneath those signs a message block where they can designate the price of their business. It's not a running sign and it's not a flashing sign, and we got some complaints about it by one of the competitors that apparently did not have the message sign, and so they went out there and looked at the situation and sited all of the people that were in noncompliance. We've now had those hotel owners come to us and say, gee, this is not a flashing sign, this is not a running sign, it's a stationary sign. It's in the spirit of a public service of letting somebody on the interstate know we've got a reasonable price here and it's a good place to stop at night, and they've had inquiry about whether there was some exception to that. Well, we read the ordinance very carefully. The public service part is not broad enough to include that and they have requested a text amendment to allow non-flashing stationary signs. Now, it makes some sense in that if they wanted to paint a sign and hire a guy to go up there and, you know, change the sign every time they changed their price, they would be well within the sign ordinance. These signs are very nice and, you know, it would require a text amendment though. We probably need to work on the language and try to make it as limiting as we could so we don't get a big exception.

Commissioner Kicklighter said, okay. So should –, would it be appropriate for me to make a motion to amend the ordinance to allow electronic stationary signs? Chairman Hair said, it would be best for y'all to direct staff to look at that ordinance and come back maybe at the next meeting with a proposed amendment to that ordinance. Chairman Hair said, that would be an appropriate motion. Commissioner Kicklighter said, okay. Chairman Hair asked, do you want to make a motion or do you want to just direct staff. We don't need a motion to do it. Commissioner Kicklighter said, okay. County Attorney Hart said, I'll be glad to do it.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, when you're doing that, let's make sure that that's all we do to the sign ordinance. County Attorney Hart said, yeah, that's why I really want to look at it. Commissioner Murray said, we've got some real problems in some other areas with some signs and it's really hard to enforce it as it is with the limited personnel to do it, but I –. Chairman Hair said, we'll have ample opportunity to look at whatever is brought back to us, and if we want to amend it or –. Commissioner Murray said, I think what he's saying makes sense, but I just want to make sure we don't go into some other areas with it and delete what we already have. County Attorney Hart said, that was my concern also, you make an exception, it swallows the rule book. Commissioner Murray said, okay.

Chairman Hair said, okay, thank you.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

The County Attorney was directed to review the sign ordinance and bring back a proposed text amendment regarding stationary electronic signs.

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3. TIMOTHY SHEPPARD - 5 MINUTES (COMMISSIONER ODELL).

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Odell is not here. Is Mr. Sheppard here? Mr. Sheppard, Tim Sheppard? Okay.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was removed from the agenda for failure of Mr. Sheppard to appear.

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4. RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES: RICHARD DAVIS, RICHARD THOMAS, DARRELL GRAHAM AND THARON PRYOR (COMMISSIONER RAYNO).

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Rayno.

Commissioner Rayno said, thank you, Dr. Hair. I had a constituent call me, I think it was late November or early December concerning what he perceived to be a problem with the approach to the Diamond Causeway Bridge which leads out to –, which leads out to Burnside Island. Actually, it's the Burnside Island Causeway approach and he said there was a dip there that was causing a problem for vehicles and I alerted Russ [Abolt] and staff of this problem and he turned it over to John Walz, who did a phenomenal job at responding very, very quickly to the problem. Called DOT and found out there were far more problems than initially thought and they ended up having to drill holes in the road and they pumped concrete underneath it to stabilize the road and fix the bridge, and the way they made it happen was we are very fortunate in Chatham County to have some very dedicated employees who chose to work on Christmas Eve and I know when the holidays come around, especially Christmas, the last place I would ever want to be would be working, especially on a Public Works project out in the cold like it was that day, but Richard Davis and Richard Thomas volunteered to go out and work on that project under John Walz's leadership, and I just can't thank you enough for the constituents of Burnside Island for what you did because that's the only road that leads in and out of Burnside Island, and if that road had gone bad or they had a situation like they had over on that other road with the wooden bridges, I don't know how we could possibly transport all the people that live on Burnside Island back and forth. So I just wanted to from the Board of Commissioners thank you and recognize you very much for that.

Chairman Hair asked, would y'all stand –, like to stand and recognize them. Commissioner Rayno said, yeah. Please stand up. Chairman Hair said, please –. Commissioner Rayno said, if you will give these two a hearty round of applause.

Commissioner Rayno said, something that was unrelated to that was on Christmas Day we had a horrible windstorm and a number of trees got knocked down, particularly outside of the (inaudible) Subdivision over on Shipyard Road, and these employees were Richard Davis, again, Darrell Graham and Tharon Pryor went out and worked on that day and made sure that this area was cleaned and while we were all inside celebrating and exchanging gifts with our family and celebrating the birth of Jesus, they were out working to make the public safe, and I really appreciate it. If they could stand, I'd like to recognize them as well.

County Manager Abolt said, some of our employees are working and we couldn't get them out of the field. Commissioner Rayno said, see, they're so dedicated they're working today. County Manager Abolt said, we do thank them very much.

Chairman Hair asked, if you would like to bring them back at the next meeting, that would be appropriate. If they're available. County Manager Abolt said, I would like to thank the Board for doing this, putting it on your agenda. I think this means so much, I know, to the gentlemen in front of you. I also know and Commissioner Murray will remember many, many years ago when I first had the chance to recognize John Walz in the field. It was a Saturday morning out near the, at that time, the landfill on Concord Road, Wilmington Island, and John [Walz] was waist deep in water solving a problem that took an awful lot of his time, too. Commissioner Murray said, it was a little bit more than water, Russ [Abolt]. County Manager Abolt said, yeah, that's right. Remember this is broadcast live on television. Anyway, I certainly appreciate what you've done for recognizing these people in a department which I think is truly outstanding.

Commissioner Rayno said, I think also Mr. Drewry should be commended for cross-training you to the point where you can excel when he's not in town. I appreciate that very much.

Chairman Hair said, we appreciate y'all's service very much and I thank Commissioner Rayno for putting that on the agenda. It's very important. Keep up the good work.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

The Board recognized and expressed their appreciation to Public Works employees Richard Davis and Richard Thomas for their volunteering to work on Christmas Eve under the leadership of John Walz to resolve a problem at the Burnside Island Causeway approach and Richard Davis, Darrell Graham and Tharon Pryor for working on Christmas Day to remove trees knocked down in a windstorm.

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CHATHAM AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

The Board recessed as the County Commission at 9:16 a.m., and reconvened as the Chatham Area Transit Authority.

The Chatham Area Transit Authority was adjourned and the Board reconvened as the County Commission at 9:42 a.m.

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VIII. TABLED/POSTPONED ITEMS

Unless action is contemplated at today's meeting, staff report and file material has not been duplicated in your agenda packet. The files are available from the Clerk. Those on which staff is requesting action are indicated by asterisk (*).

1. **ADOPTION OF 90-DAY MORATORIUM FOR SOUTHEAST CHATHAM COMMUNITY. At meeting of November 22, 2002, second reading was tabled to December 20, 2002.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was not placed before the Commissioners for consideration.

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2. **AT MEETING OF DECEMBER 6, 2002, COMMISSIONER RAYNO REQUESTED RECONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM. WAS RE-TABLED AT MEETING OF DECEMBER 20, 2002.**

ITEM	DEPT.	SOURCE	AMOUNT	FUNDING
C. Change Order No. 1 to the annual contract to provide insurance agent/broker services for additional services	Finance	Hilb, Rogal & Hamilton	\$7,000	Insurance and Surety Bond Premiums

Chairman Hair said, on Item #2, it was a reconsidered item and I consulted with Commissioner Rayno and we need to, in order for this not to die, we need to untable it and retable so that --, otherwise the reconsideration will die at this point.

Commissioner Rayno said, I make a motion to take it off the table. Chairman Hair asked, second. Commissioner Rivers said, second. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Rayno said, I make a motion to table. Chairman Hair said, okay. Second? Commissioner Rivers said, second. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, thanks.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

1. Commissioner Rayno moved to untable this item and place it before the Commissioners for consideration. Commissioner Rivers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
2. Commissioner Rayno moved to table this item. Commissioner Rivers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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IX. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL ACTION

(Unless the Board directs otherwise, adoption of an Action Item will mean approval of the respective County staff report and its recommended action.)

1. **REQUEST BOARD APPROVE THE FOLLOWING: A GENERAL FUND M&O BUDGET AMENDMENT TO RECOGNIZE TRANSFER OF RESTRICTED FINE SURCHARGES FROM**

THE SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT FUND INCLUDING JAIL CONSTRUCTION ACT RESTRICTED REVENUE OF \$275,000, 50% DRUG SURCHARGE RESTRICTED REVENUE OF \$10,000, AND 5% VICTIM WITNESS RESTRICTED REVENUE OF \$130,000; A GENERAL FUND M&O BUDGET AMENDMENT TRANSFER OF \$31,030 TO THE CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT SPECIAL REVENUE FUND; AND A CONFISCATED FUNDS BUDGET AMENDMENT TO APPROPRIATE \$150,000 FOR VEHICLE REPLACEMENT FOR THE COUNTER NARCOTICS TEAM, AND \$8,400 TO PAY OFF A LIEN ON A SEIZED VEHICLE, AND A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BUDGET AMENDMENT TO RECOGNIZE \$22,170 REIMBURSEMENT FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT FOR PURCHASE OF A VEHICLE.

Chairman Hair said, I'll entertain a motion to approve. Commissioner Odell said, move for approval. Chairman Hair asked, second. Commissioner Thomas said, second. Chairman Hair asked, any discussion?

Commissioner Rivers said, Mr. Chairman, I just want to –, \$8,400 to pay off a lien on a seized vehicle. County Manager Abolt said, yes, sir. Commissioner Rivers asked, is that one that's worth keeping? Commissioner Murray said, it must be. Chairman Hair said, must be. I hope so. Let's hope –. County Manager Abolt said, Commander Williams can speak that. Chairman Hair said, Commander Williams is here. County Manager Abolt said, Commander Williams will take the initiative to –. Commissioner Rivers asked, is that one of those Lincoln Town Cars?

Chairman Hair said, Commander, do you want to –, he probably would be best to address that issue. Commander Eddie Williams said, yes, sir, it is a vehicle that's –, that we want to use and it's worth keeping. Commissioner Odell asked, and it's worth more than \$8,400? Commissioner Murray said, yeah. Commander Williams said, yes, sir.

Chairman Hair said, all those in favor of the motion vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Commander Williams said, thank you.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved to approve the following: a General Fund M&O budget amendment to recognize transfer of restricted fine surcharges from the Special Service District Fund including Jail Construction Act Restricted Revenue of \$275,000, 50% Drug Surcharge Restricted Revenue of \$10,000, and 5% Victim Witness Restricted Revenue of \$130,000; a General Fund M&O budget amendment transfer of \$31,030 to the Child Support Enforcement Special Revenue Fund; and a Confiscated Funds budget amendment to appropriate \$150,000 for vehicle replacement for the Counter Narcotics Team, and \$8,400 to pay off a lien on a seized vehicle, and a Capital Improvement Program budget amendment to recognize \$22,170 reimbursement from the Health Department for purchase of a vehicle. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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2. REMINDER OF MEETING TODAY AT 1:00 P.M. (OR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING COMMISSION MEETING) WITH MUNICIPALITIES TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE PROJECTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE 2003-2008 PROPOSED SPLOST.

Commissioner Kicklighter asked, Russ [Abolt], should someone call the municipalities and let them know this meeting's moving along or will they know? County Manager Abolt said, by State law we have to send out certified letters so we did that. I don't want to jeopardize the legal procedure so what you're going to have to do is recess until one o'clock.

* * *

Chairman Hair said, just a reminder of the meeting today at one o'clock. This is the publicized meeting to listen to the cities and other folks to make their SPLOST requests, and we will be back at one o'clock today to do that.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Chairman Hair read the reminder of the meeting with municipalities scheduled at 1:00 p.m. today (or immediately following the Commission meeting) to discuss possible projects for inclusion in the 2003-2008 proposed SPLOST.

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COUNTY COMMISSION/BOARD OF ASSESSORS LIAISON

Commissioner McMasters asked, can I bring something up? I probably should have done it earlier. Maybe it's too late, maybe it's not, and I'm sorry that Joe [Vestal] left, but I've talked informally with him. I'd like to volunteer, and this comes from the ACCG experience that I had, noting that other counties sometimes assign representatives from the Commission to work with a department as a liaison, and I would like to volunteer to work with the Board of Assessors

as a liaison for this Commission to give you regular reports and stay current with the accouterments and ongoings for 03 in that department, and if that's something the Commission would welcome, I'm here to volunteer to do that, and any questions you have throughout the year, you can ask me directly if you so choose.

Chairman Hair said, I certainly have no problem with. Without objection, we could –. I would say this –. Commissioner Odell said, I don't have a question, but I want a clarification. Chairman Hair asked, what us that? Chairman Hair said, I do too. I think it's important that it be a liaison, you know, for the information flow and, you know, not becoming an advocate. Okay? I think it's real important that it just be information facts, those kinds of things, and I think it's important that that –. Go ahead, Commissioner Odell.

Commissioner Odell said, and that if there's a decision, the fact that you are our liaison, that at no time that you would speak for us collectively on things that we need to vote on. Commissioner Thomas said, that's the thing, exactly. Commissioner McMasters said, no, I would bring that question to you. Commissioner Odell said, absolutely, but I just want to make certain. Commissioner McMasters said, it's a vital department, it is an area that I've spent considerable time –.

Chairman Hair said, and you also have a passion for it and that's important too, that you feel really involved in it. Commissioner Odell said, beyond that, we need that and having John [McMasters] to do that will keep him out of our hair. Commissioner McMasters said, there you go. Chairman Hair said, hey, that might even shorten our meetings, you know. This is sounding better and better. Commissioner Rayno said, they may throw you out again though. Chairman Hair said, Commissioner McMasters, I think it's a great idea. I commend you for volunteering to do it, but I do think it's important, I think the comments that Dr. Thomas and both myself and Commissioner Odell, are valid comments though that you truly are a liaison and that you don't represent the Commission or the majority of the Commission.

Commissioner McMasters said, I will follow that edict and any point in time that y'all want to pull me back, that's up to you, but I'll try to do the best job possible on behalf of the citizens of Chatham County. Chairman Hair said, I think you for that.

Commissioner Rivers asked, can we change the order of business in order to get that on the agenda? Chairman Hair said, we really don't need to do that. I think, without objection, we can appoint him. Does anybody object to it? Do you object to it, Commissioner Rivers? Commissioner Rivers said, yeah.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, I'm glad that John [McMasters] brought that up and I think he'll do a great job with it and I, too, want to make sure that it's only a liaison because of the way the law is written and getting involved in what they do versus what we do and making it political, so as long as we do it that I certainly support it and I think that you'll do a great job with it and I think it's important to have that communication back and forth as long as we don't cross that line that's out there that puts us in jeopardy at that point.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Without objection from the Board of Commissioners, Chairman Hair appointed Commissioner McMasters to serve as the Commission's liaison to the Board of Assessors.

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X. ACTION CALENDAR

(The Board can entertain one motion to adopt the below-listed calendar. Such motion would mean adoption of staff's recommendation. Any Board Member may choose to pull an item from the calendar and it would be considered separately.)

Chairman Hair asked, does anybody want to take anything off the Action Calendar? Commissioner Thomas said, I'd like #5. Chairman Hair said, #5 for Dr. Thomas. Okay, anybody else? I'll entertain a motion to approve the balance. Commissioner Odell said, I move for approval. County Manager Abolt said, #7, we're not ready for #7. Chairman Hair said, well, it says it's off anyway. Minus #7. I have a motion, do I have a second? Commissioner Murray said, second. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved that the Action Calendar be approved in its entirety with the exception of Items 5 and 7. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

[NOTE: ACTION OF THE BOARD IS SHOWN ON EACH ITEM AS THOUGH AN INDIVIDUAL MOTION WAS MADE THEREON.]

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1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON DECEMBER 20, 2002, AS MAILED.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on December 20, 2002, as mailed. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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2. CLAIMS VS. CHATHAM COUNTY FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 11 THROUGH DECEMBER 29, 2002.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved that the Finance Director is authorized to pay claims for the period December 11, 2002, through December 29, 2002, in the amount of \$4,414,993. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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3. REQUEST BOARD APPROVAL OF THE 2003-2004 BUDGET CALENDAR.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved to approve the 2003-2004 Budget Calendar as follows: January 10, 2003 - Fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, Budget Calendar to Board for approval; January 13, 2003 - FY2003/2004 request packages distributed; February 7, 2003 - Revenue estimates due from departments; February 21, 2003 - Budget request packages due from departments; February 10-March 7, 2003 - Complete fiscal year ending 6/30/04 revenue estimates (all funds); March 3-April 11, 2003 - Analyze departmental budget requests/hold conference with department heads/budget staff (to run concurrent with staff analysis); March 17-March 28, 2003 - Budget reviews begin—County Manager/department heads/budget staff (to run concurrent with staff analysis); March 17, 2003 - Grants-in-Aid Task Force recommendation due (Human Resources Department); April 7-April 18, 2003 - Prepare budget workbooks for County Manager and Board of Commissioners - Final internal review by Finance Director-budget staff; April 17, 2003 - Advertisement to Savannah News Press for availability of proposed budget/public hearing; April 21-25, 2003 - Final proposed budget goes to Print Shop; April 28, 2003 - Advertise availability of proposed budget and June 13, 2003, public hearing (State law) - Proposed budget document and budget message are transmitted to the Board; May 5-May 23, 2003 - Board workshops; June 5, 2003 - Advertise FY2003/2004 budget adoption; June 13, 2003 - Board conducts public hearing (at regular Commission meeting); June 2-6, 2003 - Final review/revisions by the Board; June 27, 2003 - Adoption of FY 2003/2004 budget at regular Board meeting; June 23-July 11, 2003 - Prepare 2003/2004 budget book and complete FY 20002-2003 budget document; July 1, 2003 - Beginning of FY 2003/2004 - Budget goes into effect; October 26, 2003 - Deadline for submission of budget document for GFOA Award. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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**4. REQUEST FROM THOMAS & HUTTON, ENGINEER FOR THE DEVELOPER, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF THE WARRANTY BOND AND TO ACCEPT THE PAVING AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS FOR COUNTY MAINTENANCE FOR HENDERSON GOLF COMMUNITY, PHASE 3A.
[DISTRICT 7.]**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved to approve a request from Thomas & Hutton, engineer for the developer, to approve the release of the warranty bond and to accept the paving and drainage improvements for County maintenance for Henderson Golf Community, Phase 3A. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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5. REQUEST FROM ASPINWALL ENGINEERING, ENGINEER FOR HORIZON INDUSTRIAL PARK, LLC, DEVELOPER, TO RECORD THE SUBDIVISION PLAT FOR HORIZON

**INDUSTRIAL PARK, ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL GUARANTEE AND BEGIN THE TWELVE-MONTH WARRANTY PERIOD.
[DISTRICT 8.]**

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Thomas.

Commissioner Thomas asked, who is here for this? Chairman Hair asked, Mr. Abolt? County Manager Abolt said, we're going so fast I don't have an engineer here right now. We'll get an engineer and come right back. County Attorney Hart said, I'm somewhat familiar with that project. It's a -. Commissioner Thomas said, I just need the background on it. County Attorney Hart said, it's an industrial park and it's passed everything and basically what we're doing is signing the subdivision plat for recordation today. That requires y'all to approve it. Engineering has looked at it. I had a problem. It will be going into the City or technically is in the City, and I've talked with Mr. Blackburn about it and they're going to follow our lead on zoning. So there shouldn't be a whole lot of issues.

Chairman Hair asked, any other questions, Dr. Thomas? Commissioner Thomas said, no, that's what I wanted. Chairman Hair said, I'll entertain a motion to approve. Commissioner Kicklighter said, so moved approval. Chairman Hair asked, second? Commissioner Odell said, second. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, Jon [Hart]. County Attorney Hart said, yes, sir. Commissioner Murray said, you said this property is going into the City. Is this part of the property that was annexed? County Attorney Hart said, yes, sir. Commissioner Murray said, it's already in the City, is that correct? County Attorney Hart said, yes. Commissioner Murray asked, then why are we acting on it? County Attorney Hart said, well, we're trying to be consistent in zoning and technically the approval process was down to just approving the subdivision plat. Commissioner Murray said, yeah, but if the property went into the City January 1st, we don't have authority over that. County Attorney Hart said, and he's going to have to deal with the City because the City has given him assurances that they're going to follow the zoning that y'all put on it, and I've talked to Mr. Blackburn about that to -, and with Milton [Newton] to say, you know, where are we going to go with this, and he said well those two regulations in the City are the same as here, so I think probably the City is just going to follow our lead.

Chairman Hair said, I see a problem with it either if the City -. Commissioner Murray said, well, I don't see a problem with it either other than the fact that it's the City's responsibility now and not County's. County Attorney Hart said, your point is well taken. Commissioner Kicklighter said, this is a recommendation -. Commissioner Murray said, I wasn't in favor of them annexing the property anyway.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Kicklighter moved to approve a request from Aspinwall Engineering, engineer for Horizon Industrial Park, LLC, developer, to record the subdivision plat for Horizon Industrial Park, accept the financial guarantee and begin the 12-month warranty period. Commissioner Odell seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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6. REQUEST BOARD CONFIRM MEETING DATES FOR 2003 TENTATIVELY SET ON DECEMBER 20, 2002.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved to confirm meeting dates for 2003 tentatively set on December 20, 2002, as follows: Set meeting times for 9:00 a.m., and set dates for the second and fourth Fridays in January through October and on the first and third Fridays in November and December. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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**7. REQUEST BOARD APPROVAL IN FINAL SETTLEMENT OF ADLER CONDEMNATION.
(Note: Agenda item will be distributed on Wednesday.) County Attorney's office requests
this item be postponed until the next meeting.**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

This item was withdrawn from the agenda at the request of the County Attorney's office.

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8. REQUEST BOARD APPROVAL TO AWARD BIDS AS FOLLOWS: (Please note that new purchase thresholds of \$10,000 or more have been enacted; however, contracts and change orders of a lesser amount still will appear.)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DEPT.</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>FUNDING</u>
A. Annual contract with automatic renewal options for four additional one year terms to provide electrical maintenance and repair services	Various	•SAMCO, Inc. •TG & D Electrical, Inc.	Varies by service	•General Fund/M&O - Various •SSD - Various •CIP - Various
B. Four door sport utility vehicle	Health Department	J.C. Lewis Ford	\$21,985	CIP - Vehicle Replacement (pending Board approval of budget amendment)
C. Truck cab and chassis	Fleet Operations	J.C. Lewis Ford	\$20,596	CIP - Vehicle Replacement - SSD
D. Aerial digital photography and software for pictometry project	SAGIS	Pictometry, Inc. (reimburse MPC)	\$71,155 (annually for two years)	SAGIS
E. Change Order No. 4 to the contract for the engineering and design services for the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, Phase II for revisions to ecology report and environmental assessment	SPLOST	Thomas & Hutton Engineering	\$16,500	SPLOST (1993-1998) - Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, Phase II

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved to approve Items 8-A through 8-E, both inclusive. Commissioner Murray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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XI. FIRST READINGS

Proposed changes to ordinances must be read or presented in written form at two meetings held not less than one week apart. A vote on the following listed matters will occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Comments, discussion and debate from members of the public will be received only at the meeting at which a vote is to be taken on one of the following listed items.

- 1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY TO REZONE A PORTION OF SKIDAWAY ISLAND, PIN#'S 01-0263-02-006PT.; 007PT.; 01-0262-02-006, 007, 008, 018 THRU 036, FROM A PUD-B-N (PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT-BUSINESS-NEIGHBORHOOD) ZONING CLASSIFICATION TO A PUD-R (PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT-RESIDENTIAL) ZONING CLASSIFICATION. Note: This is on MPC's agenda for Tuesday, January 7, 2003. Agenda item will be distributed on Wednesday.
MPC FILE NO. Z-021220-38327-1.
[DISTRICT 4.]**

Chairman Hair said, Commissioner Murray has a question on first reading.

Commissioner Murray said, Charlotte [Moore], I need to ask some questions on this. I've been told that when all this came up from MPC and was approved and recommended for approval from MPC that only a portion of that lagoon is included in that. Ms. Moore said, correct. The PUD-B-N district would go to the sewer line of the lagoon. Commissioner Murray said, but the lagoon is still owned by that association and the residents and all should be included in the same. Ms. Moore said, well, the concern is that if the PUD-B-R [sic] line goes all the way to the PUD-B-N property line, then the building setbacks will have to be 50 feet from their own property line. Commissioner Murray said, well, they've got a 33-foot setback right now. Ms. Moore said, I'm sorry, I didn't hear you. Commissioner Murray said, right now they have a 33-foot setback area that's involved in that. Ms. Moore asked, a setback from what line? Commissioner

Murray said, it says, "I've been in correspondence concerning about the lagoon view with the TLA's President Robert Egan. I've enclosed the correspondence from your review for the file. In summary, TLA owns 33 foot [sic] back from the water's edge. They intend to maintain the natural beauty indefinitely and prior to any change in their position, the residents involved on Sundew will be contacted. We do not get a guarantee the view will never change from the 30-foot set -, 33 foot setback as the same goes -." Well, anyway, but from what I understand, The Landings Association, all of them would want and assume that that whole lagoon was going to be zoned the same along with it because it's all maintained the same way. It's still owned by the property owners. County Attorney Hart said, well, I think what they're trying to do is on one side keep the residential setback at 33 feet and on the commercial side have the 50-foot setback. Isn't that what you're talking about? Ms. Moore said, right, but the B-N district would require a 50-foot setback, so if that B-R district was brought across the lagoon and it abutted the commercial property, then the commercial buildings would have to set back 50 feet from their own property line.

Chairman Hair said, yea. This, I think, is a very fair compromise. I mean, what this does is -, otherwise you're going to have every single piece of property is going to have to have a variance exception that's going to be back every time they wanted to build.

Commissioner Murray said, well, not really. It's just that one area, that one lagoon and all those people out there, the ones that were requesting it and that's why I was trying to find out about it. Chairman Hair said, well, it does what we were trying to do. It takes the Sundew residents and makes sure that their property is properly zoned, and it doesn't -, and the MPC is the one that's come in with the solution. I think it's a very good solution that they've come up with. I think it's very fair.

Ms. Moore said, there was only one resident who showed up at the MPC meeting and expressed concern regarding this. Commissioner Murray said, yeah, he was representing the property owners. Chairman Hair said, well, we've got a chance at second reading if you want to do something with it. Commissioner Murray said, well, my question is at the second reading once we get the other information from them, can we change that and bring that into it? County Attorney Hart said, yes, sir. I mean, that would just be an amendment to that and it -. Commissioner Murray said, I'm sure they'll be here to speak and, if they are, we can make a decision then. Okay.

Chairman Hair said, we also need to make sure the other property owners are also here that are affected by that on the other side of the lagoon and so that we have -, get a fair balance approach to this. I think this is a good fair solution. I don't really see a problem with this at all.

Commissioner McMasters asked, Charlotte [Moore], what notification process has been followed relative to this text amendment? Ms. Moore said, each of the owners, I believe there are 21 affected property owners, they all received notices. Commissioner McMasters asked, in what fashion? Regular mail, certified mail -? Ms. Moore said, well, with regard to the County Commission, the MPC doesn't send out notices for that. That's the responsibility of the County. So I guess that's a question for the Clerk. Commissioner Murray said, all the property owners are aware of it. Commissioner McMasters said, all right. Thank you.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Chairman Hair read this item into the record as the first reading.

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XII. SECOND READINGS

1. **THE PETITIONER, ROBERT LEE, (DOMINY HOLDINGS, INC; E B MILES PROPERTIES LLP & THE WATERLAND CO.; AND LEE AND BRADLEY ROBERT W AND MARTIN J. JR., OWNERS; JOHN KERN, KERN-COLEMAN & CO., AGENT) IS REQUESTING REZONING 81.07 ACRES OF PROPERTY LOCATED SOUTH OF US HIGHWAY 17 SOUTH AND CANE BREAK ROAD FROM AN R-A (RESIDENTIAL-AGRICULTURE) CLASSIFICATION TO A PUD-M-8 (PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, MULTIFAMILY) CLASSIFICATION TO ALLOW SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED AND MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF A MASTER PLAN. THE MPC RECOMMENDED APPROVAL. MPC FILE NO. Z-011102-51611-1 [DISTRICT 6.]**

Chairman Hair said, I'll entertain a motion.

Commissioner Odell said, move for approval. Chairman Hair asked, second? No second?

Commissioner Kicklighter said, let me ask a question. Chairman Hair said, okay. Commissioner Kicklighter asked, what are they wanting to -, are they wanting to building near an existing residential neighborhood or does anyone know? Ms. Charlotte Moore said, this is part of Bradley Plantation. I believe there are approximately 500 units, it's

going to be single-family and multi-family developments. Commissioner Kicklighter asked, is it something you haven't heard nothing about? I'll second it then.

Chairman Hair said, have a second, okay. Any discussion? All those in favor vote yes, opposed vote no. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Hair said, the motion passes.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Odell moved to approve the petition of Robert Lee (Dominy Holdings, Inc.; E B Miles Properties LLP & The Waterland Co.; and Lee and Bradley, Robert W. and Martin J., Jr., Owners; John Kern, Kern-Coleman & Co., Agent) requesting rezoning of 81.07 acres of property located south of U.S. Highway 17 South and Cane Break Road from an R-A (Residential-Agriculture) classification to a PUD-M-8 (Planned Unit Development, Multifamily) classification to allow single-family detached and multi-family residential development and approval of a Master Plan. Commissioner Kicklighter seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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- 2. THE PETITIONER, RICHARD SHIRAH, AGENT FOR POWERTEL, INC. (FOR GUMER AND ASSOCIATES, INC., OWNER) IS REQUESTING REZONING PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF CHEVIS ROAD, EAST OF WILD HERON DRIVE FROM AN R-A (RESIDENTIAL-AGRICULTURE) CLASSIFICATION TO AN R-A-W-T (RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURE-WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS OVERLAY) CLASSIFICATION IN ORDER TO CONSTRUCT A TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER ON 6,400 SQUARE FEET (0.147 ACRES) OF LAND. THE MPC RECOMMENDED APPROVAL.
MPC FILE NO. Z-020925-37060-1
[DISTRICT 6.]**

Chairman Hair said, I'll entertain a motion.

Commissioner Kicklighter said, motion to approve. Chairman Hair asked, second? Commissioner Gellatly said, second. Chairman Hair said, all those in favor –. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner McMasters.

Commissioner McMasters said, they're building a cell tower? Ms. Charlotte Moore said, correct. Commissioner McMasters asked, and can you share with us what if any discussion occurred at MPC from the residents relative to this? Ms. Moore said, certainly. The residents, and there are several residents in the area –, actually this particular piece of property is located in a fairly undeveloped area. It's east of Wild Heron Road. Some of the residents were concerned about the visibility of the cell tower. The agent for Powertel did meet them on site and all their concerns were resolved. The only thing they asked was that the fence surrounding the equipment that it be eight feet instead of the required six feet, and there was resolution and everybody seemed to be happy with it. Commissioner McMasters asked, was there any discussion about stealth design relative to the site and the tower? Ms. Moore said, well, given that its location, it's in a wooded area, it won't be very visible at all –. Commissioner McMasters asked, well, what –. Ms. Moore said, – so the stealth design was not required. Commissioner McMasters said, as the area develops and it does become more densely populated, is there any sort of agreement between the community through the MPC and the tower people that in the future if density increases that they'll rethink their design or work with the community to assure happiness in the future? Ms. Moore said, well, there is no requirement for them to go back and as the area develops to do a stealth design. Commissioner McMasters said, I'm sorry. Ms. Moore said, there is no requirement in the zoning ordinance that requires them to go back and do stealth design once that area becomes more developed. Commissioner McMasters asked, Jon [Hart], if there's any –, is there any future opportunity based on perhaps a petition to make some amendment to the site or change the site that would open up the opportunity in the future for discussion on the subject? County Attorney Hart said, it would be difficult. The zoning ordinance requires you to meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance. It doesn't say you have to meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance now and as we change it in the future or as the population changes, and they also have a very strong argument that they're there first and that the people coming to that cell tower are aware that the cell tower is there, and there are some pretty strict limitations on how far the community can go in regulating these cell towers just under the Federal Communications Act and, you know, there's –, stealth can be required if you can show it's a highly urban area and that sort of thing, but just to put it out in the middle of the woods, they would have a pretty good argument about burdensomeness.

Commissioner McMasters asked, did the MPC contemplate this question and have any discussion about the desirability or the impact of this in a future context? Ms. Moore said, our review was strictly based on the existing ordinance. Commissioner McMasters said, the right here and now? Ms. Moore said, uh huh. That's the only thing that we're right to do.

Chairman Hair said, Ms. Hoang, Mr. Pierce and then Commissioner Gellatly. Chairman Hair recognized Youth Commissioner Hoang.

Youth Commissioner Hoang said, I have a question. If you –, if this tower were to be built, would it interfere with any other towers? Ms. Moore said, no. There are requirements that they have to be located at least, I believe, 2,000 feet from other towers.

Chairman Hair said, Mr. Pierce, come forward please. Mr. Pierce said, I'll say something later. Chairman Hair asked, later? Mr. Pierce said, I'll say something later. Chairman Hair said, okay. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Gellatly.

Commissioner Gellatly said, in regards to the request for the eight-foot fence, is that part of the recommendation that if we approve the recommendation, it will be an eight-foot fence? Ms. Moore said, yes, sir. Commissioner Gellatly said, okay, and then another question. If we were to approve that and the eight-foot fence is in there, who actually checks to make sure that in reality the eight-foot fence is built? Ms. Moore said, well, if it is shown on the plans, which MPC will review again and also County Engineering -. Commissioner Gellatly said, no, but I mean who physically will go out there to make sure that -, measure it that it's an eight-foot fence and not a six-foot fence, and I'm -, the reason I'm asking that is because in the Georgetown area we, in fact, had a situation where MPC -, the requirement that was voted on was an eight-foot fence and, in reality, they put a six-foot fence up with a one-foot of barbed wire. So my question is that if we approve it, will there be a real person go out there and measure it to make sure it's eight-foot tall? Ms. Moore said, I'm not certain about that question. It may be part of the building permit process once they get their -. Commissioner Gellatly asked, Russ, have that -? Chairman Hair said, we certainly could make that a requirement. It'll be -, just make sure that -. Mr. Anderson -.

Commissioner Gellatly said, I want to make sure that we have a real person go out there with a real tape measure and measure it to make sure it's eight-foot tall. Chairman Hair said, Mr. Anderson is here. Mr. Anderson, will you make sure that's done? Mr. Gregori Anderson said, done. Chairman Hair said, okay. Thank you.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, I realize that this particular tower is in a wooded area right now. There are some towers in other areas when we normally require the fences and sometimes they go to eight foot and sometimes even higher than that. Is there any requirement on this or any of the others that we do where landscaping has to be put in around that fence also? Ms. Moore said, yes, sir, there is a requirement. Commissioner Murray asked, so there will be landscaping regardless of the fact that it's out in a wooded area right now? Ms. Moore said, in this case in lieu of doing the landscaping because it is in a wooded area, they will make a contribution to the Tree Fund. Commissioner Murray asked, excuse me? Chairman Hair said, contribution to the Tree Fund. Ms. Moore said, the developer will make a contribution to the Tree Fund rather than installing landscaping because it is in a wooded area. Commissioner Murray said, okay.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Rayno.

Commissioner Rayno said, just to alleviate some of Commissioner McMasters's concerns, what's the average life span of a cell tower before it gets so stressed that they decide to take it down or replace it? Ms. Moore said, I can't answer that question. The agent may be here, I don't -.

Mr. Richard Shirah, I represent Powertel. My answer to your question is I don't know, but the design is there and, of course, the steel and I would have to think a tower is designed for the life of 30 or 40 or 50 years with proper maintenance of the tower. Can I make one comment, sir? Can I make one comment in regard to the stealth tower issue that you brought up? I think what you try to do in implementing the wireless network is hit a balance point with things, and of course that's what you do with your code and you give us that and we go out and we try to abide by that, and one of the things, it's a balancing thing in your code is the fact that there are three type towers, the guide tower, a lattice type tower, which is the three-legged type, and a monopole tower, and most places take the position that a monopole tower is the least obtrusive type tower and so in that case this is what's happening here, and then beyond that when you go to a stealth type tower and you're trying to achieve height objectives, and in this tower we are designing it for four users, so that would limit folks coming back to you to cover the area, but when you go to a stealth tower that tall, sometimes you are running yourself in a circle, I think, because whether you build -, it's [inaudible] at 180 monopole that is less visually obtrusive. So I don't know the answer to it all. I understand people's concern about it, but I just wanted to throw that out for your consideration.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner McMasters.

Commissioner McMasters said, two final comments. I'd like Charlotte [Moore] to specifically ask the consultants to the Tri-Centennial Plan to address the issue that I raised relative to construction of sites like this and future impact, and I would appreciate a response as permits from the consultants on that. Lastly, and I guess Mr. Vestal's gone, but does -, Jon [Hart], do you know how the Tax Assessor's office approaches the valuation of such a property? County Attorney Hart said, I don't. I think they, you know, the -, I really don't know, but -. Commissioner McMasters asked, can we ask for -, can I get a -, or should I just send a memo to Russ [Abolt]. Chairman Hair said, just send a memo. Commissioner McMasters said, okay, I'll find out the answer to the question. Thank you.

Chairman Hair said, thank you. Thank you, Charlotte.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Kicklighter moved to approve the petition of Richard Shirah, agent for Powertel, Inc. (for Gumer and Associates, Inc., Owner), requesting the rezoning of property located on the north side of Chevis Road, east of Wild

Heron Drive from an R-A (Residential-Agriculture) classification to an R-A-W-T (Residential-Agriculture-Wireless Telecommunications Overlay) classification in order to construct a telecommunications tower on 6,400 square feet (0.147 acres) of land. Commissioner Gellatly seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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XIII. INFORMATION CALENDAR

- 1. PROGRESS REPORT ON GENERAL FUND CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT - M&O AND THE SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT (SEE ATTACHED).**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Written report received as information.

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- 2. LIST OF PURCHASING ITEMS BETWEEN \$2,500 AND \$9,999 (SEE ATTACHED). (Note: None for this meeting.)**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

None were received for this meeting.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion being made by Commissioner Rivers, seconded by Commissioner Kicklighter and unanimously approved, the Board recessed at 10:25 a.m., to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation, land acquisition, and personnel.

Following adjournment of the Executive Session, the meeting of the Board of Commissioners was reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

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PROCEDURE FOR 1:00 P.M. SPLOST MEETING

In order to expedite the meeting the Board gave unanimous consent to establishing the following procedure for the conduct of the meeting for presentation of proposed projects for inclusion on the SPLOST referendum: (1) Each group or organization will be requested to select a spokesman and only the spokesman be allowed to speak; and (2) that the presentations will be limited to five minutes.

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ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 1. AUTHORIZE SETTLEMENT OF CLAIM WITH THE CITY OF SAVANNAH AND AUTHORIZE EXECUTION OF RELEASE (JON HART).**

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Rivers moved to authorize settlement with the City of Savannah upon payment of \$668.40 for a claim arising out of an incident which occurred on November 22, 2002, when a city employee backed into a vehicle parked at Green Gate Court, and further authorize Chuck Voelker to execute a release on behalf of the Chatham County Finance Department. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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2. REQUEST BOARD APPROVE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO EXECUTE AN AFFIDAVIT THAT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS HELD IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

Commissioner Rivers moved to authorize the Chairman to execute an affidavit that the Executive Session was held in compliance with the Open Meetings Law. Commissioner Kicklighter seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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APPOINTMENTS

None.

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RECESS OF MEETING

Chairman Hair declared the meeting of the County Commission in recess at 11:04 a.m.

The meeting of the County Commission was reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

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HEARING ON PROPOSED SPLOST PROJECTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE REFERENDUM ON MARCH 18, 2003

Chairman Hair said, can I have everyone's attention please. We will start the meeting. There's obviously a large crowd here today and we appreciate very much you being here. I want to talk a little bit about --, briefly about the ground rules today. The County Commission met earlier this morning in our regular meeting and it was unanimous on the County Commission to set some ground rules for today, otherwise we'd probably be here until one o'clock in the morning. The first ground rule is we're going to ask that whatever group you represent that there only be one spokesman. We don't need five people talking about the Library and twelve people talking about Telfair. We understand the issue. So whatever group you're a part of, we want one person to be the spokesman, and you can designate whoever you'd like to be your spokesman for that group. The second thing is we're also going to limit the presentation today to five minutes. Now, let me tell you why. First of all, we've got large groups of numbers and we want to make sure that everybody has an opportunity to speak. Secondly, we already have --, most of you have already given us detailed packets of your requests. We've already gotten those. If you don't, please feel free to get those detailed packets to us to justify your request. Secondly, as it relates to the five minutes as well, if any of you would like to meet with any of us individually between now and the 24th of January to discuss your project more in detail, if you'll just call us individually, we'd be glad to sit down and meet with you individually. So I hope you understand the rules. Now I will enforce these rules so I hope that you would abide by our requests to limit your comments to five minutes and only have one spokesman. Now the basic purpose of this meeting originally was to listen to the cities, so I'm going to take the cities first and then after that we will talk to anybody from the audience that represents any particular group. We'd be more than happy to listen to your presentation for five minutes.

Chairman Hair said, I'm going to call first on the City of Savannah and my dear friend, the Mayor, Floyd Adams, to --, I assume, Mayor, you're going to be the spokesman for the City? Mayor Adams said, a combination of myself and

Michael Brown. Chairman Hair said, okay. As long as we can get it done –. We have had many discussions about your projects.

Mayor Floyd Adams said, well, actually you know the local option sales tax [inaudible] the truth in funding, the needed infrastructure of our community for drainage, roads, neighborhood revitalization, parks and open space and other needed projects within the City and County. I'm supportive and very much so and, as you know, the staffs of both the City, the County and other municipalities have gotten together and I was hoping that Al [Bungard] would go first, but –, then we could compare and bring us to [inaudible]. Is Al [Bungard] going to make a presentation? Chairman Hair said, no, we're not going to do that presentation. Mayor Adams said, okay, okay, then so I'll let Michael [Brown] basically tell you what our projects are and go from there.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mayor.

City Manager Michael Brown said, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Commission. The last time we had a meeting, which you spoke toward, were your priorities as you saw them beginning, I think, with roads and bridges, drainage, open space, public safety, and what we tried to do in the last several weeks since that meeting was to make sure that those priorities were incorporated. Whenever one of the parties talks about it, they try to –, you say, well, did we really look out for the other party, and I can assure you, Mr. Chairman and Board, that that's what we tried to do. We looked at those elements of the road program that were urgently needed in the County and in the City and all the way down the line. So when you look at this list of projects, and since we're –, I don't know if we're going to go through this or not individually –, but, you know, that's what we faced and we tried to do is to say, okay, there is a need for a bridge, you know, a high-level bridge to replace the drawbridge and so forth, and so as we went through those projects, we tried to look at those areas of Chatham County that have the most urgent traffic needs. One thing I would caution you about is that I don't think we ought to just take the CUTS, as well thought out as that is, and simply adopt it. Yet, and then again, it does have some projects in it that would be a benefit to everywhere in all of our major corridors, 17, Dean Forest, a lot of different areas. So I won't read to you everyone of those projects, but we believe that what was presented to you by the County Manager was not just a pro-City of Savannah wish list, but it did try to take into account the needs Countywide. I would certainly affirm that in drainage because Commissioner McMasters in the last couple of months has actually been at several of our meetings. We had areas like Alice and Tattnall, we had areas like Fernwood, Parkwood over on the east side which we share, the Placentia Basin, for example, with Thunderbolt and the unincorporated area and the City, so in our drainage package, which is about \$50,000,000, we tried to make sure that we looked out for the County so that there is work for the Pipemakers, for example. There's work all throughout Chatham County ranked by what's the most important need. I think the last round really did produce value for us, especially in roads and drainage, and all you have to do is ride around. Having said that though, there's a second wave, Alice and Tattnall, Fernwood, Parkwood, Wilshire, and there are some definite areas within the City and in the unincorporated area that definitely need additional drainage work and, as we learned, if you try to do that on property taxes, it's going to get very untenable. It will be very untenable. Thirdly, I think in the area of open space, all of the municipalities and the County have worked very well together to try to make strategic purchases to provide open space and facilities for the future. I guess then the other area that we looked at is in trying to allocate funds for each of the various jurisdictions, so to speak, for their projects that are needed in their jurisdictions, unincorporated Chatham County and the municipalities, and if you'll look at this list, the math pretty much comes out that each of the jurisdiction gets its population –, its share of that population for those type of projects. The only proviso I would tell you is I think the unincorporated area gets a little bit greater than its population, the municipalities get something equivalent to their population and the City of Savannah gets slightly less than its population. So hopefully you will see that we have not been –, excuse me –, we have not been selfish as we applied that, but I would say I would try to avoid the division of who gets this and who gets that. I think that there are projects in here that would be good for the unincorporated area and helpful to the City and vice versa. There are projects in here that would be good for the City of Savannah and good for the other areas as well. So, Mr. Chairman, I just would like to say that we have been through this with a fine tooth comb. I would urge you to look –, if this process goes forward today, that we will continue to try to bring you a final –, a couple of things I would note on the schedule is that we have a schedule that is proceeding, that there's some approvals, one legal approval that is necessary since this does include drainage and certain types of projects that the Mayor and Aldermen will need to pass a resolution of support. I've recommended that they do that as of their meeting –, the first meeting in February, which I believe is the 6th, and that –, or perhaps we could do that in two weeks. So I know this, that we need to go ahead and move on with the schedule, and I would just say that we believe that within the City we have produced great value and ask everybody present to try to fit this package together. We've worked carefully on the revenue estimate of about \$245,000,000. It would be a pretty safe bet, and as much as 265, but I'm not sure we could fit everything in that everybody would like to have. And thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mr. Brown. Also, we do plan on meeting and voting on the 24th so that should be in the schedule. I saw Mayor Parker out there. If any of the other City Mayors would like to come up, we would also give them the same five minutes. Any other mayors, I didn't see –, it's pretty crowded out there. I see a couple of other –.

Mayor Walter Parker, City of Tybee Island, said, I don't think I'll take five minutes. We have put together and Council has already approved what we consider a reasonable request, and at the percentage of 2.08, and of course drainage is important and of course the beach is another. If anywhere in –, Bob [Thompson], do you have anything you want to add to this as I go through it –, this is our City Manager. The beach renourishment, of course, is of prime interest and if, in your infinite wisdom, in putting these packages together, if there could be any additional funding other than what we request at the end of the projects or whatever, then we would put that towards the beach also. We'll leave you this list, and –, is there anything else you want to add? Chairman Hair said, we'd be glad to do that.

City Manager Bob Thompson said, Mr. Chairman, the –, one thing we would like to emphasize is a lot of these requests address regional needs, such as the beach, and we would hope that y'all respectfully keep in mind that we do generate a lot of sales tax revenue for the County and our population is –, to just look at the census figures is only the full time resident population and we average probably 6,000 to 8,000 folks when you take into account the condominiums and that sort of thing.

Chairman Hair said, thank you very much, Mayor, Mr. Thompson. We appreciate you being here. Any other city –? Yes, Thunderbolt.

An unidentified representative of Thunderbolt said, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Just to reiterate, we have also tried to keep these lists as reasonable as possible, but the top of the list being drainage because we understand everything. We've got some –, and we've made some good progress in Thunderbolt in the last few years and there's a lot to be done that we've got on the drawing board that's going to be completed shortly. So we'll be down to ground zero. Really, I'm going to leave a list with Russ [Abolt], if it's all right. It's an updated list that the Council put together, but one thing I would like to ask a top priority –, well, really too other top priorities to consider for us. One is we need a public works facility extremely terrible. We've spoken briefly to Commissioner McMasters about this and he's willing to try to help us with it. We've got a situation which we've already bought the land, and we need the help to clear the land and construct a facility and put a recycling facility in there, and we've got an estimate for you on that. The other area if any of you have participated out there and been with us lately on some of the LOST agreements, you've seen that we have a parking problem. We've got a solution here for the parking problem that we think you need to address and help. So we have our list. We ask that you consider it and I'll just leave it with Russ [Abolt].

Chairman Hair said, he'll make sure we'll get it. Thank you. Yes?

Mayor Tim Holbrook said, Tim Holbrook from Port Wentworth. We'd like to thank the County for the opportunity to speak today and with the SPLOST that we have received under the last cycle to date was about \$2.1 million, and the Phillips Avenue Canal has been finished. Our dollar request this year will be \$2.2 million, which we'll probably go over \$2.2 million as per last year's. The requests this year are going to fall in other projects/roads. As you are aware, the population in Port Wentworth has decreased with the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway taking out some of the residential neighborhoods, and also the Georgia Ports Authority taking out the LaGrange Road area. Based on population, we are still a little bit under two percent, which is right on the money as far as if it was based on population. The other capital projects, and there's two of them, will be a wastewater facility. Many of you may not be aware, but the City of Port Wentworth has been requested by the Department of Transportation to handle the wastewater effluent for the Welcome Center –, the Georgia Welcome Center coming in on I-95 into Georgia, which is the first exist on I-95. They have over four million visitors there a year. We simply cannot take this wastewater unless we have some type of an agreement. Also, too, what we plan to do with the wastewater is enter into a partnership –, a partnership intergovernmental agreement where we will help with the capital funding of the new wastewater facility which is to be built near the [inaudible], and that money will be used to help the capital requirements of the project and handle our effluent, and that Welcome Center –, and also that and the Sugar Refinery and the County area, we have a County –, a State designated industrial zones bordering Port Wentworth where we handle this water effluent for industry there. The tertiary treatment, we'll clean up the Savannah River in the respect that this will be clean water going in the river, the same river that flows from Port Wentworth to the edge of Garden City, to the back of Mayor Adams' office, through Thunderbolt, right on out to Mayor Parker's beach. So there is Countywide benefit from this. We just hope you'll consider our consideration. We're not asking for any more than what we got the last time, but we need what we got the last time. Thank you so much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mayor Holbrook. We appreciate you being here. Next city. Anybody else –, anybody here from Pooler or any other city. I see Mayor Carter.

Mayor Buddy Carter said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I walked in and told them I was from the City of Pooler and they told me they had a seat in the very back. I don't know exactly what that means, but we do appreciate the opportunity to be here, appreciate all the work that you're doing with this. One of the things that I would like to reiterate is a point that Michael Brown made about the good of the community, and these projects I hope they don't get lost. If you'll remember back to our LOST negotiations, one of the major subjects that we discussed at that time was the jail and the computer system at the jail, and we all agreed that it would be time for us to put that in the SPLOST so that we can make improvements so that the two separate, as I understand it, computer systems they have now would be combined into one so that they could communicate and it obviously would benefit all of us and all of those who, excuse me –, who use the jail. As far as specific projects for the City of Pooler, we have submitted a list of capital projects. Not to go through all of them, but I would like to mention a couple. One is the recreation park. We are in dire need of more recreational facilities in our community. As you can well imagine, in a growing community such as ours, recreation is a vital part of our community and we have had the land donated to the City. Branigar has been kind enough to do that, and when they did that it was with the stipulation, of course, that we have a project under way within the next five years. So if we're able to do that, then we'll be able to get the land. Also, we're submitting a new Visitor's Center that we hope will attract visitors off of I-95 and into our City. That again would benefit all of Chatham County. As tax revenues go up in the City of Pooler, it's going to go up all in Chatham County as well. Also, the paving of sidewalks that we've been able to do in the past, we want to continue on with that. The drainage that we've been able to accomplish with the past SPLOST taxes has been very effective and very well used in our community and we'd like to continue with that as well. We've also done some pipe work, culvert pipes, and we've submitted a list of those projects for you for your review. In essence, we would like to continue on with the projects that we have done in the past and hopefully add on a couple of capital projects that will help this tax to be passed by the citizens. We feel like if we get something

in there that the citizens can see that would be beneficial and that they can actually use —, utilize such as the recreation park, that that would make the whole package even more attractive.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mayor. Thank you very much. Mayor Carter said, thank you. Chairman Hair said, Mayor Quinney from Garden City.

Mayor Andy Quinney said, they told Buddy [Carter] to go sit in the back; when I came in, they told me to stay standing, so I don't know what that means. I do want to appreciate the cooperation that we have. The LOST program we went through and everything, it seems like we all got together and were able to talk and communicate. We have a list of projects that we want to do for Garden City. Part of what we want to do is we want to increase the fire hydrants in Garden City. We'd like to double those. We right now have about 275 and we want to go to 600. We're concerned about our citizens. You know, we have two of the busiest highways in Chatham County, and we'd like to do something about those for walkers on Highway 21 and for the safety of our citizens and also for the beautification of the City. Building of recreational trail paths along drainage canals and inventory the City's public spaces, so we can retrofit those for the —, for [inaudible] scapes. Again, I'll be brief. We appreciate the cooperation that we have had and we'll look forward to the future with bigger and better things.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mayor Quinney. Mayor Quinney said, thank you, sir. Chairman Hair said, we appreciate you coming. Is anyone here from Bloomingdale? I didn't see Mayor Rozier —, okay. We've got Vernonburg —. Okay, there's the Mayor, okay.

Mayor Ben Rozier said, they wouldn't even let me in. I had to stand out in the hall. Thank you very much for having me here today. We had a couple of items that we'd like to pass on. Once again recreation is our top priority. We do have a few paving projects. The Stagecoach Road area right now is being paved right now by Effingham County in their part of the County, and we'd like to try to finish that in the Chatham County part. Also, we're looking at trying to put a public safety center together for our police department and get them outside of City Hall and our fire department, our fire station is falling down. We're hoping to also mention that —, I noticed it's on your agenda here to look at the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, the last phase of it. If you drive from 95 to Highway 80 on the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, the majority of the traffic that you're going to see right now is big trucks. They're using that from —, as a shortcut to get from Highway 80 to 95 to the ports area. When that does open up from the ports to I-16 eventually, you're going to talk about 18 to —, 1,600 to 1,800 trucks a day on that stretch of highway. Right now it dumps out onto Highway 80, which is already congested, and it dumps out into a two-lane road, which is already congested, and then the past couple of weeks in the Faulkville/Bloomingdale area, there have been several real bad accidents up there. I don't —, I believe there's been one or two fatalities in —, just in the past couple of weeks. So the County's attention to finishing the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway —, Mr. DeLoach himself came to me a couple of months back and said, "You know, we really need to talk to everybody you can. I've tried to get them to finish this." I think it's been —, from what he told me, he thought it had been pushed backed to 2006, and that's something that really does need to be looked and to better facilitate truck traffic out of the Ports Authority. But those items that I mentioned is what we're looking at and we appreciate your attention to it. Thank you very much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mayor. We appreciate you being here. Mr. Lawler from Vernonburg. Do you want to come forward, sir?

Mr. William Lawler, Intendent of Vernonburg, said, I really —, I support Mr. Brown's statements on the importance of drainage. We're really working hard on that. As far as Vernonburg goes, I know that the request that we submitted exceeded what the dollar amount would be based on the latest projection, whether it's by acreage or by population, and we don't expect to get the total amount there. Just tell us the rules and we'll play the game. Chairman Hair said, okay. Mr. Lawler said, the things we put in there fits within the perimeters of what currently SPLOST is [inaudible].

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mr. Lawler. Anybody else from the cities that would like to comment? Okay, if not, we will move to the other projects. I'm going to take these in no particular order, just the ones that I remember, and everyone, I promise you, will get a chance to come up and say whatever you need to say. Again, I'm going to ask that you have one representative per group. I'm going to start with the Library. Who's going to be the spokesman for the Library?

Ms. Thelma McKenzie said, I don't want to waste your Chairman —, time, Mr. Chairman, so I'm going to get started right away. I'm Thelma McKenzie, Chairman of the Chatham County Library Board of Trustees and the Live Oak Public Library Board of Trustees, and I thank you for the opportunity to be here today. You have received our long range facilities plan and a lot of the supporting information. Most recently, you asked us to provide you with our priorities. You have before you summary and detailed information on our core potential packages of projects at four different levels of funding. If I may, I'd like to quickly review the summary information with you now. At a cost of \$26.9 million, we can put a much needed new facility on the south side near Savannah Mall and replace branches in Pooler and on Wilmington Island and new facilities that will serve the residents well for the next 20 years. Since this level of funding does not allow us to build both of the new branches needed on the south side, we will need to renovate the Oglethorpe Mall Branch to make it serviceable until the second branch can be built. For \$35.1 million we can do those same projects and we can put another new branch on the west side to serve Garden City/Port Wentworth area. This new branch would replace the existing Port City Branch and the Port Wentworth Branch. At this level of funding, we can also renovate the Forest City Branch on Stiles Avenue and Thunderbolt. At a funding level of \$41.4 million it becomes possible to build both new branches on the south side as well as new branches in Pooler and Wilmington Island. For \$45 million, we can build the southeast, southwest, West Chatham County and Islands branches. We can do the renovation at Forest City and Thunderbolt and we can upgrade the five small inner city branches. When you asked

us for priorities, we were looking at a need for 15 projects totaling \$62 million in our long range plan, as you know. We have no specific funding target so that was a challenge. If none of these four options is the right mix of projects at the right funding level, we would be happy to work with you to find the right combination of projects for servicing the Chatham County needs for library services in our long range plan. Each of you have been gracious enough to meet with us to discuss our needs facility –, our facility needs, excuse me. You asked a lot of excellent questions, which I hope we've answered to your satisfaction. One thread was common to all of the meetings, and that is –, all of the meetings with you, and that is the question of operating costs. In the long range plan itself and in our public presentation of the plan, we have made it clear that the capital costs and the operating costs are two separate challenge, and we have done our best to put numbers to both of those challenges. We know and we have always told our audiences that SPLOST will not pay the operating costs after the projects are completed. We also know the challenges that you face as you've tried to provide adequate funding to all of the essential services that the County provides, including the public library. We do feel your pain and your pain is our pain. So we will make this comment to you –, this commitment to you: If you make it possible for us to build new facilities, we will work with you to find new alternative sources of funding for library operation. We would like to work with you on that even if we cannot build new facilities. For the past 18 months we've been telling audience that if funding for operation is not available, we would rather not build the facilities. We reaffirm that commitment today. If together we cannot find and develop a practical and accessible means of funding the operation of new facilities, we will defer construction until we can. We have no hesitation in making these comments to you. It is a common sense approach. Also, we know that we have the will to make this critical improvement to our libraries, and we believe that you have the will to do the same. But most importantly, we have been very diligent in listening to the people of Chatham County about our plans for the library and we've listened to them and we've listened to them, and we know that this is what they want. Thank you for your opportunity this afternoon. I know you are aware of the progress the library system has made, and I hope that you take great pride in it. As your appointee to the Library Board, we certainly do. There are so many good reasons to continue that progress and so few obstacles. Please give this proposal the consideration it deserves. And we thank you for the opportunity, and you have all of the information. If you have any questions, I can listen to those.

Chairman Hair said, thank you very much. We appreciate it. I'm next going to call on Judge Brannen, Chief Judge in Superior Court. I see Judge Burke back there. Who's going to be –. Judge Brannen said, Judge Karpf. Chairman Hair asked, Judge Karpf, are you going to be the spokesman? Judge Karpf said, yes. Chairman Hair said, okay, Judge Karpf will be the spokesman.

Judge Michael Karpf said, thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission. Of course, I am here to speak on a proposal for the Courthouse renovation and expansion project. You all received correspondence from us indicating the scope of our request. I'd just like to speak about it briefly. In the audience here today are most of the other elected officials from the other Courthouse. All of us are always happy to come over to this Courthouse so we can see how the other half lives. Of course, you'd like to make our building look as nice as this building looks, but it's not just looking nice that's the issue. It is what we think has become an absolute necessity for the Judicial Courthouse. As you probably are aware, the SPLOST funding is frequently used around the State for courthouse renovation and expansion projects. It's been used in several areas –, many areas I should say –, to build new courthouses. Indeed, in the Georgia Code that authorizes SPLOST funding, courthouse renovation projects are right at the top of the list. Our courthouse was built in 1978 on what could only be described as a shoestring budget. If you all remember, I'm not sure how many people do remember, but at the time a bond referendum to build the courthouse failed and the Commissioners were able to find just enough money to build what we have now. What we built was barely adequate then and it's inadequate now. We've had little renovation in the intervening years. We have had some different rooms and areas renovated, but in effect the basic configuration has not changed at all since that time. We are in need of additional courtroom space, we are in need of additional space for jurors. Our juror assembly room is woefully inadequate. We have public safety concerns about our building. We're concerned with security aspects. We have fire safety concerns about our building. There is no sprinkler system, for example. We have limited access to emergency exists through stairwells. Several of them are now behind security areas, and since the time the courthouse was built, we're all aware of the heightened security concerns that have arisen about public buildings. You need only to look across this square to see the changes that have been made in the Federal Courthouse. We suffer from the same vulnerability, if you will, as other public buildings, perhaps more so. We're very concerned about it. I think it's safe to say that our courthouse building, our Judicial Courthouse is arguably the most heavily used public building in the County, with the exception perhaps of some schools. Thousands and thousands of our citizens come through the doors of the courthouse every day. They're there for a variety of reasons. They're there as jurors, they're there as litigants, parties in lawsuits. They're also there for routine transaction of business with the County, including the payment of taxes and the assessment of taxes. It is a heavily used building and it needs to be renovated. We simply do not have enough room to perform all the functions that we need to perform. The ports have expanded, our case loads have expanded. We require the space and the only real way that the capital funding can occur is through the use of funds such as raised by the SPLOST sales tax. We have a master plan for the courthouse that was prepared in 1995 by the National Center for State Courts. It's been distributed long before now and I don't know if all of you have it, but certainly we will be glad to distribute it again. It addresses both the short term and the long term needs of the Judicial Courthouse. Of course, none of the needs identified in 1995 have been addressed since then. They persist today, only it's worse. It's worse than it was at that time. I would encourage you to take a look at it. We have gotten some cost estimates from Scott Barnard, who's an architect. The cost of our plan is approximately \$12,000,000. It would include an addition to the western side of the building that would add courtroom space, office space, secured areas, and so forth. We would be glad to and have provided, I think, the details of all that to you. A couple of other things to mention includes the fact that the old County jail is currently being, I don't want to say renovated, because I don't think that's the right term, but at least the interior is being gutted to make it suitable for use for other purposes. There is not funding to go forward with that, however. We can tear it out, but we can't build it out for use for other offices. The plan would include moving some current County offices that are in the Judicial Courthouse into the old

jail. That, of course, would free up some space for us. It would also allow a couple of fairly unique uses, I think, over there, one being the County computer center, the ICS Department, which has unique security needs, and our master plan, at least, identifies the possibility of moving the Emergency Management Agency to the Old Courthouse [sic] because it is a secure and hardened building and again they seem to have unique security needs. That, of course, would free up space in this building, all of which we think would be to the benefit of the citizens. So, let me sum up by saying that we think this is a public safety issue. We think it affects the citizens of the entire community. We very much appreciate your willingness to consider this renovation project. It is vitally needed and we encourage your support. I thank you very much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Judge Karpf. I've recognized Judge Brannen and Judge Burke. Are there any other Judges here? Oh, yeah, they are. Most of them are here, okay. Thank y'all for coming. Judge Karpf said, and if you'll excuse us now, we have to go back to work. Chairman Hair said, we appreciate that. We appreciate y'all being here very much. All right, next I'm going to call on the Telfair, and again I'm not doing this in any particular order, just --, everybody will get their chance.

Ms. Butine Hardwick said, good afternoon. I had planned to try to be impressive and speak extemporaneously, but with a five-minute time constraint I'd better go to my notes. I'm Butine Hardwick, a member of the Board of Trustees for the Telfair Museum of Art and I have been a member of the Board off and on for a period of eight years, and I'm very, very committed and excited about that that I wish to speak to this afternoon. Thanks for affording me the opportunity to address you to request your support for the interactive gallery, and I think all of you have received a copy of the brochure having to do with that, a most important component of the new Jefferson Center for the Arts that will certainly be an attraction for the masses of young people in Savannah. Our target group in this area will be the seven to eleven year olds and the mission of the interactive gallery at Telfair Jefferson Center --, which by the way is targeted to open in 2004 --, the mission of the interactive gallery at Telfair Jefferson Center for the Arts is an intriguing and provocative place where visitors create connections that excite and spark a deeper relationship with art. So, having said all of those profound things, so in your fund raising deliberations, please give serious consideration to some pennies between the bridges and the drainage and the parks to some pennies for cultural education and the interactive gallery. Thank you.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Ms. Hardwick. Ms. Hardwick said, if you have questions, I have a whole contingent of Telfair members, President Diane Lesko, Dr. Lesko is here and the President of the Board of Trustees Jack Nesmith is here, so if you have a question, just fire away. Thanks. Chairman Hair said, we'll ask for those at a later time. Thank you, Ms. Hardwick. Anybody here from Greenbriar?

Mr. Arnold Jackson said, good afternoon. I'm going to get some help today from Vanna White. Oh, I mean --, excuse me. She's quite as gorgeous as Vanna. Hello. My name's Arnold Jackson and I am the President of the Board of Directors at Greenbriar Children's Center. It takes a village to raise a child. Nowhere is that more evident than Chatham County where a motherless and fatherless children depend on public funding. With this in mind, this is why we are here today. For 52 years Greenbriar has been serving abused, abandoned and neglected children in Chatham County. We are seeking your continued support so we can continue this mission. Greenbriar houses over 400 children each year. These children include infants, toddlers, preteens and teenagers of all races. It's important that we provide these innocent victims with a safe nurturing environment. We're asking that you give us an opportunity to complete our master plan by awarding us \$1.2 million in the next SPLAST --, SPLOST extension, and this is our master plan and in this master plan we're going to install --, we're going to provide two new residential cottages which will increase our capacity from 40 children to 68 children. We're going to renovate all of our existing cottages, which is three, that's approaching 50 years old. We're also going to include site work that is going to involve some drainage improvement, outdoor park recreation areas and additional parking. Currently, we are midway through Phase One of our master plan and with your help we really started building last year. We completed construction on a much needed storage building, we also completed the design work on our residential facility and our campus site work. Last month we bid out and awarded both contracts to local firms --, local firms in the area. Construction of both projects is scheduled to start next year and our children are really excited. The campus is really buzzing. I mean, everybody is --, we are bouncing off the walls. Phase Two of our master plan we're planning to renovate the cottages, and this is going to involve upgrading internal finishes, which involves installing drywall over concrete masonry block and that's going to create a less institutional feel, and we're going to start doing some carpeting over vinyl tiles and replace windows to a more secure configuration. Our final phase, Phase Three, we plan to construct a multi-purpose facility and administration building. This project will add 3,000 square feet of dining space and meeting space and currently we have raised \$2.2 million for our capital campaign and nearly half a million of that fund came from the business community and the State of Georgia. But we need your continued support to meet our goals and this much needed five-year project, and we're asking that you give us the opportunity to complete our master plan by awarding us \$1.2 million in the next SPLOST allocation. The Board of Directors and the children of Greenbriar would like to thank each of you for your support of \$1.4 million from SPLOST over the last four years, and also please include Greenbriar and other human services and cultural arts programs in the next years' SPLOST. I have some handouts and I'll just leave them.

Chairman Hair said, just hand them to the Clerk there or Mr. Bungard and he'll make sure we get them. Thank you very much and your able assistant there. Battlefield Park. Scott [Smith]?

Mr. Scott Smith said, the Coastal Heritage Society is actually representing two issues. Can we address them both in the five minutes? Chairman Hair said, yes. If you can get them in five minutes, you certainly can. Mr. Smith said, okay. Chairman Hair said, three or four if you get them in five minutes. Mr. Smith said, first I'd like to ask the people that have come here to support Battlefield Park and our other issue, Fort Jackson, to stand or, if they're already

standing, raise their hand. Commissioner Murray said, might have some seats after you finish, eh? Mr. Smith said, and I want to thank these folks for coming and that doesn't include the folks that came this morning who thought it was at nine o'clock. My mistake. But Battlefield Park we've given you a detailed conceptual plan and the benefits for that and we are firmly backing the City's proposal for Battlefield Park and setting aside the beautification issues, the preservation of historic buildings, the interpretation of history and the education, set all that aside, we're talking about \$32,000,000 a year in economic benefit of a fully developed park. This is an incremental phase that should bring two components of the [inaudible] on line complete, there are actually three, and stabilizing other area and reduce the cost of future construction by halting deterioration. Fort Jackson is not as old a project as Battlefield Park. Battlefield Park has been an active City concern, community concern since the 1950's. Walter Hartridge is here, who has worked on it since the 1970's. There are others who have been involved since the 60's. It's definitely a decades long effort.

Mr. Smith said, Fort Jackson was begun in the late 60's through the effort of Judge Alexander Lawrence. It is now one of Georgia's 47 national landmarks and in an incomplete and partially developed state, it has served the community for the last 26 years under the Coastal Heritage Society. In that time we've had almost one million visitors. We have raised \$6,000,000 of operating support, none of it from the public. In fact, we don't even use our Society dues to operate Fort Jackson. It is a earned income tourism business and educational business and we've accrued some surpluses to protect those operations. It has never had operating support and we do not anticipate it, but it is not doing the job it could do for the community. If we could put the development in it that we're talking about, another \$1.1 million, then we can double its economic impact from about \$1.3 to \$2.6 million per year, and in the six percent sales tax that it would generate in the community, it would pay back its investment in less than ten years. So, as an economic concern, it is one that has very tangible and identifiable and measurable goals, and we'd like you to consider that for Fort Jackson, as well as the issue for Battlefield Park. We've brought bullets that encapsulate the benefits of both and I'll give them to staff. I'll point out that Fort Jackson is public property, it belongs to the people of the State of Georgia. It is not a private institution and the Society which has been operating as its stewards represents the entire State and the entire community. Of the people who stood, we have members of the Coastal Heritage Society, but other groups that are interested in both of these projects, heritage groups like the Sons of the Revolution and the Sons of Cincinnati and Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Confederacy, Sons of the Confederacy. We have a strong interest in Battlefield Park by the American Haitian community and we've been in communication with representatives of the Haitian American Historical Society in the development of Battlefield Park also. The issues are very diverse, they cover a lot of ground, an example being one of our supporters here today represents the trade unions of Savannah, some of which got their start in the railroad shops complex within Battlefield Park. There's a tremendous opportunity here and your assistance in helping develop it will be very much appreciated.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Scott [Smith].

Commissioner Murray said, let me get clarification please on something. Mr. Smith said, sir. Commissioner Murray said, on the Battlefield Park, I thought that was part of the City of Savannah's proposal. Mr. Smith said, it's [inaudible]. Commissioner Murray asked, so are you speaking on their behalf? Mr. Smith said, we're supporting that as a citizen group.

Chairman Hair said, I'm going to allow just about 30 seconds if any of you want to leave. You're certainly welcome to stay for the whole thing, but if you want to leave now and you don't want to disrupt the meeting, I'm going to allow about 30 seconds here for those of you that need to get back to work. [A number of members of the audience left the meeting at this time.] Chairman Hair said, okay, I'm going to reconvene the meeting at this time. I'm going to call on Hospice next. Does anybody -, Judy [Brunger], do you -, Hospice, who's going to be -?

Ms. Judy Brunger said, I think, Mr. Chairman, that we did distribute a fact sheet, a brief fact sheet and just, I personally, the Director, want to thank you for the opportunity to be here today and also to present to you our exciting construction project. I have the Chair of our Building Committee, Dr. Victor Marrero, who will be happy to answer any questions. I think the fact sheet speaks for itself, so I'll let that stand, but thank you so much. Chairman Hair said, thank you, Judy. Dr. Marrero said, the only thing I wanted to add to this is that the fact sheet doesn't tell you is the fact that we do about \$700,000 to \$800,000 a year of free charity work in Hospice Savannah, number one. Number two, it's the only nonprofit hospice, and, number three, is all of us sooner or later have to use it. Just remember that, and we want to continue to grow. There's a tremendous need for growth. Since I've been in this community for the last eight years, we have doubled the size of it and I can assure you in the next five years we'll have to quadruple the size of it. Thank you very much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Doctor [Marrero], and thank you, Judy [Brunger]. CAT, Scott [Lansing], do you want to make any -?

Mr. Scott Lansing said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't see you guys in a long time. I do want to thank you for -, I know the County has included some funds for purchase of buses and a retirement of some of our debt, and I want to express our appreciation. These buses are important to us. We'd gotten ourselves into a situation lately. We have 30-some buses, half our fleet, with close to a million miles apiece on them and those are hard buses are expensive to maintain and cost a lot of money, but we need to keep our capital replacement, vehicle replacements up and as long as we have funds to help reduce property tax burden on the taxpayers, it will help us greatly to do that, and we appreciate your support and anything we can do to defer that would be greatly appreciated.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Scott [Lansing]. Civil Rights Museum, anybody here? I see Helen [Johnson].

Ms. Helen Johnson said, I'm Helen Johnson and Reverend Grant, and we want to thank you so much for having us down here and of course the County Commission is so well known around our place, and so you could have had any of them down here to do what I'm going to do, especially Gregori Anderson and Mr. Abolt and Mr. Thompson, and we really want to say thank you, thank you so much. What we're doing is about to go into the second phase of our renovation, and you all know about that because you carried us through the first phase and we are ready to begin our archives and our library, and our first priority is the land to the north of the museum that we want to purchase that property in order to expand the museum, and you all have all of this, but I did leave it again so if you want to look over it again. If you have any questions, you can ask any of those people names that I called or you could even ask Richard Shinhoster, the Mayor, they're all very familiar with the museum, and thank you again so much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Ms. Johnson, we appreciate you being here. Fire Chiefs, Mr. Meadows.

Chief Wesley Meadows said, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. I had a 30-minute presentation set up, but I have wisely cut that to five minutes. Chairman Hair said, good idea. Chief Meadows said, I do appreciate the opportunity of being here today on behalf of the Southside Fire Department, but also the Chatham County Fire Chiefs Association. We have sent a list to the Commissioners, and I have just mailed a letter to you, and I'd ask that you would come by and visit me and let me show the reasons behind our list. The first thing I'd like to do is thank you for allowing us to participate in the SPLOST –, the last SPLOST. It has really been great, especially with America's homeland defense that needs to be taking place. One of the big things that I ask that you look at real hard and that is the dry hydrant system that we are proposing for Chatham County. Briefly, the dry hydrant system allows us to draw water from static water sources, such as lakes, rivers, ponds, things of this nature. As you know, water has become liquid gold and has become a valuable asset. With this not only in the unincorporated area and sparsely populated locations, it can be used and the budget we submitted which was \$4,500,000, and that is an estimate. It may be just a little less. I don't think it will be more. They recommend one dry hydrant for every three square miles. That puts it at about 150 to 160 hydrants. If our water systems become compromised, this would also benefit us during any disaster or things of that nature to bring water out for reasons other than potable water. So I ask that you look at that at great length. Number two, we're asking for \$2,500,000 to bring up our –, the Fire Training Center at Savannah Fire Department to be used by all the fire departments to put in there to upgrade that facility, \$2,500,000. We're asking for a million dollars for each fire department for the purpose of purchasing emergency equipment. This last time it proved very valuable for all departments concerned, and also \$30,000,000 for a joint 9-1-1 Center. Of course, that would be under your jurisdiction and your guidelines. When we speak about that, we're talking about the 9-1-1 from Savannah and the 9-1-1 from Chatham County to become one service. \$30,000,000 may not even touch that, but it would be a good start. That's coming from the Chatham County Chiefs Association. We feel that this benefits all of Chatham County, just not one municipality, but all of Chatham County and its citizens. The benefit to the dry hydrants would be immediate. The maintenance to the hydrants would be up to the local fire departments. They have to be maintained, that's back pumping and things of that. That will be up to the local fire departments. And after listening to some of the requests, I don't think ours is as exorbitant as I had anticipated, but I would definitely love to sit down with you and talk with each one of you and do our presentation, and I've sent you the information on that. I ask that you take time to meet with us and go over our request, and one other thing that I haven't heard anybody say that's on that SPLOST tax, I wish you would put a larger air conditioner in there for this room.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Chief.

Commissioner Rivers said, Chief, let me ask you a question. Chief Meadows said, yes, sir. Commissioner Rivers asked, on that 9-11 put in one, everybody on the same frequency, isn't that already proposed coming down through Congress and the money been appropriated for that if we tap into and so on? Chief Meadows said, yeah, the 9-11 –, what you're talking about there is a radio communication system. What we are advocating on joining the forces is right now if you receive a call through a portable telephone, it comes to the 9-1-1 Center in Savannah. If you're out on I-95, Savannah then rolls that call to Chatham County, Chatham County then dispatches the unincorporated area or, like Pooler or southside, it was like that. If you jointly put the system together, it would operate as an independent organization and not be controlled by so much by Chatham or the City of Savannah. It would be operated by a user board, which would be appointed just like your CAT system. It would be appointed to oversee the 9-1-1 operation. It would be separate from the police, separate from the fire, but it would be utilized maybe through CEMA, but it would actually dispatch emergency services. But right now in Chatham we are on the 800 frequency and all the departments currently have inter-operability with communications.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Chief. Chief Meadows said, thank you. Chairman Hair said, all right, that's the only list that I had. I know there's still a few more out there that want to talk about groups that I didn't have written down here. I'm going to ask if you'll come forward and identify yourself, identify the project that you're proposing and, again, please don't address a project we've already addressed. Okay? Make it a new project that we've not already heard about.

Mr. Cullen Chambers said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Cullen Chambers, I'm the Director of the Tybee Island Historical Society. I'm also on the Board of Directors of the Tybee Theater. That's the project I'm here to talk about today. I'm always intimidated. I have to tell you, I'm sweating like a –, nobody's business here when I'm before a group of people who have so many wonderful and worthwhile projects. Greenbriar is here asking you folks to invest in growing hope; Scott Smith is here asking you folks to invest in growing appreciation of a military history; Telfair is here for investing in growing appreciation of the arts; Hospice is here asking for money to invest in grown compassion and dignity. I'm here asking on behalf of the Tybee Theater to invest in growing money because tourism is the driving mechanism behind a large percentage of SPLOST funding. I fear to think what would happen if we did not have the tourist based economy in our community to provide better than 30% of these funds. That burden would fall solely on

the local taxpayers. It is our position and has always been our position at the Tybee Island Historical Society and it runs true with the Tybee Theater as well, if you give visitors something to come for, they will come back. If they come back, they will bring more money into the mechanism that provides funding for all these worthwhile projects and for the important infrastructure projects you have to –, had to decide where the priorities lay. The Tybee Theater is a historic building, but more importantly it's a historic opportunity to provide a venue on Tybee Island for a multi-purpose facility that will benefit not only the residents of Tybee Island, but the residents of the Islands as well that provides a more localized venue for special events, a cinema for performing and visual arts. We think that the Tybee Theater represents the last and best hope on Tybee Island. As you know, the property values of the Islands now exceed many entities' ability to purchase other properties. We have that property available for us. It's most important that we remember it takes money to invest money, and I think Michael Brown said it best at the last meeting, you want a mechanism for growing funds. If I can just take one more second, Mr. Hair, I don't know if this is going to work in this lighting or not, but very often you folks invest in projects and never get to see the end result, and I wanted to provide to you an opportunity to see where the last cycle of SPLOST money went when you so generously provided some funds for the Tybee Historical Society. And I will also tell you, Mr. Hair, that you challenged me the last time I was here. We asked for \$350,000 for the head keeper's dwelling and I told you if you provided those funds, I would go out and raise enough funds to complete the project, and I'm happy to tell you we did that. The funds provided by SPLOST took the head keeper's dwelling built in 1881 that looked like this [showing slides], we leveraged the SPLOST money and got funds for DOT and from the State of Georgia and our local funds and raised \$560,000 to transform the building from this to this [showing slides], from this to this [showing slides]. Very quickly, the rear of the building looked like that, today that [showing slides]. On the interior walls that looked like that were transformed to this [showing slides]. They looked like that to be able for us to interpret the lifestyle and living conditions of the keepers and their families on a barrier island. Over 100,000 visitors toured Tybee Island Life Station. All we want to do is take that seed money from SPLOST and apply it to the Tybee Theater so that we can transform that derelict shell of a building into something the entire community can use and put it on Tybee Island [inaudible]. Thank you very much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mr. Chambers. We appreciate your presentation. Who's going to be next?

Mr. Andy Kaplan said, good afternoon. My name's Andy Kaplan and I represent Coastal Georgia Soccer Association. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of thousands of youth and adult soccer players from throughout Chatham County, and when I say from throughout Chatham County, I include obviously the Cities of Pooler, Garden City, Tybee and Thunderbolt as well as the City of Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County. Just a real brief background to kind of bring you up to where and why we are making our request. A number of years ago, during the first round of funding, the County had talked to Coastal Georgia Soccer and told them they were interested in putting together the Soccer Complex that you have currently, and through input through Coastal Georgia Soccer and the support of Coastal Georgia Soccer Association, that happened and we have a beautiful facility here in our area. But since then a number of things have changed that we feel necessitate additional facilities or expansion to facilities, and there's two main things. Number one, even at that time soccer was the fastest growing sport in America. Even today that's still holds true. Every time the United States plays in the World Cup you see a huge spike in participation here in Chatham County, and we saw that this past Fall and we expect to see that again when women's national team plays in 2004. So the numbers have really increased since the complex was built. The second thing that's happened is that soccer here in Chatham County has become much more sophisticated. When I say that, back then for the most part adults and kids played in the Fall. They played between September and November and then that was it. Soccer is now is completely year round. It takes no time off and, as you can imagine, right now with it getting dark very early with the numbers of kids and adults participating, there's no place for them to participate. The complex needs time to rest after the Fall season, so it's close for a month, month and a half, while it's resting and the grounds are being rehabilitated, and it needs that. There's no place for anyone to participate. We have identified or had identified a proposal or request that we had forwarded to the Commission probably about six or seven months ago for SPLOST three main requests or three main areas that we felt needed to be addressed. They're separate, but all included in one proposal. The first one is on Wilmington Island. The Islands area of Wilmington, Whitemarsh, Talahi areas, kids coming from Tybee, make up a large portion of the participants in youth soccer. There are absolutely no adequate facilities for these kids to utilize on the Islands for soccer, for practicing soccer. Absolutely nothing. At times the players are able to utilize Brooks Park in the Fall –. Chairman Hair said, Mr. Kaplan, you have one minute. Mr. Kaplan said, when they utilize it in the Fall and it's fairly sufficient at that point. In the Spring during baseball they can't use Brooks Park. What they use is Concord Field. Concord Field is dangerous. The ground is not prepared sufficiently. We have a proposal request for renovations to Concord Field. I'll leave it at that, and I have a copy of the proposal that I'll leave here again so you can look at it again. The only thing I will say is I know with recreation projects one of the concerns is that you can make it, but then you've got to have a way to keep it up and fund it and you're not supposed to do that with SPLOST funds. Coastal Georgia Soccer has made the proposal that we would assist in paying for the upkeep of those facilities if we're able to do it through SPLOST funds similar to what we do in conjunction with –, we had to do some projects with St. Joseph's/Candler and Kensington Association. So I will leave these here and we certainly hope that we regain the support of the Commission and everyone here today.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mr. Kaplan. Mr. Kaplan said, thank you. Chairman Hair said, next group. Anybody else?

Mr. Richard Shinhoster said, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I'm here today representing Savannah Development Renewal Authority, and our purpose is to thank the Mayor and Aldermen for their efforts in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard Renaissance. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, we believe, is the gateway to Savannah –, one of the gateways to Savannah, and included in the City's proposal to beautify downtown Savannah includes the MKL Renaissance. We, at SDRA want to ask for your support of the City's request for funding in the areas of Battlefield Park, your continued support in the Phase One, Phase Two portions of the MLK Revitalization Plan, which

includes streetscaping. We think that is extremely important that MLK, which is a gateway, be beautified from River Street at least to Gwinnett Street in this first phase. We also ask your continued support for the Ellis Square Project, as well as the Neighborhood Improvement, especially Cuyler/Brownville. The City approved the MLK Plan. We have brought copies of it, and we leave it here and we certainly thank you for your support.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mr. Shinhoster. You're getting to be sharp dresser when you retired there. Mr. Shinhoster said, thank you. Chairman Hair said, as most of y'all know, he and I worked together for about 20 years.

Mr. Pat Locklear said, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, I'm Pat Locklear. I'd like to introduce Ms. Lewis, who's the Executive Director of the Tybee Island Marine Science Center. She will do the presentation. Thank you.

Ms. Kelly Lewis said, good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. As Pat [Locklear] mentioned, I'm Kelly Lewis, the Executive Director of the Tybee Island Marine Science Center, and I'd like for y'all to notice my State of Georgia pin here because I'm representing not only Tybee Island, but Savannah and the County of Chatham and the State of Georgia. The Tybee Island Marine Science Center is a nonprofit organization. Our mission is to promote appreciation of and conservation understanding of the marine ecosystem of Coastal Georgia through education and service. As you know, the primary focus of the Marine Science Center is hands-on education for the schools and the children of the County and the State of Georgia. We get children from all over the State of Georgia, but especially Chatham County. We also promote tourism and we offer programs for Girl Scouts and children of all ages. In 2002 we had over 26,000 visitors with 10,000 additional students coming to the Marine Science Center. Because we have had so many students, we are overflowing in the building that we are in. We are currently in the old police station and lifeguard station down in Tybee Island. We've expanded as much as we can and are overflowing. We would like to continue to expand by building a new building. We now have six staff and an excellent board of directors that we have the capability now to move to a new and larger building. In addition to a detailed letter, I have included a list of the staff and the board of directors and a business plan for 2003-2004, which we have given to you. The project that we're proposing would increase the current 1.5-floor building 3,000 square to a 3-floor, 21,000 square foot building. I won't tell you what I wrote in the letter, but I will say that what we need is \$45,000 —, hundred thousand dollars. We have requested some money from the City of Tybee and in the amount of \$600,000, and we have an additional \$50,000 from the 1998 SPLOST funding, which we thank you for, and that is secured in a certificate of deposit. When we get the additional \$450,000, we can begin this new project. I thank you for your consideration and we are extremely grateful for any provision that you can give to us.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Ms. Lewis.

Commissioner Murray said, let me clarify the numbers. You said, did you say \$45,000 or \$450,000? Ms. Lewis said, \$450,000. Commissioner Murray said, okay.

Commissioner McMasters said, I have a quick question. Chairman Hair said, okay. Commissioner McMasters asked, Russ [Abolt], can you help —, understand, the two Tybee requests, are we going to see them in the document as Other Capital Outlay, City of Tybee, or are they going to be identified as stand-alone? County Manager Abolt said, no, sir, that's your preference. Right now staff has gather, based on your direction, the public works projects, roads, drainage, things like that, and we have one category entitled Other. Chairman Hair said, they should be listed separately. County Manager Abolt said, you'd have to decide —. Chairman Hair said, they need to be listed separately as they've made their requests. County Engineer Bungard said, yeah, I've got them all and I'll list them all separately. Commissioner McMasters said, just so [inaudible] the City of Savannah Battlefield Park for coming within the scope of the City's request, but outside the City of Savannah coming individually. Chairman Hair said, that is correct. Commissioner McMasters said, thank you.

Chairman Hair said, thank you very much. Ms. Lewis said, thank you. Chairman Hair said, I'd like to recognize a friend and a former Commissioner, Julie Smith, in the audience. We appreciate you being here. Is David [Saussy] out there? I didn't see him. A former Commissioner. There he is. Commissioner Saussy as well. We appreciate y'all being here. Next group?

Ms. Burke said, hello and good afternoon. I'm Kathleen Burke, the Executive Director of Royce Learning Center and we have been around a long time. I'm sure a lot of you have heard about us. This is Connie Morgan, who's the Director of our project reading program, which is the single largest unduplicated effort to educate adults in literacy needs in this County. We deal with people with learning disability and other learning differences, and we put nearly 400 adults a year through our program. The City and the County both send us employees, and have for years. Now that the Georgia graduation test has been rearmed and made a little bit more difficult. We have many students who finished high school to come to us to pass the test so that they can get a high school diploma. Literacy is really our passion. We feel it's the building block of this County and our economic development because if we don't have a well-educated labor force, we cannot attract business and industry to this area, and the statistics since 1990 are worse than they were. We have over 40% functional illiteracy rate. That means that almost half the adults in this County cannot read the morning newspaper, and this is shocking and we are doing as a very small amount, we're doing a great deal of work in this community. We do collaboratives as any other nonprofit. We have a day school, Chatham Academy, for children with learning disabilities, and I know a lot of you have heard of us. I'm trying to think. We are asking for money to renovate our existing building, which was purchased in the mid-90's but was built in the 70's and is in need of some repairs. We're also asking for capital to build a new building on property that we already own behind us to become a community resource for people who have an interest in learning disabilities. This is educators, on the university level, the public school level, we work with the public schools a great deal and we work with all of the private schools and for physicians and medical community because there is no one place where they can go and get

information about learning disabilities, and where people who are supervising them, like electrical companies, trade unions can get ideas of how to work with the people they supervise. Many times they have learning disabilities and they really don't know how to deal with it, and they have many skilled laborers on the force that really could –, we could benefit. We could teach them how to work with those people. So on many levels we're out there struggling, and we're asking for capital money. We have staff in place to man the facility, but we don't have the capital funds. We did finish a capital drive last year, which we're going to in four years completely pay off the debt on our current building. So this is money to keep us going in the community and make us a better and larger community resource. Thank you.

Chairman Hair said, thank you very much. Next group?

An unidentified lady said, good afternoon. We're here to represent the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation and our present project director for the restoration will speak for the group, Gary Fuenfhausen, and Ms. Scott and Mr. Dawson are here to represent the Board of Directors.

Mr. Gary Fuenfhausen said, thank you. I first want to start by saying right now as we sit here there's a restoration project under way, hammers going, men working right now at the Beach Institute, and that if it wasn't for the funding that we received, we wouldn't have been able to do this project. The project that we are doing right now is \$100,000. By the end of the year we will have completed restoration of the basement where we will have our new offices and a new gift shop and also exterior of the building so that they'll drive by and actually see something from the outside that this money has done. What we're asking for is a continuation so that we can become independent so that we have a future way to make money, and the way that we make money is through our buildings by teaching people about the African-American experience here in Savannah and the coastal region, and so we find that from the report that was provided that the largest part of the money is for acquisitions of property, property around the Beach Institute, as well as acquisitions of collections. We have a couple of collections that we would like to have, but we currently need the funding to get those as well as the money to upkeep them. Lastly, I'd like to say that we hope that the Commissioners recognize that the Beach Institute is a cultural heritage organization and that we would like to see that the cultural heritage in the area continues through this funding. Thank you.

Chairman Hair said, thank you. We appreciate you being here. Any other groups?

Ms. Elizabeth Oxnard said, good afternoon. My name is Elizabeth Oxnard and I am here to represent the Savannah Symphony. The Savannah Symphony plays an immensely important cultural and economic role in our community and has done so for the past 49 years. According to recent studies, the Symphony generates \$5.8 million in business activities as well as over \$300,000 in tax revenue. Not only does the Symphony contribute to the economic fabric of our community, it also contributes socially. In any given year we touch approximately 400,000 through our symphonies and outreach programs. A number of our activities focus on our children. There are over a hundred performances held in our schools, several concerts are held in the Civic Center for elementary grades, and opportunities are there for young musicians through ensembles and scholarships. Today we are here to ask –, to request \$80,000 for computers. I have prepared a breakdown for each of you for this figure. Although this is not the largest number you will hear, we feel that it is vital to our success. We currently have what could best be described as a mishmash of donated used equipment that we have had for three to six years. One of our computers won't even roll over to the year 2000. We are currently working on the year 1903. A sizeable amount of time and money goes into keeping –, just keeping them running. As a result of our woefully outdated systems, customer service suffers and community perception to the office's ability to respond to requests is seriously damaged. The customers have no way to contact –, to connect any of our computers. We maintain three databases. Obviously this creates a certain amount of chaos, lost productivity due to each department entries that may already be in someone else's computer, and wasted money by spending –, by sending out multiple mailings. Although volunteers try to help eliminate duplications, it is difficult to keep up. Our ticketing is manual. With the proper computers and appropriate software, we could offer tickets over a website and increase our efficiency tremendously. In conclusion, the Symphony desperately needs help with our computers and software. We could take money from our programs, but we feel that our mission to bring music to as many citizens as possible is more compelling. We have a commitment to this community. We hope that you will continue –, help us continue our efforts with a great deal more efficiency by including this in this tax allocation.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Ms. Oxnard. We appreciate you being with us. Ms. Oxnard said, thank you. Chairman Hair asked, any other groups?

Mr. Lee Adler said, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, Mr. Remer Pendergraph and I are here to talk about continuing the works of Mr. W. W. Law. As you know, one of the most prolific lives of any Savannahian ended during the Summer when Savannah and Georgia lost one of its most renown historian, educator, preservationist and civil rights activist. Wesley Wallace Law, W. W. Law's contribution as a civil rights activist are as important to defining Savannah and Georgia as Martin Luther King, Jr., is to defining Atlanta and America. Under the leadership of Mr. W. W. Law, buses, taxi cabs and lunch counters and restaurants, hotels, schools, employment and housing were desegregated in Savannah. There were no markers designating African-American, historic sites and contributions, no museums and cultural centers, except churches, no historic properties on the National Register of Historic Sites in Savannah until 1976 when Law founded Savannah Yamacraw, the local branch of Carnegie [inaudible], the father of Black History Month, Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, ASALF, and [inaudible]. He served as President of that organization from its founding until his death on July 28, 2002. That organization organized the African-American preservation efforts in Savannah that led to the creation of Savannah's three African-American museums and cultural centers, the King-Tisdell Cottage Museum, the Beach Institute Cultural Center, and the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, which you helped on. The Negro Heritage Trail Tour, the Black Heritage Festival and the oldest repository of African-American history in Georgia, Laurel Grove Cemetery itself, was placed on the National Register

of Historic Sites as a result of the commitment of ASALF to preservation and historic documentation. We are here today to advocate for the inclusion of the Wesley Wallace Law Preservation and Research Center in the 2003 SPLOST of \$5,000,000. ASALF has a commitment from the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation to allow the Cottage to become the W. W. Law Preservation and Research Center. SPLOST funds are needed to construct an archive at the rear of the facility to the house and to continue the works of W. W. Law. The Center and the archive will be operated and maintained by funds raised through private sources. A committee is being formed to raise the funds and put in place an endowment to ensure the long term success of this project. Mr. Law never left anything to chance and never rested on his accomplishments, as we all know. In his last will and testament he does not allow for anyone else to rest on his accomplishment, but rather leaves all his worldly possessions, real and personal property, including but not limited to his papers, his music, his art, book collections, degrees, awards, certificates of recognition, memorabilia and artifacts, wherever located at the time of his death, is one body of work not to be separated out by any particular aspect. And he left that so Remer Pendergraph could care, control and continue his work for the benefit of his beloved Savannah through the ASALF. Stephen Tuck, Director of Studies and History of Camden University, [inaudible] College, wrote in his recently published book, *Beyond Atlanta*, the struggle for racial equality in Georgia from 1940 to 1980, the quote, "In contrast to Savannah, the Savannah movement stood out among the various local civil rights protestors in both Georgia and across the South primarily, because of its success. Georgia and the civil rights movement is Savannah's history. Georgia's most popular attraction is the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site." Chairman Hair said, one minute, Mr. Adler. One minute. Mr. Adler said, certainly. One more minute? Chairman Hair said, yes, sir. Mr. Adler said, I'll try. Mr. Law, however, believed that his beloved Savannah, where Georgia had its beginning, is a treasure trove of rich history and culture and is Georgia's top attraction. We can stop there, but it is one of the great things this City could do because he was one of the greatest people it ever had. Thank you very much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mr. Adler. Thank you. We appreciate y'all being here. Anybody else?

Mr. Robert Lee said, Dr. Hair, and members of the Commission, I'm Robert Lee, representing the Humane Society of Chatham-Savannah, and I'm coming today with a request for some assistance in maintaining our facility. The Humane Society serves all the residents of Savannah and Chatham County every day. If it were not for the Humane Society, the burden on County facilities would be greatly increased with the numbers of animals that in fact were directed to —, our citizens are directed to bring to us because there is no place for them. We help provide for public safety and health and many other things. We're proposing some additions and renovations to the facility on Sallie Mood Drive, a total of \$214,500. In the past five years, the Society itself has spent \$460 [sic] in improvements to the facility. We're not asking that the County SPLOST funds be used for all of these improvements. We're asking for a total from SPLOST of \$147,500. We do have the funds for the remainder of \$67,000. I'd like to leave the proposal with you and appreciate your consideration in your future distributions.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Mr. Lee. If you just give them to the staff there, we'll make sure we get it. Anybody else? Any other groups? If not, I want to thank everyone for being —. Oh, I'm sorry. If you still haven't spoken, please come forward to save time. If you'll come and sit on the front here so we'll know who's still left.

Mr. Julie White said, I just have a question. I'm Julie White, President of the Savannah Tree Foundation, and I'm wondering if there is available a list of road improvements slated for the next SPLOST and, if so, could —, might we have it. County Manager Abolt said, you sure may. Ms. White said, thank you.

Chairman Hair said, okay. Is that —, have you finished? Mayor Adams said, I want to ask a question. Chairman Hair said, just a second, Mr. Mayor. Dr. Thomas has made a request that we just enter into the record a request for the Yamacraw Arts Heritage Project. The gentleman that was supposed to be here, had an emergency at the last minute and we just want to make sure that that gets in —, enter in the official request even though he was not here to present it. Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Floyd Adams said, I want to thank everybody for having us here today, but I just want a procedural process. As you know, you requested us to get with staff and do —, are we're going to have an opportunity to get with staff after you make your decision so we can fine tune the requests before we have a vote on the 24th? Chairman Hair said, that's a very good question, Mr. Mayor, and I'm —, I haven't planned on, for the benefit of everyone. What we, the Commission, decided to do today is that the Commission will have a workshop, just Commission, just us, we'll have a workshop sometime between —, we did not set the date for that —, it will be some time between now and the 24th. Of course, it will be advertised as a regular meeting for the press, and then hopefully on January 24th we will make the final decisions and make the final vote at that time, and because —, I think it was you, Mr. Mayor, that brought up —, we had a lot of [inaudible], Mr. Brown brought up a lot of legal requirements we have to meet, we have to have this totally to the Board of Elections by 30 days prior, which is February 18th, and there's —, because of our advertising requirements and printing of the ballots and things like that, we have to really get it to them about 10 days prior to that, so we really pretty much have to wrap this up by the end of January, and —, so we agreed to do today to have a workshop between now and the 24th and then on the 24th make the final decisions. So that's the time line.

Commissioner Kicklighter said, observation. Chairman Hair said, yes. Commissioner Kicklighter said, I just want to state that for the people sitting here from the beginning until the end, I personally, I didn't hear one project that wasn't worthy of assistance, but if you've been here from the beginning until the end, you must realize that we would have to take in an additional \$300,000,000 to fund that and that still wouldn't allow the County to build one road or to dig one ditch, which we need to work on the infrastructure. So I just want to, while you're here, let you know that whoever, if you don't receive what you've requested, it's not out of us not appreciating what you're doing. Every request was a fine request and we'll take it into consideration, and we appreciate what you do.

Chairman Hair said, also, I want for the record, I've asked Mr. Abolt to put together a very brief, just a bullet list of the project and the amount and also have either the County Attorney or Mr. Bungard or Pat [Monahan], for someone to identify –, to ensure that the project is SPLOST eligible. There's a lot of things we've had requested today that I don't believe is SPLOST eligible. We just need to make sure of that and so –, but –. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Odell.

Commissioner Odell said, yeah. There are two projects which were not mentioned, which we didn't have anyone here today to speak on, which I'd like to have entered on the records. The first project is the Diversion Center. We have had information presented by our Sheriff and his cohorts regarding that project. The cost of that project would be \$5,000,000. The ultimate purpose would be for non-violent offenders to eliminate the costly expense of having someone who might owe \$1,500 on child support being placed in jail, losing their job, et cetera, and I think that the Manager has that information. I'd like to have that project entered upon the record. I'm sorry? Chairman Hair said, another project you said. Commissioner Odell said, yeah, and the second project is that we had a request from the Tatumville Neighborhood Association. This Commission built the Tatumville Neighborhood Association –, started. There were three phases. We did Phase One. They have submitted a proposal regarding Phase Two. They are not here today. That program needs to be on the agenda as far as that wish list. The cost being requested, thanks to Senator Regina Thomas, we were able to receive funds to do the architectural study to look at Phase Two. That's in the process, and we think that is a half a million dollars. That is what should be entered upon the record.

Commissioner Kicklighter said, and I'd like to enter something on the record also while we're doing that. The West Chatham YMCA approached me a while back. Because of the growth in the area, needing assistance in expansion there, but I told them that it was the will of this Board that we were sticking to roads, drainage and bridges. So, beings we're entertaining all this other, we need to also add to the list that the West Chatham YMCA is interested in some assistance also.

Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner Murray.

Commissioner Murray said, yeah, I'd like to fund all of Wilmington Island and the Fourth District at about \$20,000,000. Can we do that? What I'd really like to do is thank each organization and each municipality for being here and giving their presentations. It's obvious that there's a lot more requests than funds are going to be available for them, but I also would like to ask each of you regardless, we've got a tough task ahead of us to come up with how it's going to break down and what happens. After that decision is made though, I would hope that each one of you that has made those requests today, regardless of how that breakdown goes, will go out and help support the referendum, regardless of how it is, because if you look back over the years, the benefits to this community because of this sales tax has been terrific. We would not be anywhere near where we are today, any of the municipalities, a lot of the organizations, the County or anyone else. It does benefit all of us whether we like some of the projects or not, and I just request that after it's said and done that each of you will go out and still help support this referendum and make sure that we do get it passed for another five years.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Commissioner Murray. Chairman Hair recognized Commissioner McMasters.

Commissioner McMasters said, thank you. The one comment that I'd like to make is to acknowledge the Library's willingness to have an open dialogue, an open mind, understand the County's problems financially. We certainly understand yours, and I think that was a great example of open dialogue, working down towards an agreeable situation that will accomplish the objectives and assure taxpayers of some assurance that they won't be asked to do anything more than they wanted to do. So I heartily appreciate the Library staff and board members and their willingness to accommodate the County's financial situation and be flexible in your long range planning.

Chairman Hair said, thank you, Commissioner McMasters. I'd like to suggest to my fellow Commissioners that we set the workshop for 10:30 on the 22nd. Let's go ahead and set the workshop first and then –. The workshop for 10:30 on January –, Wednesday, January 22nd. Does anybody –, does that –. That's a Thursday –, I'm sorry, it's a Wednesday. I apologize. Wednesday at 10:30 in the Green Room.

Commissioner Odell said, I'd like to have this sent to all the judges so that they won't expect me in court. They have a \$14,000,000 request.

Ms. Julie White said, Julie White again of the Savannah Tree Foundation. I would like to read our mission statement in regard to the widening of Victory Drive. Chairman Hair asked, is this the same as in your letter to us? Ms. White said, no. Well –. Chairman Hair said, you've already written us a letter stating your position. Is that the same –. Ms. White said, no, this is –. Chairman Hair said, okay. Ms. White said, I just wanted to say that this was not arrived at quickly. It is the result of many weeks of study and careful thought by several our board members and our executive directors who have, as you say, written to and listened to the appropriate representatives of the City, County and MPC, and here it is:

The Savannah Tree Foundation is opposed to the widening of the portion of Victory Drive from Truman Parkway east to the Intercoastal waterway. STF has requested in writing to the City and the County that this project be removed from the 2003-2008 list of SPLOST projects. STF has also requested that the MPC remove this project from the CUTS long range plan. Our concerns are as follows: Victory Drive represents the model roadway long advocated by STF and the design standard to which the community should aspire, the four-lane, raised median design, which accommodates the canopy of trees both in the center median and on the sides of the roadway. Other examples of this model are found on Oglethorpe

Avenue, Abercorn Street, 37th Street, Columbus Avenue, and White Bluff Road. STF has further recommended and published in its State of the Trees Reports that “The City and County establish road design standards that maximize the opportunity for tree preservation and protection with a tree survey as a required first step in the design process and further to provide ample space for new planting sites through the use of a median and/or protected rights-of-way. The canopy effect exemplified by Victory Drive makes this roadway a defining element of the community’s character. Long before the Historic District helped to make Savannah a visitor destination, world famous Victory Drive was a popular Springtime destination because of its spectacular beauty with oak trees overhanging azalea landscaped medians. Removal of trees or degradation of the median for widening will compromise the characteristics which make it commendable. The loss of canopy trees in this segment of the road will be the precedent for removal of trees in other segments of the road in the future. Removal of canopy trees from roadways removes also the valuable functions performed by trees in locations where the benefits are most needed. Erosion and sedimentation control stormwater abatement through canopy [inaudible], reduction of glare for drivers provided by shade and buffers between noisy traffic and homes and businesses from the front of the street.

Ms. White said, thank you very much.

Chairman Hair said, thank you very much. I appreciate that. That concludes this meeting and we appreciate again everyone, particularly our City of Savannah colleagues and aldermen and the Mayor being here.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hair declared the meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

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APPROVED: THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2003

 DR. BILLY B. HAIR, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF
 COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

 SYBIL E. TILLMAN, COUNTY CLERK