



**Columbia County Board of Commissioners
Public Hearing on House Bill 581 Homestead Exemption
Minutes of Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Evans Government Center Auditorium, Evans, Georgia**

Present at the meeting included:

Chairman Douglas R. Duncan, Jr.
Vice Chairman Alison G. Couch
Commissioner Connie M. Melear
Commissioner James E. Allen, III
Commissioner Michael W. Carraway
County Manager Scott Johnson
Deputy County Manager Matt Schlachter
Deputy County Manager Glenn Kennedy
County Attorney Chris Driver
County Clerk Patrice R. Crawley

Division Directors:

Scott Sterling – Planning Services
Paul Scarbary - Development Services
Chief Jeremy Wallen - Fire Services
Michael Blanchard - Technology Services
County Staff

Members of the Media and Public

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Duncan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. INVOCATION

Chairman Duncan gave the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

County Manager Johnson led the pledge to the American Flag.

D. ROLL CALL / QUORUM

Chairman Duncan declared a quorum with five commissioners.

E. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Duncan presented the agenda.

F. DISCUSSION OF THE IMPACTS OF HOUSE BILL 581 HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

Chairman Duncan made a statement concerning House Bill 581. He also announced that these public hearings are being live-streamed and that an additional public hearing will be held on February 18 at 6:00 p.m.

County Manager Johnson explained the details of House Bill 581. The law imposes a strict deadline for the Board to make a decision, which is why three hearings have already been scheduled. No decision has been made, and the board is seeking citizen input.

G. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PARTICIPATION

(G1) Opening of the Public Hearing

Chairman Duncan opened the public hearing. Brenda Heidman, Tom Himber, Lee Muns, John Kennedy, and Perry Burton provided their opinions and asked questions about House Bill 581.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Duncan adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Douglas R. Duncan, Jr., Chairman

Patrice R. Crawley, County Clerk