

**REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES**

**Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority**

**August 25, 2025**

**One Griffin Center Municipal Courtroom**

**100 S. Hill St, Griffin, GA**

**4:00 PM**

**Call to Order**

Determination of a Quorum

Meeting called to order by Bruce Ballard, treasurer, presiding, convening the meeting at 4:02 PM

Board Members present were Cora Flowers and Pamela Sutton. David Allen, Michelle Haynes, John O'Neal, attorney with Beck Owen & Murray and Christopher Blocker (Land Bank Authority Manager) were also present. Vice Chairwoman Patricia Beckham arrived at 4:06 PM and Chairman Newton Galloway attended the meeting virtually via Zoom.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Motion to approve agenda made by Cora Flowers.*

*Second by Pamela Sutton.*

*Motion approved by 3-0*

**Approval of Minutes**

Approval of Minutes for the Regular Scheduled Meeting for June 23, 2025

*Motion to approve minutes for Regular Scheduled Meeting for June 23, 2025 made by Cora Flowers.*

*Second by Pamela Sutton.*

*Motion approved by 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)*

No public comments were given.

## Regular Agenda

1. Presentation to the GSCLBA Board by Square Foot Ministry by Emily Morrison, Executive Director (Blocker)

Emily Morrison presented to the GSCLBA Board. Square Foot Ministry (SFM) is a non-profit homebuilder that has built home and community facilities over several years. Their mission is to assist low-income individuals gain access to safe, quality and affordable housing. SFM seeks to help families gain generational wealth. The organization was established in 2002. SFM has built over 20 homes in Griffin over the years and housed over 100 people. SFM is responsible for gaining over \$2.6 Million in equity for families. SFM has increased property values by \$3.6 Million.

SFM Clients are low-income individuals. Their mortgage is typically \$400.00 to \$600.00 per month. The cost to build a home is \$150,000 and the mortgage is \$35,000. The construction typically takes 3 months to complete the home. The SFM program requires a 1-year lease to own to ensure financial capability and literacy. SFM maintains a silent second mortgage on their homes for a period of 10 years to prevent non-compliance. Their focus is to build neighborhoods rather than singular houses. Square Foot Ministry has built several homes on Lynn Lane. Square Foot Ministry receive land donations from local churches, Habitat for Humanity and other groups in a community. Square Food Ministry is seeking a property donation from the Griffin-Spalding Land Bank Authority. SFM has identified the properties located at: 809, 810, 811 Pamela Dr.; 421, 425, 428, 507 and 509 N. 13<sup>th</sup> St; 815, 822 826, 830 Williams St. There are low-income guidelines based on federal standards to determine who qualifies for the home.

*No board action was required or taken.*

2. Presentation to the GSCLBA Board by Metro Southern Media by James Maddox, Principal (Blocker)

Metro Southern Media has partnered with the Griffin-Spalding Land Bank Authority Board Members since 2021. Metro Southern Media designed and launched the current website as well as provided monthly maintenance and website security. James Maddox presented the existing and refreshed website design to the GSCLBA. James showed designs for the Meetings Page, Properties Page, Contact Us and Policies Page to show an enhanced user experience. The application forms will also be included on the website. The current website is too wordy and not user-friendly. The photos on the website should be reflective of City of Griffin and Spalding County and photographs of success stories from the Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority. Metro Southern Media is able to do photography services for the Land Bank Authority. The goal of the website should be authentic and professional. Metro Southern Media would like to start building existing pages. The Land Bank Authority can request updates monthly as needed.

*No board action was required or taken.*

3. Consider a request by GSCLBA to the City of Griffin Board of Commissioners and Spalding County Board of Commissioners to adopt the 2012 Georgia Land Bank Act and amend the current Interlocal Agreement.

The Land Bank Authority is in need of an updated Interlocal Agreement as discussed in previous meetings. There have been several issues related to the financial management for the Land Bank Authority. The Land Bank Authority is out of compliance with the current laws. There are more board members than allowed by the Georgia Land Bank Act of 1990. Another benefit of the 2012 law allows for greater financial autonomy because it allows for a land bank to retain the new taxable proceeds. Once the boards adopts the act, the board can request an amended interlocal agreement from the respective governments. Christopher Blocker met with Jessica O'Connor to discuss the request. David Penland met with the county manager to discuss the request. The current operations are not reflective of the current interlocal agreement. The city manager and county manager would be in favor of the amended agreement.

*Motion to approve request by GSCLBA to the City of Griffin Board of Commissioners and Spalding County Board of Commissioners to adopt the 2012 Georgia Land Bank Act and amend the current Interlocal Agreement by Cora Flowers.*

*Second by Patty Beckham*

*Motion approved 5-0. Newton Galloway voted in favor via Zoom.*

4. Update the GSCLBA Board on the Cancellation of the Purchase and Sale Agreement for 522 Meriwether St and consider the disbursement of the earnest money held by Beck, Owen & Murray. (Penland and Blocker)

The purchaser for the former Haisten Hospital located at 522 Meriwether St has decided to cancel the purchase and sale agreement and no longer pursue the zoning action required for the property. The purchaser expressed concerns about the owner-occupancy requirement of the Land Bank Authority, financing, marketability for the properties, safety and crime. The purchaser has completed pre-development/due-diligence work with the City of Griffin related to zoning. The Land Bank Authority believes that there is a need for economic development incentives to market this property in the future.

*Motion to disburse earnest money held by Beck, Owen & Murray to purchaser, Builder's Inc., for the cancellation of the Purchase & Sale Agreement for 522 Meriwether St by Patty Beckham.*

*Second by Cora Flowers.*

*Amended Motion for the Land Bank Authority Manager to provide a written request to Beck, Owen & Murray to disburse earnest money held by Beck, Owen & Murray to purchaser, Builder's Inc., for the cancellation of the Purchase & Sale Agreement for 522 Meriwether St by Patty Beckham.*

*Second by Cora Flowers.*

*No further discussion.*

*Motion approved 5-0. Newton Galloway voted in favor via Zoom.*

Jeremy Stratton, Economic Development Director with City of Griffin will be attending the ICSC trade show in Atlanta on October 15<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta. There will be developers present. Jeremy feels this property would be attractive to potential developers during the show and the Land Bank Authority should work with Electric Cities of Georgia to create a marketing flyer for the property. This property will need to be competitively bid via a Request for Proposal. The downtown development authority has worked with ECG with marketing. Christopher to bring the marketing flyer for review in September.

5. Consider the issuance of a Request for Proposal for property maintenance for Land Bank Authority owned property in the City of Griffin (Blocker)

The City of Griffin has received numerous complaints from residents and elected officials regarding lawn maintenance for Land Bank owned properties. The City of Griffin Public Works Streets Department currently maintains the land bank lots within the city limits. The land bank lots outside of the city are not maintained at all.

*Motion to approve consideration of the issuance of a Request for Proposal for property maintenance for Land Bank Authority owned property in the City of Griffin specifically to address property maintenance issues to include grass cutting and minor issues by Cora Flowers,*

Lawn Maintenance was included in the Land Bank Authority FY 2026 Budget Request in the amount of \$60,000.00. Per discussion with Land Bank Authorities in Georgia, typically land bank authorities maintain the lots prior to foreclosure of the right of redemption.

*Second by Newton Galloway via Zoom*

Currently, the public works department has maintained the lots as needed and not on a regular schedule. There is no code enforcement requirement for grass height.

*Motion approved 5-0. Newton Galloway voted in favor via Zoom*

6. Consider the payment of costs related to execution of Quitclaim Deeds by Claudia Callaway for properties located at 808 Meriwether Street, 911 Meriwether Street, 1005 Meriwether Street, 1009 Meriwether Street, 304 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and 1114 W. Solomon Street. (Penland)

Claudia Callaway is the executor of the estate for the previous owner of the properties. Claudia is willing to submit Quitclaim Deeds to the Land Bank Authority if the land bank would cover the legal expenses in the amount of \$100.00. The condition of these properties is unknown; these properties were awarded by the Land Bank Authority years ago. The Quitclaim Deeds serve as a substitute for the Foreclosure of the Right of Redemption.

*Motion to approve the payment of \$100.00 related to the execution of Quitclaim Deeds by Claudia Callaway for properties located at 808 Meriwether Street, 911 Meriwether Street, 1005 Meriwether Street, 1009 Meriwether Street, 304 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and 1114 W. Solomon Street by Cora Flowers*

*Second by Pamela Sutton*

*Amended Motion to approve the payment of \$100.00 and related fees for the execution of Quitclaim Deeds by Claudia Callaway for properties located at 808 Meriwether Street, 911 Meriwether Street, 1005 Meriwether Street, 1009 Meriwether Street, 304 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and 1114 W. Solomon Street by Cora Flowers.*

*Second by Pamela Sutton*

*Motion approved 5-0. Newton Galloway voted in favor via Zoom*

7. Consider the Execution of Quitclaim Deeds by the Griffin Spalding County Land Bank Authority to rescind improper tax sales at 815 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Rehoboth Road (PIN 125 02013A) (Penland)

There is an improper description included in the Tax Sale Deed which may be an issue with future title clearance for new owners. The Land Bank should not convey this property. There is a recommendation by David Penland to return this property to the previous owner. There was an insufficient legal description in the tax sale deed.

*Motion to approve the execution of Quitclaim Deeds by the Griffin Spalding County Land Bank Authority to rescind improper tax sales at 815 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Rehoboth Road (PIN 125 02013A) by Cora Flowers.*

*Second by Patricia Beckham*

*Motion approved 5-0. Newton Galloway voted in favor via Zoom*

8. Consider the development of an RFP for the Purchase and Sale of 809, 810 and 811 Pamela Dr. (Blocker)

The properties on Pamela Dr. have been foreclosed successfully as of July 2025. The board should consider the development of an RFP for the Purchase and Sale of 809, 810 and 811 Pamela Dr.

*Motion to approve the development of a Request for Proposal for the Purchase and Sale of 809, 810 and 811 Pamela Dr made by Patricia Beckham.*

*Second by Newton Galloway via Zoom*

*Second by Newton Galloway rescinded due to virtual attendance*

*Second by Pamela Sutton*

The new policies need to be developed prior to the release of an RFP. An RFP would be premature. The Board has not collectively decided that the board would release properties via RFP rather than an application. The ad-hoc application in years prior was not successful.

*Motion denied 2-3. Patricia Beckham and Newton Galloway via Zoom voted in favor; Bruce Ballard, Cora Flowers and Pamela Sutton denied.*

9. Update the GSCLBA Board regarding Land Bank Authority Board Policy Survey and the discussion of the results (Blocker)

Christopher Blocker presented the Board Survey results to the GSCLBA Board. The survey was released in May 2025 and closed in July 2025. The survey was released to city and county elected officials, board members, executive staff, director level staff and community partners. There were 23 responses. The results of the survey will be used to create new policies. Many of the survey respondents believe the land bank should not continue with the owner-occupancy requirement. There should be different disposition strategies for the city and county properties. Christopher Blocker should prepare a draft policy revision for the board to consider. The Land Bank Authority should not abandon the owner-occupancy requirement. The owner-occupancy requirement stated in the interlocal agreement might have been too stringent.

10. Update the GSCLBA Board on closings, contracts pending and properties to be redeemed (Blocker and Penland)

- a. Contracts expected to close (Penland and Blocker)
  - i. 317 N. Hill St
  - ii. 309 E. Tinsley St
  - iii. 504 & 508 E. Tinsley St
  - iv. 207 Central Lake Cir
  - v. 526 Lane St
  - vi. 110 Davidson Cir
  - vii. Davidson Dr
  - viii. 1734 Turnberry Dr
  - ix. 818 Hallyburton St.
  - x. 428 N.13<sup>th</sup> St (Side Lot Program)
  - xi. Newnan Rd (Side Lot Program)
- b. Rights of Redemption Foreclosures in Process (Blocker):
  - i. 47 Dundee Lake Cir
  - ii. 428 E. Tinsley St
  - iii. 103 Central Lake Dr.
  - iv. 411 Northside Dr.
  - v. Northside Dr. (PIN: 108A07024)
  - vi. 214 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> St
- c. Certificates of Titles Requested (Blocker)
  - i. 1102 Parkview Dr
  - ii. 1360 N Ext 9<sup>th</sup> St.
  - iii. 601 W. Quilly St.
  - iv. 611 W. Quilly St.
  - v. 645 W. Quilly St.
  - vi. 825 W. Quilly St

- vii. 720 Hallyburton St
- viii. 721 Hallyburton St
- ix. 808 Hallyburton St
- x. 819 Hallyburton St.
- xi. Hallyburton St (009 04011A)

Christopher Blocker presented information regarding the properties listed above. The properties listed on W. Quilly and Hallyburton were included in the target area.

### **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)

No treasurer report given.

2. Presentation of the City of Griffin FY Budget 2026 (Blocker)

Christopher Blocker presented the remaining budget balances in the City of Griffin FY 2026 Budget. There is a \$218,770.00 budget remaining.

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

Christopher Blocker and David Penland met with and corresponded to Mauldin & Jenkins regarding the audits. There were some outstanding legal documents that were needed related to real estate transactions. Once the documents have been provided the audit should be complete shortly. Mauldin & Jenkins audits the City of Griffin accounts and Land Bank Authority accounts therefore there should be no issues with managing and tracking finances. The issue with the varied accounts should be rectified through the updated interlocal agreement.

### **Authority Member Comments**

Cora Flowers requested detailed descriptions on the meeting packet item cover letters

### **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn by Cora Flowers

Second by Bruce Ballard