



**Columbia County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes of Tuesday, August 5, 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
Kyle Titus - Engineering Services
John Luton - Community Services
Chief Jeremy Wallen - Fire Services
Michael Blanchard - Technology Services
Stacey Gordon - Water Utility Services
Steven Prather – Facility 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

Commissioner Allen 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 present.

E. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(E1) July 15, 2025

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2025 Board of Commissioners meeting as presented. Commissioner Allen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Duncan presented the August 05, 2025 agenda.

G. SPECIAL RECOGNITION, PRESENTATION, AND / OR DECLARATION

Chairman Duncan welcomed former Commissioner Don Skinner.

H. CONSENT AGENDA

In accordance with Columbia County Code of Ordinance Section 2-81(6), the following items were voted on collectively. Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H1) Community and Emergency Services Committee

(H1a) Animal Services Donations

Approved the acceptance of the donations to Animal Services in the amount of \$3,200 for the medical care of shelter animals; 2250301.433019.01713.

(H1b) Independent Contractor Agreement with Musco Sports Lighting, LLC. to retrofit Blanchard Woods Park sports fields lighting with upgraded LED fixtures

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with Musco Sports Lighting, LLC. to retrofit Blanchard Woods Park sports field in the amount of \$912,823; 28120.38.015.

(H2) Public Works and Engineering Services Committee

(H2a) First Amendment to Water Tower License with Verizon Wireless located at HWY 232

Approved the First Amendment to the water tower license with Verizon Wireless located at Hwy 232.

(H2b) Change Distribution Department Administrative Coordinator Position Number 439 to Full-Time

Approved the change of the Distribution Department Administrative Coordinator position number 439 to full time.

(H2c) Independent Contractor Agreement with Sensus USA, Inc. for Meter Data Transfer

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with Sensus USA, Inc. for the meter data transfer in the amount of \$9,840; 511.5120.601090.

(H2d) Independent Contractor Agreement with Southern Civil Solutions, Inc. for the Turnberry Lane Drainage Project

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with Southern Civil Solutions, Inc. for the Turnberry Lane Drainage Project in the amount of \$18,500; 5215200.601100.

(H2e) Correction to Bid # 2025004-BID3313 and Contract # 2025-3234 with Reeves Construction Co. for the Hardy McManus Rd Widening Project, PI# 0013704

Approved the correction to the contract with Reeves Construction Co. for the Hardy McManus Road widening project in the amount of \$40,651,012.27; 91329.24.015.986.

(H2f) Georgia Department of Transportation Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement for the Installation of CCTV Cameras at the Intersection of US 221/SR 47 (Appling Harlem Road) @ I-20 (SR 402 Carl Sanders Highway)

Approved a Georgia Department of Transportation Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement for the installation of CCTV cameras at the intersection of US 221/SR 47.

(H2g) Final Plat for Rabbit Run Farms Phase 1

Approved forwarding to the August 05, 2025 Board of Commissioners Consent Agenda the acceptance of all rights of way and improvements to include easements as depicted on the plat prepared by Jachens Land Surveying, Inc. dated July 01, 2025 for Rabbit Run Farms, Phase 1 contingent upon staff's approval.

(H2h) Final Plat for Tillery Park Section III-A

Approved the acceptance of all rights of way and improvements to include easements as depicted on the plat prepared by H&C Surveyors, Inc. dated June 02, 2025 for Tillery Park Section III-A contingent upon staff's approval.

I. DEBATE AGENDA

(I1) Unfinished Business

(I1a) Public Works and Engineering Services Committee

(I1a1) Ordinance 25-05 Amending Chapter 78, Taxes, Article V, Occupational Tax and Licenses, Section 149 When Tax Due and Payable - *Second Reading*

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Second Reading of Ordinance 25-05 Amending Chapter 78, Taxes, Article V, Occupational Tax and Licenses, Section 149 When Tax Due and Payable. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1a2) Ordinance Number 25-06 Amending Chapter 34, Environment, Article I, Grading, Section 34-1 Major Site Grading - *Second Reading*

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Second Reading of Ordinance Number 25-06 Amending Chapter 34, Environment, Article I, Grading, Section 34-1 Major Site Grading. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1a3) Resolution 25-21 Adopting the Fee Schedule for Alcoholic Beverage Licenses - *Second Reading*

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Second Reading of Resolution 25-21 Adopting the Fee Schedule for Alcoholic Beverage Licenses. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1a4) Resolution 25-22-Planning Services Fee Schedule Revision - *Second Reading*

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Second Reading of Resolution 25-22 Planning Services Fee Schedule Revision. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2) New Business

(I2a) Development and Planning Services Committee

(I2a1) RZ25-07-01, Conditional Use for Massage, 4210 Columbia Road, Building 15, Tax Map 079 Parcel 156, 0.23 +/- acres, and currently zoned PDD (Planned Development District).

Commissioner Allen made a motion to approve the request for the conditional use for massage for property located at tax map 079 parcel 156 Building 15. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a2) RZ25-07-02, Change of Conditions, 102 Colonial Road and 303-311 South Belair Road, Tax Map 073A Parcels 154-159, 2.86 +/- combined acres, and currently zoned C-C (Community Commercial).

Applicant Saj Lakhany commented on the conditions that the Planning Commission put on the request. Commissioner Melear made a motion to deny the request for the change of conditions for property located at tax map 073A parcels 154-159. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. Chairman Duncan, Vice Chair Couch and Commissioners Melear and Carraway voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Allen opposed the motion. The motion carried.

(I2a3) VA25-07-01, Variance to section 90-98 list of lot and structure requirements, 307 South Belair Road, Tax Map 073A Parcel 156, 0.46 +/- acres, and currently zoned C-C (Community Commercial).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to deny the request for a variance to section 90-98 for property located at tax map 073A parcel 156 to reduce the front building setback to 90 feet from the centerline of South Belair Road. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. Chairman Duncan, Vice Chair Couch and Commissioners Melear and Carraway voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Allen opposed the motion. The motion carried.

(I2a4) RZ25-07-03, Rezoning from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to S-1 (Special), 4933 Hereford Farm Road, Tax Map 067 Parcel 017G, 1.8 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).

Applicant Dr. Levi Makala explained why the rezoning was necessary.

Commissioner Allen made a motion to deny the request for a rezoning from R-1 to S-1 for property located at tax map 067 parcel 017G. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a5) RZ25-07-04, Conditional Use for retail package sale of distilled spirits off-premise consumption, 102 South Old Belair Road, Tax Map 068 portion of Parcel 003A, 3.05 +/- acres and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Applicant Attorney Matthew Padgett explained why the request should be approved. Russell Wilder and Grace Welch stated why the request should be approved. Don Skinner explained why the request should be denied.

Commissioner Allen made a motion to approve the request for the conditional use for the retail package sale of distilled spirits for off-premise consumption for property located at tax map 068 portion of parcel 003A. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. Chairman Duncan, Vice Chair Couch and Commissioner Allen voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Melear and Carraway opposed the motion. The motion carried.

(I2a6) VA25-07-02, Variance to section 90-53 list of lot & structure requirements, 303 Crestview Drive, Tax Map 082A Parcel 183, 0.36 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-3 (Single Family Residential).

Commissioner Allen made a motion to approve the request and the fee waiver for a variance to section 90-53 for property located at tax map 082A parcel 183 to reduce the side setback to 3 feet from the southwest property line. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

J. LEGAL MATTERS

K. REQUESTS FOR REVIEW BY COMMITTEE

L. PUBLIC COMMENTS

(L1)

Priscilla Bence spoke about the age-appropriate approved guidelines for the County Library.

Marlena Bergeron spoke about how she was opposed to the data center and the approved guidelines for the County Library.

Renee Hale spoke about the lack of affordable housing and transportation for low-income seniors in the County.

Karin Parham spoke about how she was opposed to the approved guidelines for the County Library.

Susan Warren spoke about her concerns about the proposed data center.

Howard Johnson spoke about how he was opposed to the approved guidelines for the County Library.

M. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(M1) Property

(M1a) Ginger Webb parcel 072162H, John Davis parcel 072J061, Melissa & Arijana Reese parcel 072J186, Adrian Velez parcel 072241 to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve \$24,900 to Ginger Webb parcel 072162H, \$33,300 to John Davis parcel 072J061, \$14,600 to Melissa & Arijana Reese parcel 072J186, \$17,500 to Adrian Velez parcel 072241 to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1b) Resolution 25-24, Declaration of Taking and Order by Condemnation for a portion of tax map 067 015 for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve Resolution 25-24, Declaration of Taking and Order by Condemnation for a portion of tax map 067 015 for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1c) GVS Holdings I LLC parcel 060078, Cynthia Enriquez parcel 072D002 and Leila & Raymond Chaney parcel 067022 to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve \$20,000 to GVS Holdings I LLC parcel 060078, \$84,000 to Cynthia Enriquez parcel 072D002 and \$30,000 to Leila & Raymond Chaney parcel 067022 to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1d) Resolution Number 25-23, Declaration of Taking and Order by Condemnation for a portion of parcel 067064F for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road project.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve Resolution Number 25-23, Declaration of Taking and Order by Condemnation for a portion of parcel 067064F for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road project. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1e) Resolution 25-25, Declaration of Taking and Order by Condemnation for a portion of tax map 072B041, 072B040, 072B039, 072B038, 072B037, 072B036, 072B035, 073017 for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve Resolution 25-25, Declaration of Taking and Order by Condemnation for a portion of tax map 072B041, 072B040, 072B039, 072B038, 072B037, 072B036, 072B035, 073017 for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M2) Items Added at the Meeting

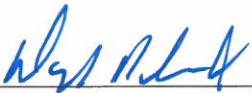
(M2a) Resolution 25-28 Notifying the Columbia County Board of Elections the Vacancy of District 2 Commissioner

Commissioner Allen made an announcement that he would be resigning the District 2 Commission Seat and would be taking a job in Washington DC.

Commissioner Melear made a motion that, upon the Governor's acceptance of James E. Allen III's resignation from the Board of Commissioners, the Board of Elections shall issue the call of the election to fill the resulting vacancy. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.



Douglas R. Duncan, Jr., Chairman



Patrice R. Crawley, County Clerk