

**REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES**

**Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority**

**April 28, 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 4:02PM*

Board members present were Bruce Ballard (Treasurer) and Pamela Sutton. Also present were David Penland (Counsel), David Allen, Michelle Haynes, Eva Morales, and Christopher Blocker (Land Bank Authority Manager)

**Approval of Agenda**

*Motion to amend agenda to move item 6 to item 1 made by Newton Galloway.*

*Second by Bruce Ballard*

*No further discussion and no objection.*

*Motion approved, 3-0*

**Approval of Minutes**

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

*Motion to approve Amended Minutes from the Regular Scheduled Meeting for January 27, 2025 made by Bruce Ballard*

*Second by Pamela Sutton*

*No further discussion and no objection.*

*Motion approved, 3-0*

Approval of Minutes for the Regular Scheduled Meeting for March 24, 2025

*Motion to approve Minutes from the Regular Scheduled Meeting for March 24, 2025 made by Bruce Ballard*

*Second by Pamela Sutton*

*No further discussion and no objection.*

*Motion approved, 3-0*

## 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](mailto:cblocker@cityofgriffin.com)*

Pastor Erica Brooks who resides in Griffin, addressed the Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority Board regarding 309 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Pastor Brooks and her husband have been maintaining this property. Pastor Brooks have been working the City of Griffin Public Works Director, Mariza Eller and her staff to maintain this property and keep this property presentable. Pastor Brooks is interested in purchasing 309 N. 10<sup>th</sup> St when it becomes available. Pastor Brooks is requesting permission to use this property to host a community event and revival for her church ministry. Pastor Brooks is seeking to give away food, clothing and essential items for an upcoming event in July 2025.

Christopher Blocker stated that he has spoken with Pastor Brooks regarding the use of this property and advised her to address the board to make her request. There is concern about potential liability for the use of property in case of potential accidents. Due to this being a tax sale property, the GSCLBA does not have the right to enter the property until the Foreclosure of the Right of Redemption is complete. If the GSCLBA or a third party were to enter this property without permission from the owner it would be considered trespassing. Pastor Brooks request was denied.

Rosa Rutherford-Lemons of College Park, Georgia addressed the board inquired about the side lot program for a lot on 205 N. Brawner St. Ms. Rutherford-Lemons has had the side lot surveyed. Mrs. Lemons has received a contract from David Penland and is looking to schedule a closing for the property on N. Brawner Street. Staff from Beck, Owen & Murray will be reaching out to Mrs. Rutherford-Lemons to schedule a closing in the near future. The right of redemption has been completed.

## Regular Agenda

1. **(Formerly Item 6)** Update the Board on closings and 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)

David Penland has spoken with Thelma Wilke earlier this month of April. Thelma Wilke is waiting on architectural drawings to be completed. Once the drawings are received by Builders Inc. they will be submitted to the City of Griffin as a package for the rezoning application. The drawings will also be submitted to the Beck, Owen & Murray to provide them to Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

522 Meriwether Street was listed for sale by the previous owner. David Penland has spoken with the listing agent and provided him with the deed book number and the listing will be removed. David recommends that Christopher Blocker be registered with the FANS system with the Georgia Superior Court Clerks Cooperative Authority to be notified about any properties filed in the deed books to help to prevent fraud. David has received 17 titles as requested by Christopher for individuals looking to close their existing contracts. Christopher and David have an upcoming meeting to start the Foreclosure of the Right of Redemption process on 17 Properties. The FANS system is not property specific.

- b. Update on outstanding contracts (Blocker)

Christopher has notified existing outstanding contract holders about the April 11<sup>th</sup> deadline regarding closing existing contracts. The total number of contract holders is unclear however there are 44 properties that are looking to move forward with their contracts.

- c. Contracts expected to close (Blocker)
  - i. 122 Ella St

Christopher Blocker has executed the agreement for 122 Ella Street. Christopher is working with staff at Beck, Owen & Murray regarding scheduling the closing. The contract holder has 60 days to close the contracts or the contract will expire.

Michelle Haynes has spoken with the contract holder for 122 Ella St. The Land Bank Authority has given Michelle permission to demolish this property because this property is a nuisance. Michelle will work with the new owner to seek a permit for demolition or rehabilitation.

- ii. 86 Hillcrest Ave

Christopher Blocker has executed the agreement for 86 Hillcrest Ave. Christopher is working with staff at Beck, Owen & Murray regarding scheduling the closing. The contract holder has 60 days to close the contracts or the contract will expire.

- iii. 428 N. 13 St

Michelle Haynes expressed to the Board that the applicant for 428 N 13<sup>th</sup> St use will not be allowed by zoning. The applicant is looking to build a community garden and the zoning only allows for a single-family home.

*Motion to authorize Christopher Blocker, Land Bank Authority Manager, to complete the Georgia Superior Clerks Cooperative Authority FANS registration made by Newton Galloway.*

*Second by Bruce Ballard*

*No further discussion and no objection*

*Motion approved, 3-0*

- 2. Consider rescheduling Regular Scheduled Meeting from Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday May 21<sup>st</sup> at 4PM.

*Motion to approve rescheduling Regular Scheduled Meeting from Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday May 21<sup>st</sup> at 4PM by Newton Galloway.*

*Second by Pamela Sutton*

*No further discussion and no objection*

*Motion approved, 3-0*

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

Christopher Blocker met with Spalding County Commissioners Finance Committee and County Administrator, Dr. Steve Ledbetter to discuss the line item budget and the equitable split for the Land Bank Budget. Christopher has also met with Jessica O'Connor and city finance staff to discuss the budget and equitable split. It was determined that the City of Griffin will invoice Spalding County Board of

Commissioners for their portion of the Land Bank Authority expenses. The total budget presented was \$322,553.49

The intergovernmental agreement needs to be revised. The intergovernmental agreement states the GSCLBA needs to prepare a budget and recommend an equitable split between the city and county. The equitable split is based on the tax assessed value of the property in the land bank authority inventory. The budget is not consistent with the intergovernmental agreement. The IGA states the Land Bank Authority would receive payment from the city and county. The intergovernmental agreement needs to be revised. The GSCLBA would need to adopt the 2012 Land Bank Authority act.

David Penland and Christopher Blocker is directed to provide a report regarding the inconsistencies between the budget and IGA and provide a proposal to amend the IGA.

*Motion to approve FY 2026 Budget Amended to be presented to City of Griffin and Spalding County Board of Commissioner and direct Christopher Blocker and David Penland to provide a report regarding the inconsistencies between the budget and IGA and provide a proposal to amend the IGA made by Newton Galloway*

*Second by Bruce Ballard*

*No further discussion and no objection*

*Motion approved, 3-0*

4. Presentation to the GSCLBA Board regarding current activity for Griffin Area Habitat for Humanity by Elizabeth Lynn Ray, Executive Director

Elizabeth Ray presented to the Board regarding the Griffin Area Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is a mortgage holder at no interest for their properties. Habitat for Humanity uses volunteer labor and donations which allows them to sell the houses at a low affordable cost. The individuals that Habitat for Humanity serves have an annual income between \$25,000.00 and \$60,000.00 per year. Habitat for Humanity sells housing to people based on need, substandard living conditions, income and willingness to partner. Habitat for Humanity has two programs which are minor repairs and home building. There is a lot of focus on seniors and disabled individuals. Habitat for Humanity hold 43 active mortgages. Habitat relies on donations. This local chapter is led and operated by volunteers.

Habitat is looking to acquire buildable property from the Land Bank Authority. Elizabeth expressed an interest in 531 and 533 E. Tinsley St. Habitat is looking to improve an entire block. They are currently rehabilitating a property on N. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 539 E. Tinsley. Habitat has acquired property from the Land Bank Authority previously. 531 and 533 E. Tinsley St parcels have been acquired by the Land Bank Authority as donations. The lots are 0.12 acres and Habitat of Humanity is looking to consolidate these lots. Habitat for Humanity may not need a variance. They are willing to consider architectural standards set by the historic mill village overlay district.

*Motion to adjourn by Newton Galloway*

*Second by Bruce Ballard*

*Meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm*

Chairman Newton Galloway directed Christopher Blocker include the remaining items on the agenda on the May 21, 2025 Regular Scheduled Meeting Agenda.

5. Presentation to the GSCLBA Board regarding county nuisance program and current GSCLBA owned property by Officer Luke Fletcher
6. Consider adoption of a moratorium for sales agreements for current properties in the Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority Inventory (Blocker and Flowers)
7. 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 potential conveyance to the City of Griffin for future development
  - b. Consider title clearance for Land Bank Authority properties for potential conveyance to Spalding County Board of Commissioners for future development
  - c. Consider title clearance for Land Bank Authority properties within the target area for development in the City of Griffin for future private acquisition
  - d. Consider title clearance for Land Bank Authority properties for potential conveyance to the Griffin Area for Humanity
  - e. Consider title clearance for Land Bank Authority properties deemed a nuisance by City of Griffin or Spalding County
8. Consider website proposal for new website designed by Metro Southern Media in the amount of \$8,000.00 (Blocker)

### **Report of Finances**

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

1. Consider Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency Renewal GIRMA 2025-2026 in the amount of \$4,375.00 (Ballard)
2. Presentation of current financial statements (Ballard)
3. Presentation of the City of Griffin FY Budget 2025 (Blocker)
4. Update the Land Bank Authority Board on FY 2023 & FY 2024 audit with Mauldin & Jenkins (Ballard & Blocker)

### **Authority Member Comments**

### **Adjourn**