



**Columbia County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes of Tuesday, September 16, 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 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
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

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 four Commissioners present.

E. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(E1) September 02, 2025

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 02, 2025 Board of Commissioners meeting as presented. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Duncan presented the agenda.

G. SPECIAL RECOGNITION, PRESENTATION, AND / OR DECLARATION

Chairman Duncan welcomed some of the members from the 2026 Leadership Columbia County Class.

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) Management and Internal Services Committee

(H1a) Employee Medical Premium Rates, Spousal Surcharge, Weight Loss Medications

Approved Employee medical rates to the Gold Plan Single \$51.11, Employee plus one \$104.90, Employee plus two \$162.35, Family \$197.44, Silver Plan Single \$36.86, Employee plus one \$75.66, Employee plus two \$116.79, Family \$154.05, removal of weight loss medication and \$50 surcharge per paycheck if your spouse is employed & has access to employer sponsored medical insurance.

(H1b) United Healthcare Employee Medical Insurance Renewal for Year 2026

Approved United Healthcare employee medical insurance renewal for the year 2026.

(H1c) Contract with Employee Services, Inc. for Employee Assistance Program

Approved Contract with Employee Services, Inc. for Employee Assistance Program.

(H1d) November 11, 2025 Committee Meetings

Approved canceling the Management & Internal Services Committee and Development & Planning Services Committee meetings scheduled for November 11, 2025.

(H1e) December 2025 Committee Meetings

Approved holding all December 2025 Board of Commissioners Committee meetings on Tuesday, December 09, 2025.

(H1f) Purchase of Building A Furniture

Approved the purchase of Building A furniture from State Contract and Cooperative Agreements in the amount of \$2,093,304.98; 24810.34.015.

(H1g) GDOT FY 2027 5311 Rural Transportation Program Application

Approved the Georgia Department of Transportation Fiscal Year 2027 Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program application and acceptance.

(H1h) Cisco Smartnet Renewal Payment Authorization 2025-2026

Approved payment authorization for the Cisco Smartnet in the amount of \$255,216.40; 1011005.533035.

(H1i) Cisco Enterprise Agreement Payment Authorization 2025-2026

Approved the payment authorization for the Cisco Enterprise in the amount of \$153,112.61; 1011005.533035.

(H1j) Approval of Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) Relating to the use of Columbia County Data Network and Security Practices

Approved the template for a Non-Disclosure Agreement relating to the use of Columbia County data network and security practices.

(H1k) Cityworks Annual Maintenance Authorization of Payment 2025-2026

Approved payment authorization for Cityworks annual maintenance in the amount of \$113,859.90; 6516500.533035.

(H1l) Independent Contractor Agreement with WSP USA Inc. for the Performing Arts Center Support Facility for Special Inspections and Material Testing Services

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with WSP USA Inc. for the Performing Arts Center Support Facility for special inspection and material testing services in the amount of \$56,850; 24180.34.090.

(H2) Development and Planning Services Committee

(H2a) Purchase of County Vehicles

Approved the purchase of two Silverado 1500 2wd for \$86,821.50, one Chevrolet Tahoe for \$54,628, one Chevrolet 15 Passenger Van for \$50,666.95, 14 Silverado 1500 4wd for \$654,300.50, one Silverado 3500 Services Body for \$72,000, one Ford Maverick for \$30,549.85, one Chevrolet Equinox for \$29,497.05, one Silverado 2500 for \$60,058.65, one Silverado 2500 Service Body for \$73,054.75 from Alan Jay and one patch truck for \$256,243.65 from Doggett Freightliner.

(H2b) Alcoholic Beverage License Legacy Ties LLC dba Eggs Up Grill

Approved the Alcoholic Beverage License for Legacy Ties LLC dba Eggs Up Grill.

(H2c) Easement Encroachment Agreement for Tax Map 067 Parcel 2379

Approved an Easement Encroachment agreement for tax map 0672379.

(H2d) Conditional License, Encroachment and Maintenance Agreement for the License Area of Whimbrel Court Right of Way

Approved the Conditional License, Encroachment and Maintenance Agreement for the license area of Whimbrel Court right of way.

(H2e) Easement Encroachment Agreement for 510 Pineview Court
Approved an Easement Encroachment Agreement for tax map 082K097.

I. DEBATE AGENDA

(I1) New Business

(I1a) Management and Internal Services Committee

(I1a1) Fiscal Year 2026 Medication Assisted Treatment Grant Program from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Commissioner Melear made a motion to accept the Fiscal Year 2026 Medication Treatment Grant from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b) Development and Planning Services Committee

(I1b1) VA25-09-01, Variance to Section 90-53 List of lot & structure requirements, 84 Chigoe Lane, Tax Map 024 Parcel 202, 1.28 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-4 (Recreational Residential) and Easement Encroachment.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the request for a variance to section 90-53 for property located at tax map 024 parcel 202 to reduce the rear building setback from ten feet to zero feet for a pool and associated structures subject to the following conditions:

Planning: An as-built survey showing the location of the existing retaining wall, and foundation and pool walls will be required prior to release of a foundation or wall inspection from our Building Standards Department.

Stormwater Management: An easement encroachment agreement is required and approve an Easement Encroachment Agreement. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b2) RZ25-09-01, Rezoning from C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) to R-A (Residential Agricultural), 5605 Old Augusta Highway, Tax Map 054 Parcel 032, 2.00 +/- acres, and currently zoned C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial).

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the request for a rezoning from C-1 to R-A for property located at tax map 054 parcel 032 subject to the following condition:

Planning: A combination plat for the subject parcel and the adjacent parcel (Tax Map 054 Parcel ID 033) shall be recorded within 60 days of the Board of Commissioners' approval of this request.

Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b3) RZ25-09-02, Rezoning from C-2 (General Commercial) to C-3 (Heavy Commercial) with a Conditional Use for an Automobile or Truck Storage Lot, 270 Rose Street, Tax Map 078D Parcel 084, 3.58 +/- acres and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to allow the applicant to withdraw without prejudice. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b4) VA25-09-02, Variance to Section 90-133 Parking, 270 Rose Street, Tax Map 078D Parcel 084, 3.58 +/- acres and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to allow the applicant to withdraw without prejudice. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b5) RZ25-09-03, Rezoning from PUD (Planned Unit Development) to S-1 (Special), Off Columbia Road, Tax Map 061 Parcels 2140 & 2141, 39.49 +/- acres, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Representative of the applicant, Warren Kritko explained why the rezoning should be allowed.

Brenda Heidman and Joanne Murdock stated their opposition to the rezoning.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to disapprove the request for a rezoning from PUD to S-1 for property located at tax map 061 parcels 2140 & 2141 for a solar farm. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b6) RZ25-09-04, Rezoning from C-2 (General Commercial) to M-1 (Light Industrial), 475 Lewiston Road, Tax Map 061 portion of Parcel 030L, 1.30 +/- acre portion of a 30.46 +/- acre total, and currently split zoned C-2 (General Commercial) and M-1 (Light Industrial).

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the request for a rezoning from C-2 to M-1 for a portion of property located at tax map 061 portion of parcel 030L for a proposed self-storage and boat and RV storage facility. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b7) VA25-09-03, Variance to Section 90-139 Buffers and Screening, 475 Lewiston Road, Tax Map 061 Parcel 030L, 30.46 +/- acres, and currently split zoned C-2 (General Commercial) and M-1 (Light Industrial).

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the request for a variance to section 90-139 for property located at tax map 061 parcel 030L to allow the required opaque fencing to stand outside of the 10' structural buffers against properties to the north and south and to eliminate the required landscaping for the buffer against property to the south. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b8) RZ25-09-05, Rezoning from a split zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) and R-A (Residential Agricultural) to S-1 (Special), 480 & 500 Chamblin Road, Tax Map 061 Parcels 087A & 087, 35.96 +/- combined acres, and currently split zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) and R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the request for a rezoning from a split zoned M-1 and R-A to S-1 for property located at tax map 061 parcels 087A & 087 for a proposed senior living community subject to the following condition:

Planning Department: Structural buffer element shall be an 8 foot high wooden privacy fence placed as high as possible on the site to provide the most effective buffer as possible.

Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I1b9) RZ25-09-06, Rezoning from a split zoned C-2 (General Commercial) & R-4 (Recreational Residential) to S-1 (Special), off Ridge Road, Tax Map 024 Portion of Parcel 057, a 7.86 +/- acres, and currently split zoned C-2 (General Commercial) & R-4 (Recreational Residential).

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to disapprove the request for a rezoning from a split zoned C-2 and R-4 to S-1 for property located at tax map 024 portion of parcel 057 for a proposed RV & boat storage facility. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2) Items Added at the Meeting

J. LEGAL MATTERS

K. REQUESTS FOR REVIEW BY COMMITTEE

L. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Commissioners answered some of the questions they received concerning the proposed data center.

(L1) Alan Wyatt, Susan Warren, Karin Parham, Howard Johnson and Marlena Bergeron

Alan Wyatt and Susan Warren explained their opposition to the data center.

Karin Parham, Howard Johnson and Marlena Bergeron expressed their concerns regarding the Columbia County Library.

M. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(M1) Property

(M1a) Ann Tapley parcel 072B140, Ryan & Brittany Raner parcel 072J119 and Katherine Green & Brantley Chin Yu parcel 060005D to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project.

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve \$7,100 to Ann Tapley parcel 072B140, \$5,400 to Ryan & Brittany Raner parcel 072J119 and \$22,000 to Katherine Green & Brantley Chin Yu parcel 060005D to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 a.m. Chairman Duncan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.



Douglas R. Duncan, Jr., Chairman



Patrice R. Crawley, County Clerk