



Miles Parks signed to play football at Fort Scott Community College and was joined by his family, friends, and teammates. Family members attending the signing were (front, l-r) Anthony Parks, his father; Parks; Melissa Parks, mother; Letrellis Glaze, cousin; (back, l-r) Eloise Ferguson, grandmother; Roslyn Jones, aunt; Corliss Parks, aunt; and Dexter Parks, uncle.

Miles Parks signs to play football at Fort Scott Community College

Miles Parks is the latest Red Devil who has signed to play football in college, as he will attend Fort Scott Community College in Kansas this fall. However, this particular signing comes as the fulfillment of not only the personal dreams of the young defensive end, but also the dreams of the entire Parks family. Playing football in college honors the memory the late Austin Parks, elder brother to Miles, who still holds a very special place in their hearts.

"This means a lot to me because it's something my brother always wanted to do, so I'm doing this for his memory - there are big dreams ahead," Parks said. "I'd like to thank my family, the coaching staff, and God above. I'm excited for the opportunities that are coming."

While he will continue playing the position of defensive end at Fort Scott, Parks also anticipates tackling new obstacles and seriously pursuing his education.

"Miles has an exciting opportunity ahead of him. It also comes with challenges and the opportunity to extend his education," Red Devils Head Coach Lee Chomskis said. "Miles has shared with me that maybe he'd like to follow in

his family's footsteps and go into real estate, so furthering his education certainly helps in that endeavor. We're excited for Miles and the Parks family."

With the entire Red Devil team behind him, Parks has also found infinite support from his family and friends who all believe in him and believe that his future will be filled with success.

"We're just proud parents," Melissa Parks, his mother, exclaimed. "I'm overly excited. I'm so proud of him and I see great things coming and I see him going to a higher level than even he expects."

"I feel great - this gives him an opportunity to take his talents to the next level," Anthony Parks, Miles' father, concurred.

As a former Red Devil and collegiate player himself, Anthony explained, "It's been a great opportunity to see [Miles] play and to enjoy the game and relive the game through him."

"I had the opportunity to teach and be taught and understand how to do things in life going forward. [It's great] having the opportunity to see him sign this scholarship and help navigate the waters he will be travelling down," he said.

In memory of Austin, the Parks

family established the organization #44 Strong. With many relatives and friends in attendance of Miles' signing ceremony, each one wore shirts and other paraphernalia that brandished the blazing "#44 Strong" emblem - Miles himself donning his #44 Red Devils jersey.

"His older brother had a dream of going to a higher level to play college ball, but his dream was interrupted because he was diagnosed with cancer his senior year, so he had to fight the cancer battle," Melissa explained.

"He gained his wings in 2018, so in order to keep his legacy alive - which is #44 Strong - [his] dad played as #44, Austin played as #44, and Miles got to the chance to play as #44. Dad wanted to go pro, Miles is going to play on a college level, but Austin is going to retire #44 here at Lincoln County High School."

Since the jersey #44 is being retired to immortalize Austin at LCHS, Miles explained that "it feels good to be the last one to wear it."

While the number is retired, however, the memory will live on - through Miles and all those who carry Austin with them into the future.

Bus drivers speak out on behalf of colleague

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janitorial, maintenance, and bus mechanic staff from Universe for \$4,126.20.

Light also informed the board that it is in need of a district legislative delegate and alternate to attend GSA Delegate Assembly meetings. Those interested should let either Light or Chairman Jason LeRoy know so the board can vote on them for this position.

As a part of her financial report director Kaye Bufford noted that local ad valorem taxes have gone up and are at 86 percent of the budgeted amount. Last year at this time it was at 82 percent, "so we're ahead of where we were last year as far as budgeted figures go," she said.

According to Bufford, 58.33 percent of the fiscal year is complete with revenues at 72.35 percent and expenditures at 54.96 percent, both of which look good and in-line with the budget.

"We talked about last month that we're going to do an amended budget to cover some of these, but it looks like we're going to need to increase our budget on our intangible reporting tax and real estate transfer tax as well as our TAVT title ad valorem tax," she said. "Apparently, a lot of people are buying cars and selling property, so that's a good sign that the economy is improving."

Cash in the bank was at \$3.9 million and the fund balance was recorded at \$3.46 million.

"Everything looks in good shape," Bufford said. "We should meet all of our budget figures."

SPLOST collections for the month of January were \$71,965.01, which was yet another high month for collections compared to last month and last year.

Bufford noted that the SPLOST balance is at \$443,096.03, and the bond tax balance is at \$985,100.09 with \$1,428,196.12 available for future bond and interest payments.

The director added, however that there are enough monies to cover the April payment which totals \$1,141,862.50.

There were no changes to the capital projects, the director said, noting there are \$52,542 available for use.

As a part of public participation, three individuals spoke on behalf of bus driver Robert James Leverett in regard to his alleged firing. However, it was noted after an executive session concluded that a formal resignation was submitted by Leverett to the board prior to the meeting.

Speaking first was Debra Partridge, long-term bus driver for the Lincoln County school system.

"We're just here concerning the firing of Robert James Leverett, that he put his hands on a child," she said. "I've been driving a bus for 33 years, but you can't drive a bus without putting your hands on a child at some point - it's just going to happen. If they have a pencil you have to take away from them that they're stabbing other kids with, various things. If they won't sit down and you have to stop the bus and make them sit down, you've got to touch the child."

"We don't hit them or beat them, we don't hurt them at all, but we love them and we're trying to keep them safe," Partridge added. "We need some back up here, we need some support on this. If it's that simple to lose your job I might as well be done. I've been driving too long for that."

Following Partridge, bus driver Shannon Penrow spoke, explaining, "My number one rule [for the kids] is to obey the bus driver, that's what they are supposed to do number one."

"My [personal] number one rule when I was hired, was I was to get those children from home to school safely and back from school to home safely and if I did not, I'm the one who's in trouble," she continued. "It is not right if

there is one child there disrupting the bus. Then the child needs to be taken off and tried on another bus, and if that can't be then the parents need to deal with it, that's not our job," she said. "Our job is to make sure they're safe. I love my job, I love my children, but I will make sure that they're safe, and if that means that I can't touch my children, they're having a seizure, or they need me to come and comfort them, then I need to be fired."

Last, Sharon Bryan, another driver, spoke.

"I don't know if y'all realize that we have a really good group of bus drivers here, that really try to take care of our kids," she said. "I have two little girls that hug me every day before they get off the bus, am I going to tell them 'you can't hug me because our board and our school system says we can't put our hand on you?' The day that I have to do that I quit, because I respect my kids, they respect me," Bryan said.

"When I have problems, I call the parents, and most of the time that takes care of my problems, but y'all have got to start supporting us when we do have these problems and not listening to some of these parents out here, because those kids are going to go home and tell them whatever. You need to support the bus drivers or you're not going to have any," she added.

After Executive Session, Leverett's resignation was deliberated upon by the board, as Chairman LeRoy asked for a motion to accept it.

No motion to accept the resignation was made by any of the board members, which was then deemed "dead" by LeRoy.

Furthermore, the board voted to hire Sarah Gilbert, Courtney Hoffman, and Stacey Wolski as substitute teachers.

The next meeting of the board of education will be held Tuesday, March 9, beginning at 7 p.m. at the board office.

Permit issued for glamping site

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nor of the State of Georgia.

The two political parties would no longer have a selection under the new act.

Moving on, Chairman Walker Norman recognized retired Library Director Shirley Dawkins, presenting her with a plaque in recognition of her 26 years of dedicated service and leadership to the Lincoln County Library.

Dawkins thanked commissioners for their continued support of her over the years.

After adjourning the meeting, Norman opened a public hearing on a request for a special use permit by WITT, LLC Operating Manager Shayne S. Stuart of Tucker, Georgia, for The Glamp Inn (TGI).

The proposal described "glamping" as "upscale camping," the equivalent to a five-star hotel suite surrounded by the openness of nature. The glamping sites at TGI will come with inside full bathrooms, some will have plunge pools, hot tubs, lake views, garden views, and horses.

Phase one of the project will offer 10 sites in year one, a five-acre lake, and direct dockable access to lake/river for fishing and other water activities. Each structure will have queen- or king-size beds, on-suite bathrooms, and view options. Some will have air and heat. Each site will be self-contained.

The other phases would come on-line following the success of phase one. Future phases could include an eight-room club/guest house with pool, restaurant/banquet facilities, indoor shooting range, and horse ranch.

Public Works Director Roby Seymour explained to commissioners that they would be approving two separate special use permits, one for each of the properties. Once approved it is up to the landowner/developer to apply for the other necessary permits for water, septic and infrastructure.

Once issued the landowner would have one-year to begin construction or the property would revert to its original zoning of residential.

Mike Zahner, an adjacent property owner, voiced his concern over the project's timeline and possible failure.

Seymour explained that if the initial phase fails, the owners would be instructed to remove everything and return the property to its natural state. However, there is no timeline further phases in the project. "The developers may have provided a timeline for expansion, but the permit does not," Seymour said. "If phase one continues to operate successfully there is no timeline on the expansion."

Commissioners approved the special use permits with the following conditions: approved water system from EPD; approved septic system from health department; buffer requirement; permit to begin construction to be obtained within one year; and all phases of construction to come before commission for approval.

The contract between LC Paws and Lincoln County was renewed for another year. The \$8,000 provided to LC Paws is paid out in quarterly allotments of \$2,000.

Augusta Southern Tree Removal provided the low bid of \$5,000 to remove the four oak trees and two Leland cypress trees in front of the courthouse. The bid includes grinding the stumps and hauling away all the debris. According to Seymour, the company is licensed, bonded, and insured.



Retired Library Director Shirley Dawkins was presented a plaque by the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners for her 26-years of dedicated service to the library.

In previous discussions on the oaks and cypress trees, Norman informed commissioners about the deteriorating condition of the oak trees and the liability issues they pose to the county. The two cypress trees were originally planted at the courthouse for Christmas events and have grown too large. The county does intend to plant more appropriate trees as replacements.

In other business commissioners heard and approved the second reading of the Timber Ordinance.

• Signed a Data Release Authorization and Service Agreement with Utility Management Services, Inc. and authorized the release of the county's information from Rayle EMC and Georgia Power.

UMS will provide an off-site contingency-based utility bill audit and analysis, identify savings, and reduce power provider costs. There is no upfront fee for the service, UMS will split any savings the county receives from the audit 50/50.

• Commissioners signed two resolutions. The first is a resolution to adopt the Georgia Department of Transportation Procurement Policy for the Procurement, Management and Administration of Engineering and Design Related Consultant Services.

The second was a resolution to re-affirm service member participation in the Sourcewell National Purchasing Cooperative.

• Agreed to act as the fiscal agent for Family Connection.

• Approved the Certificate of Distribution between the City of Lincolnton and Lincoln County relating to Local Sales and Use Taxes. The City of Lincolnton will receive 20 percent and Lincoln County will receive 80 percent. Percentages are based on population.

• At the direction of Finance Director Ernie Doss, commissioners approved an amendment to the 2020 Condemned Fund Budget.

• Agreed to pay the invoice from the CSRA Regional Commission

for Lincoln County Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan in the amount of \$18,000. The funds will be reimbursed by the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency.

• Courtney Elam Davis was approved to serve a four-year term on the Lincoln County Development Authority for District 1.

Commissioners reviewed departmental reports including the Office of Emergency Services report which included calls answered for the month of January, at 121 transports, 55 EMS NPU's, eight fires, one rescue, and one EMR, with an average response time of 11.2 minutes.

The Lincoln County Recreation Department report indicated that due to the increase in COVID-19 and high-risk health issues, basketball season was cancelled. Justin Ashmore and Steven Warrant have agreed to be the active president and vice president of the Lincoln County Little League for 2021. The new basketball goals have been delivered and will be installed in the spring.

The Lincoln County Planning and Zoning Code Enforcement Office report showed that three building inspections were performed, 60 permits were issued, two residential permits were issued, and two violation notices were issued during the month of January totaling \$6781.43.

The Public Works Water Report for the month of January showed a total of \$84,102.84 collected, which covers water, sewer, and available customers' setup and tap fees. The department installed three service connections and repaired six leaks on the system; performed continued maintenance on hydrants, valves, and meters; and performed maintenance on the Savannah Bay and Pointe Shores water systems.

The next regular meeting of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners will be held at 6 p.m., Thursday, March 11

Total COVID-19 cases now 470

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lincoln County increased to 470 with sixteen reported fatalities as of the 3 p.m. posting by the Georgia Department of Public Health on Monday, February 18.

Neighboring Wilkes County lists 634 cases and sixteen deaths, McDuffie County reports 1534

cases and 34 deaths, Columbia lists 10,251 cases and 138 deaths, and Richmond County reports 18,099 cases and 318 deaths.

Also reported as of 3 p.m. Monday, 792,509 Georgians had tested positive for COVID-19. Of those patients, 53,403 were hospitalized, and 13,997 deaths have been reported.



Continued partnership feeds 200 plus families

Over 200 families were provided with bread, eggs, canned goods, leg quarters, pollock filets, and swiss cheese slices during the Lincoln County Food Pantry's drive-through mobile food distribution on Thursday, February 11.

The partnership between the LCFP and Lincoln County School Superintendent Dr. Samuel Light continued last Thursday with the addition of child-friendly "blessing bags" filled with a variety of fresh fruit, juice, and other tasty treats provided by Light. The continued partnership provides a little something extra to families with children.

The next scheduled drive-through food distribution will be held February 25 at the Firetower Road location from 10 a.m.-noon.