



**Columbia County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes of Tuesday, January 6, 2026 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 Jim M. Steed
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 Couch 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) December 16, 2025

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2025 Board of Commissioners meeting as presented. Commissioner Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Duncan presented the agenda.

G. ELECTION OF OFFICER

(G1) Vice Chairman

Commissioner Melear made a motion to appoint Commissioner Couch as the Vice Chair for 2026. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

H. SPECIAL RECOGNITION, PRESENTATION, AND / OR DECLARATION

I. CONSENT AGENDA

J. DEBATE AGENDA

(J1) New Business

(J1a) Management and Internal Services Committee

(J1a1) Resolution Number 26-01 Fixing the Qualifying Fees for Each County Office to be Filled in General Primary, NonPartisan Election or General Election to be Held in 2026

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve Resolution 26-01. Commissioner Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(J1b) Development and Planning Services Committee

(J1b1) VA25-12-01, Variance to Section 90-135 Signs, 4050 Jimmie Dyess Parkway, Tax map 074A Parcel 019A, 0.51 +/- acres, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the request for a variance to Section 90-135 for property located at tax map 074A parcel 019A to reduce setbacks for a freestanding sign subject to the following condition:

Planning:

The right of way must be marked by a licensed surveyor prior to construction of the sign. Markings must remain in place for the required inspections per the sign permit.

Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(J1b2) VA25-12-02, Variance to Section 90-53 List of lot & structure requirements, 223 Stonington Drive, Tax map 078A Parcel 025, 0.47 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) and Encroachment Easement

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the request for a variance to Section 90-53 List of lot & structure requirements for property located at tax map 078A parcel 025 subject to the following condition and approve the Easement Encroachment Agreement:

Stormwater Management:

An Easement Encroachment agreement is required.

Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(J1b3) RZ25-12-05, Major PUD (Planned Unit Development) Revision, 5100 Pierce Court, Tax map 072 Parcel 043T, 5.09 +/- acres, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the request for a major PUD revision to add C-2 uses to the property located at tax map 072 parcel 043T. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(J1b4) RZ25-12-06, Rezoning from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to C-C (Community Commercial), portions of 113 & 127 South Old Belair Road, portions of Tax Map 068 Parcels 018 & 019D, 3.20 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the rezoning from R-1 to C-C for portions of property located at tax map 068 parcels 018 & 019D subject to the following condition:

Planning:

A 50-foot structural buffer against Tax Map 068 Parcel 020 is required.

Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(J1b5) RZ25-12-07, Rezoning from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to S-1 (Special), portions of 113 & 127 South Old Belair Road, portions of Tax Map 068 Parcels 018 & 019D, 17.30 +/- acres in total, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to allow the applicant to withdraw without prejudice the request for a rezoning from R-1 to S-1 for portions of tax map 068 parcels 018 & 019D. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(J1b6) RZ25-12-08, Rezoning from a split zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural) and M-1 (Light Industrial) for portions of the properties and a split zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural) and S-1 (Special) to S-1 (Special), 690 Louisville Road, 728 Louisville Road, 750 Louisville Road, 760

Louisville Road, off Baker Place Road, and off Interstate 20, Tax Map 051 Parcels 029, 030, 031, 032, and 044 and Tax Map 040 Parcel 055B, a total of 434.85 +/- acres, and currently split zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural) and M-1 (Light Industrial) for portions of the properties and a split zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural) and S-1 (Special).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the request for a rezoning from R-A , split zoned M-1 & R-A, and split zoned R-A & S-1 to S-1 for property located at tax map 040 parcel 055B and tax map 051 parcels 029, 030, 031, 032, and 044 subject to the following conditions:

Traffic Engineering:

Left and right turn lanes are required on Louisville Road. Refer to Project Access Improvement policy (PAI). Minimum paving section for Louisville Road (arterial classification) is 10 inches AB, 4 inches 25 mm, 3 inches 19 mm, and 1 ½ inches 12.5 mm, or match existing—whichever is greater.

Planning:

1. Prior to issuance of any land disturbance permit for the subject properties, a subdivision plat shall be recorded that subdivides the existing cell tower lease area and area zoned from the subject parcels. Once recorded, a copy shall be provided to Columbia County Planning.

2. Prior to issuance of any land disturbance permit for the subject properties, a subdivision plat removing Tract E, shown as 17.54 acres on a recombination plat submitted to Columbia County Planning on December 11, 2025 shall be recorded and a copy provided to Columbia County Planning.

Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion.

Ronald Gilchrist, Daniel Lanning, Gregory Guido Jr., Morgan Groothand, Brandon Terrette, Jeremy Pennington, Steven Sims, Kaye Jones and Dewey Carey spoke against the quarry rezoning.

Applicant David Grayson, Sal Mahammad and John Eubank spoke in favor of the quarry rezoning.

Commissioner Melear made a motion to amend the current motion to include the condition that no truck traffic turns left onto Louisville Road before 9 am and between 2–4 pm when school is in session. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. Chairman Duncan and Commissioners Melear and Carraway voted in favor of the amended motion. Vice Chair Couch and Commissioner Steed voted against the amended motion. The amended motion carried. Chairman Duncan called for a vote on the motion with the additional condition. Chairman Duncan and Commissioner Melear and Carraway voted in favor of the motion with the additional condition. Vice Chair Couch and Commissioner Steed voted against the motion with the additional condition. The motion with the additional condition carried.

(J1b7) RZ25-12-09, Rezoning from a split zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) and S-1 (Special) to S-1 (Special) and a major S-1 (Special) revision, 638 & 600 Stevens Creek Road, Tax Map 084 Parcels 012 and 006C, 4.78 +/- acres and 24.92 +/- acres respectively, and currently split zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) and S-1 (Special).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the request for a rezoning from R-2 to S-1 and a major S-1 revision for property located at tax map 084 parcels 012 & 006C subject to the following conditions:

Water Utility:

The existing meter will need to be relocated out of the driveway or abandoned if not being used.

Planning:

The property at 638 Stevens Creek Road shall be combined with the property at 600 Stevens Creek Road prior to completion of all inspections related to the land disturbance permit for the driveway. A copy of the recorded plat shall be submitted to the Planning Department.

Chairman Duncan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(J2) Items Added at the Meeting

K. LEGAL MATTERS

L. REQUESTS FOR REVIEW BY COMMITTEE

(L1) C3AI for Property Appraisal Assistance

Commissioner Melear stated that the software was reviewed and currently they do not wish to bring the item before commission for further action.

M. PUBLIC COMMENTS

(M1) Ronald Gilchrist, Susan Warren, Lindsey Brantley, Joanne Murdock, Gregory Guido Jr., Daniel Lanning and Blane Carter

Ronald Gilchrist, Susan Warren, Lindsey Brantley and Joanne Murdock stated their concerns about data centers coming to Columbia County.

Blane Carter had questions regarding running for an elected office.

N. EXECUTIVE SESSION

O. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. Chairman Duncan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.



Douglas R. Duncan, Jr., Chairman



Patrice R. Crawley, County Clerk