

REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES

Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority

March 24, 2025

One Griffin Center Municipal Courtroom

100 S. Hill St, Griffin, GA

4:00 PM

Call to Order

Determination of Quorum

Chairman Newton Galloway presided, convening the meeting at 4:01PM

Board Members present were Bruce Ballard (Treasurer), and Cora Flowers. Also present were David Penland (Counsel), David Allen, Michelle Haynes, Eva Morales, Jeremy Straton and Christopher Blocker (Land Bank Authority Manager)

Approval of Agenda

Call to Motion to approve agenda made by Newton Galloway

Motion to approve agenda made by Cora Flowers.

Second by Bruce Ballard.

No further discussion and no objection.

Motion approved, 3-0.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes for the Regular Scheduled Meeting for January 27, 2025

Bruce Ballard seeking clarification in the section Authority Member Comments: “The city and county will provide the Land Bank Authority to do our work”. Newton Galloway “The Land Bank Authority has not purchased the property from the Tax Commissioner Tax Sale, the property was acquired as a credit bid” The word “property” need to be pluralized and the land bank never pays at a tax sale and there needs to be an explanation of a credit bid. There was no exchange of monetary funds. There needs to be more clarification in the minutes.

Motion to accept the minutes from the January 27, 2025 Regular Scheduled Meeting with the following revisions: “The city and county will provide the Land Bank Authority to do our work”; “The Land Bank Authority has not purchased the property from the Tax Commissioner Tax Sale, the property was acquired as a credit bid” needs to be changed from “property” to “properties” add a comma and include a brief explanation of what is a credit bid by Cora Flowers.

Second by Newton Galloway

No further discussion, no objection

Motion approved 3-0

Approval of Minutes for the Griffin-Spalding Land Bank Authority Board Workshop February 24, 2025

In regards to item #4 in the Minutes under Report of Finances, “What is the process for GIRMA Coverage?” An update will be provided later in the agenda.

Public Comments

At this time, the Chairman opens the floor to comments from public. Comments should relate to a specific agenda item. Comments related to property availability can be directed to Christopher Blocker, Land Bank Authority Manager at (678) 544-5292 and cblocker@cityofgriffin.com

Keith Carlisle, Riverdale, GA, addressed the board regarding his goal to build affordable housing in Griffin. He has been attempting to purchase properties from the Land Bank Authority for the last 3 or 4 years. Mr. Carlisle has not been able to purchase properties from the Land Bank Authority because there has not been a Land Bank Authority Manager in place. Mr. Carlisle is looking to purchase the properties or partner with the City of Griffin and give them to families who can afford them. The City of Griffin only has 30% homeowners. The name of his development company is Carlisle Construction Team and they have been in business for 25 years.

The Land Bank Authority will be discussing property disposition later in the agenda but the Land Bank Authority is not in the position to sell property.

Spencer Miller, Griffin, GA addressed the board regarding the existing purchase process. The process is taking awhile to purchase a property. As a Griffin resident, he is looking to develop properties for his family and invest in the community where he lives. Mr. Miller has a property under contract with the Land Bank Authority.

No further public comments.

Regular Agenda

1. City of Griffin Economic Development Update provided by Jeremy Stratton, Economic Development Director

Jeremy Stratton, Economic Development Director, with the City of Griffin addressed the Board regarding the economic development programs and updates in various areas of the city. The Economic Development Department helped Thelma Wilke with identifying the former Haisten Hospital for redevelopment. The Downtown Development Authority can acquire property for economic development. There are several businesses in the downtown district that have received façade improvement grants from the Downtown Development Authority.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority has the same board as the Downtown Development Authority. The Urban Redevelopment Authority can issue revenue bonds for companies seeking financing. The urban redevelopment authority is going to propose a map to the City Commission. Apex is building multi-family units in close proximity to the hospital. There are 2 Marriott hotels under development in downtown Griffin. Thomaston Mills is under development where they are expected to deliver 80 1-2 Bedroom apartment units for rent by Summer 2025. Thomaston Mills is using the Downtown Development Authority for financing.

A new grocery store in Griffin has a property under contract.

The Economic Development department is looking to partner with the Land Bank Authority to assist a developer with property assemblage.

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Authority will have similar powers to the Downtown Development Authority. The URA will have the ability to do residential investment financing for bonds. The city appointed the DDA as the URA. It is essentially an overlay district.

2. Consider adoption of the FY 2026 Budget to be presented to City of Griffin and Spalding County Board of Commissioners (Blocker)

Christopher Blocker, Land Bank Authority Manager, reviewed the line-item budget with the board members. The Land Bank Authority Budget recommended by Land Bank Authority Manager is \$281,885.50

Under the Inter-Local Agreement, the Authority shall establish its budget annually and submit to the City and County for review, but as to apportionment of funding, Article XI, Section (A)(2) says “The budget documents submitted to the City and County shall list and describe total requests made to the City and County and shall state the portion requested from each Party, which shall be equitably apportioned based on reasonable principles of tax equity to avoid double taxation.” Historically, the expenses for the Land Bank Authority would be divided 50%-50% and the payments would go into the Land Bank Authority account. Four options were given to present the equitable apportion.

In the past, the city and county have contributed payments to the Land Bank Authority in various amounts. The county has generally paid on a monthly basis, the city has usually paid on a quarterly basis. This payment schedule is similar to other authorities in the city and county.

There needs to be two separate votes for the budget. The second vote necessary is a recommended division. The land bank has historically been sustained based on the properties sold. Due to lack of properties sold in the last few years, the Land Bank Authority account is low. Based on the four options presented, the assessed value seems to be the one option that that would meet the requirement of the IGA.

The city has an internal account in which current land bank expenses have been paid including Land Bank Authority Manager salary. The city pays for expenses for other joint authorities such as airport authority and archives; the city then invoices the county at the end of the fiscal year for their portion of the expense. The city nor county did not deposit funds to the Land Bank Authority in FY 2022, FY 2023 and FY 2024. Until the hiring of a manager there have been no expenses for the city or county to reimburse. The equitable split between the city and county reimbursement of the expenses should not be subjective, the reimbursement of the funds should be policy and procedure. The City of Griffin and Spalding County Boards of the Commissioners need to agree to the appropriate apportion.

There are questions regarding the current year budget legal retainer and the expected legal fees for fiscal year 2026.

No further questions or discussion regarding the FY 2026 budget.

Call to motion consider adoption of the FY 2026 Budget to be presented to City of Griffin and Spalding County Board of Commissioners by Newton Galloway.

Motion to approve draft FY 2025-2026 Budget as presented on the budget document excluding any details about the apportionment between the city and county by Cora Flowers.

Second by Bruce Ballard

No further discussion, no objection

Motion approved 3-0.

The Land Bank Authority is not privy to all of the information regarding the Land Bank Authority finances from the City of Griffin. There is a concern about future audits. It is unfair to task the Land Bank Authority with a budget and appropriate apportionment but not be able to see the outcome of the budget. The Land Bank Authority should be able to get an accounting for everything that has been paid by the city for the Land Bank Authority operations and identify an invoice amount that the city would bill the county for Land Bank operations. The Land Bank Authority does not have that information currently. The Land Bank Authority needs to know how much money it has in its account to know how much money the Land Bank Authority has to spend.

The Land Bank Authority has been tasked with maintaining its own set of accounting books. There is no suggestion that Inter-Governmental Agreement shall be revised. The city should not be solely managing the financial accounting for the Land Bank Authority.

Motion to direct the Land Bank Authority Manager to present the Griffin-Spalding Land Bank Authority Draft Budget for FY 2025-2026 to the governing authorities so known as the City of Griffin and Spalding County Board of Commissioners for their consideration of an appropriate split of the Land Bank Authority budget and payments to the Land Bank Authority by Cora Flowers.

Second by Newton Galloway

No further discussion and no objection,

Motion approved 3-0.

3. Consider the establishment of an ad-hoc strategic planning and policy committee to recommend mission, goals and review existing policies, programs and existing agreements

Christopher Blocker recommended to the Land Bank Authority Board Members the creation of a committee to recommend mission, goals as well as review existing policies, programs, applications and agreements.

Motion to approve the establishment of an ad-hoc strategic planning and policy committee to recommend mission, goals and review existing policies, programs and existing agreements by Cora Flowers.

Second by Bruce Ballard

No further discussion and no objection

Motion approved 3-0

- 4. Update the Board on closings, redeemed property, right of redemption foreclosure status, contracts pending, request for properties awarded but not under contract (Penland and Blocker)**
- a. Update on existing contract with Builders Inc. regarding 522 Meriwether St. (Penland and Blocker)**

David Penland has spoken with Thelma Wilke with Builders, Inc. and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. The Georgia Trust is willing to approve the Haisten building, 522 Meriwether St, even though this building is not in exact compliance with their preservation agreement. The Georgia Trust is only interested in the exterior of the building and are willing to execute an affidavit. The Georgia Trust is waiting for the preliminary drawings from Ms. Wilke.

Ms. Wilke needs to rezone the property. Ms. Wilke has not submitted building plans nor a zoning application to the City of Griffin. Michelle Haynes has not been in contact with Ms. Wilke. The Georgia Trust will submit a waiver affidavit stating the façade is compliant and the preservation agreement will remain in place. There is no timeline for her applying for rezoning.

b. Update on outstanding contracts (Blocker)

Christopher Blocker updated the board on outstanding contracts. Christopher read an email stating the following: "...my records show that you have entered into an agreement with the Griffin-Spalding Land Bank Authority to purchase a parcel. Please respond back via email by 5:00 PM on Friday, April 11th to let me know if you are still interested in purchasing this property. Also, please be sure to forward your agreement that you signed with Ms. Virginia Church prior to her departure in January 2022 as well as any correspondence related to the purchase. The Griffin-Spalding Land Bank Authority will honor the sale price in your agreement. It is likely that the Title Search and Foreclosure of the Right of Redemption has not yet been completed. When you reply to me (cblocker@cityofgriffin.com), I will take the steps to process your agreement so that we can close in a timely manner." "Once the Foreclosure of the Right of Redemption is completed, you will be notified by me. You will have 60 days to close the sale or your contract will be void and the property will be returned to the Land Bank Authority inventory. Additionally, if you have a side lot application/award, you will be required to have the two lots surveyed and possibly a variance from the city or county. The Griffin-Land Bank Authority will not be accepting applications for new property acquisitions, we are only looking to serve existing agreements at this time."

Christopher has sent the email to the outstanding contract holders three times since January 29th and has received 24 replies. Christopher has ordered title from Beck, Owen & Murray to begin the Foreclosure of the Right of Redemption process.

Christopher will be notify the contract holder for 122 Ella St. shortly.

5. Consider the Land Bank Authority Manager Property Disposition Workplan to identify a target area for development (Blocker)

- a. Consider title clearance for Land Bank Authority properties for within the target area for development in the City of Griffin for future private acquisition
- b. Consider title clearance for Land Bank Authority properties for potential conveyance to the City of Griffin for future development
- c. Consider title clearance for Land Bank Authority properties for potential conveyance to Spalding County Board of Commissioners
- d. Consider the development of a Request-for-Proposal for properties within the Land Bank Authority target area

During the Board Workshop scheduled on February 24, 2025, the board concluded that there should be a target area for development. There are 36 parcels in the proposed target area for private investment on Belle St, Ellis St, Hallyburton, W. Quilly, Williams and N 13th St. This proposed area represents about 10% of the Land Bank Authority inventory.

Motion to approve the 36 parcels shown on target area map as shown by the Land Bank Authority Manager as the target area for redevelopment by Newton Galloway

Second by Cora Flowers

There may be ramifications once the Land Bank Authority identifies a target area including the price of properties within the area. There are currently developers looking to acquire other properties in the target area and in its vicinity. There needs to be a thorough gameplan put together and there needs to be further details, analysis and discussion regarding the properties. There should be a phased approach and further discussion.

There is a belief that the Land Bank Authority was going to bank properties as a part of a greater development plan. There should be analysis of which properties had the best sale potential. There needs to be further policy for developers and criteria for sales.

The Land Bank Authority should consider placing a moratorium on sales other than outstanding contracts. Individual transactions have not generated the results that the Land Bank Authority would like to see. It may be premature to set a target area.

Motion withdrawn to approve the 36 parcels shown on target area map as shown by the Land Bank Authority Manager as the target area for redevelopment by Newton Galloway

Second withdrawn Cora Flowers

Motion to table Item 5 until the April 28th Regular Scheduled Meeting by Cora Flowers

Second by Newton Galloway

No further discussion and no objection.

Motion approved 3-0

6. Consider the nuisance abatement of 152 Second Ave. Griffin (County) to include demolition and disposal services up to the amount of \$20,000.00 (Blocker)

The Land Bank Authority currently owns 152 Second Ave. Griffin, GA. A county citizen complained to the Land Bank Authority about this property. Luke Fletcher, Chief Code Enforcement Officer informed Christopher that this property is a nuisance. Christopher notified Dr. Steve Ledbetter about this nuisance. This property is under contract but Christopher has not received a response from the outstanding contract holder. The lot is 0.76 acres.

Motion to deny the nuisance abatement of 152 Second Ave. Griffin (County) to include demolition and disposal services up to the amount of \$20,000.00 pending reconsideration after the close of the existing contract deadline of April 11, 2025 by Cora Flowers.

Second by Bruce Ballard

The foreclosure of the right of redemption has been completed.

In the city nuisance program, the city places a lien on property for nuisance abatement.

This property is an illegal dumping site.

Motion approved 3-0

7. Presentation to the Land Bank Authority Board regarding Land Bank Manager Activity (Blocker)

In the last 30 days, Christopher Blocker has toured three properties developed by Three Bulls Capital on W. Broad St. and had a subsequent meeting with them. Christopher has also met with Elizabeth Ray from Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is looking to acquire new property on the east side of Griffin. He has also received over 120 phone calls, emails, text communications regarding properties in the Land Bank in total.

8. Consider approval and adoption of new logo for Griffin -Spalding Land Bank Authority (Blocker)

Add "County" to the logo. The green lettering logo is preferred.

Motion to approve and adopt the new logo for the Griffin-Spalding Land Bank Authority presented with the changes to the spelling of "authority" and adding the word "county" given approval via email consensus by Land Bank Authority Board Members by Cora Flowers,

Second by Newton Galloway.

No further discussion and no objection.

Motion approved 3-0.

Report of Finances

Treasurer and Land Bank Authority Manager will update the Board on expenses, monies received and any other pertinent financial information

1. Presentation of current financial statements (Ballard)

Treasurer Bruce Ballard presented LBA Bank Statements for month ending February 2025. The Land Bank Authority started the month of February with \$7,240.00. Checks and expenses cleared in the amount of \$382.91. The Land Bank Authority ended the month of February with a balance of \$6,771.69. There was one check outstanding from November 2024 payable to Metro Southern Media that had not cleared. In the public fund checking account there was no change in the account which started and ended at \$17,994.01.

Motion to approve financial statements as presented by Newton Galloway,

Second by Cora Flowers.

No further discussion and no objection.

Motion approved 3-0

2. Presentation of the City of Griffin FY Budget 2025 (Blocker)

Christopher Blocker presented the LBA City of Griffin FY 2025. There is \$91,165.40 remaining in the budget .

3. Update the Land Bank Authority Board on FY 2023 & FY 2024 audit with Mauldin & Jenkins (Ballard & Blocker)

Christopher and Bruce have begun the process for the FY 2023 and FY 2024 audits with Mauldin & Jenkins. Christopher and Bruce have met with M&J audit staff. There have been over 370 documents uploaded to the portal provided by M&J to complete the audit. Mauldin & Jenkins needs a spreadsheet to see which properties were sold in FYs 2023 & 2024. The minutes need to be reviewed to determine which properties were disposed in those fiscal years.

4. Discussion regarding Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency Renewal GIRMA 2025-2026 (Ballard)

Upon discussion with GIRMA and the City of Griffin Attorney Drew Whalen, the Land Bank Authority though it was possible to be covered under the City of Griffin policy. It was determined that the Land Bank Authority should maintain its own GIRMA coverage because the properties are in the name of Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority. The Land Bank Authority should receive a proposal for the cost recommendations for next year in the first week of April.

Authority Member Comments

No Authority Member comments

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Newton Galloway

Second by Bruce Ballard

Meeting adjourned at 6:25