



**Columbia County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes of Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Evans Government Center Auditorium, Evans, Georgia**

Present at the meeting included:

Vice Chairman Alison G. Couch
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
Michael Blanchard - Technology Services
Stacey Gordon - Water Utility Services
Steven Prather – Facility Services
County Staff

Absent was

Chairman Douglas R. Duncan, Jr.
Commissioner Connie M. Melear

Members of the Media and Public

A. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Couch called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. INVOCATION

Commissioner Steed gave the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

County Manager Johnson led the pledge to the American Flag.

D. ROLL CALL / QUORUM

Vice Chair Couch declared a quorum with three members present.

E. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(E1) March 03, 2026 Board of Commissioners

(E2) March 10, 2026 Elected Officials Budget Work Session

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the March 03, 2026 Board of Commissioners Minutes and the March 10, 2026 Elected Official Budget Work Session Minutes. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Couch presented the agenda.

G. SPECIAL RECOGNITION, PRESENTATION, AND / OR DECLARATION

Vice Chair Couch welcomed former commissioner Don Skinner, Sr. and members of the 2026 Youth Leadership Class to the meeting.

(G1) Special Recognition

(G1a) Coroner Terry Norman to Recognize the Coroner's Office Staff

Coroner Terry Norman recognized the Coroner's Office Staff for all the work that they do and how they help with organ donations.

(G2) Declaration

(G2a) Proclamation Designating April as Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month in Columbia County

Vice Chair Couch presented to Glenn O'Steen a Proclamation declaring the Month of April as Autism Awareness and Acceptance month in Columbia County.

H. CONSENT AGENDA

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

(H1) Management and Internal Services Committee

(H1a) Independent Contractor Agreement with Christopher Caudell to serve as a Staff Attorney for the Columbia Judicial Circuit

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with Christopher Caudell to serve as a staff attorney for the Columbia Judicial Circuit.

(H1b) Juvenile Court Independent Contractor Agreement with Brendan Fleming to Serve as an Independent Prosecutor for Children in Need of Services

Approved the Juvenile Court Independent Contractor Agreement with Brendan Fleming to serve as an independent prosecutor for Children in Need of Services.

(H1c) Agreement Renewal Number 2 with EyeMed Vision Care for Employee Vision Insurance

Approved Agreement Renewal Number 2 with EyeMed Vision Care for employee vision insurance.

(H1d) Renewal with New York Life for Basic Life Insurance

Approved the Renewal with New York Life for basic life insurance.

(H1e) Proclamation Designating April as Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month in Columbia County

Approved Designating April as Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month in Columbia County.

(H1f) WebEx Telephony Payment Authorization

Approved the WebEx Telephone Payment in the amount of \$140,410.20.

(H1g) Renew Maintenance and Support with Ciena for Network Equipment and Services

Approved the Maintenance and Support Renewal with Ciena for network equipment and services in the amount of \$100,888.81; 5515530.533035.

(H1h) Intergovernmental Agreement with the Georgia Department of Public Safety, Georgia State Patrol, for Landscape and Janitorial Services

Approved an Intergovernmental Agreement with Georgia Department of Public Safety, Georgia State Patrol, for landscape and janitorial services.

(H2) Development and Planning Services Committee

(H2a) Contract 2026-3467 with Reeves Construction Company for Sheriff's Driving Track - Milling and Inlay

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with Reeves Construction Company for the Sheriff's Driving Track - milling and inlay in the amount of \$48,135; 3503550.601090.35562.

(H2b) Contract 2026-3466 with Remac, Inc. for the Sheriff's Driving Track - Crack Seal & Striping

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with Remac, Inc. for the Sheriff's Driving track - crack seal and striping in the amount of \$76,605; 3503550.601090.35562.

(H2c) Purchase of a Bucket Truck from Hardy Automotive for Traffic Engineering

Approved the purchase of a bucket truck from Hardy Automotive for Traffic Engineering in the amount of \$212,000; 3503550.601081.

(H2d) Alcoholic Beverage License Mai Thai Restaurant LLC

Approved the Alcoholic Beverage License for Mai Thai Restaurant, LLC.

(H2e) Alcoholic Beverage License Pancho Villa Mexican Kitchen LLC

Approved the Alcoholic Beverage License for Pancho Villa Mexican Kitchen LLC.

(H2f) Automatic Forfeit Extension for Vault 221 LLC

Approved the extension of Vault 221 LLC's Alcoholic Beverage License until June 15, 2026.

(H2g) Encroachment Agreement, 711 Whitney Shoals Road, Tax map 060 Parcel 2098, Highland Lakes, Section 3

Approved an Encroachment Agreement for parcel 060 2098.

(H2h) Encroachment Agreement, 7208 Hoffman Drive, Tax Map 067 Parcel 1718

Approved an Encroachment Agreement for tax map 067 1718.

(H2i) Conditional License, Encroachment and Maintenance Agreement, 725 North Belair Road, Tax map 072 Parcel 231M

Approved the Conditional License, Encroachment and Maintenance Agreement for tax map 072 231M.

(H2j) Easement Encroachment Agreement, 725 North Belair Road, Tax map 072 Parcel 231M

Approved an Easement Encroachment Agreement for tax map 072 231M.

I. DEBATE AGENDA

(I1) Unfinished Business

(I1a) Development and Planning Services Committee

(I1a1) RZ25-12-04, Rezoning from C-C (Community Commercial) to R-2 (Single Family Residential), 309 & 311 South Belair Road, Tax Map 073A Parcels 154 & 155, 0.49 +/- acres each, and currently zoned C-C (Community Commercial) - *Postponed from March 03, 2026*

Commissioner Steed made a motion to approve the request for the rezoning from C-C to R-2 for property located at tax map 073A parcels 154 & 155. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Blankenship explained why he wanted the parcel to be rezoned. Mr. Lakhany explained why he didn't want the parcel to be rezoned.

(I2) New Business

(I2a) Management and Internal Services Committee

(I2a1) Independent Contractor Agreement with Kawahna McFadden to serve as Clinical Case Manager for the Columbia Judicial Circuit

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Independent Contractor Agreement with Kawahna McFadden to serve as Clinical Case Manager for the Columbia Judicial Circuit. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a2) Appointment of Donald Skinner Jr. to Serve on the Hospital Authority

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to appoint Donald Skinner, Jr. to the Hospital Authority for the term ending December 31, 2028. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a3) Commercial Lease Agreement Between Columbia County and Plaza at Evans, LLC for .75 Acres of Property, Parcel 072 550C

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Commercial Lease Agreement between Columbia County and Plaza at Evans, LLC for .75 acres of property, parcel 072 550C. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a4) Resolution 26-04 to Amend the Jabez S. Hardin Auditorium Fee Schedule and Authorize the General Manager to Negotiate the Facility Use Agreement and Fees - *First Reading*

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the first reading of Resolution 26-04 to Amend the Jabez S. Hardin Auditorium Fee Schedule and authorize the General Manager to negotiate the Facility Use Agreement and Fees. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a5) Revised Rental Contract for Hardin Auditorium

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the revised rental contract for the Hardin Auditorium. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a6) C3BU Purchase of Server Equipment from Mainline

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to purchase server equipment from Mainline for C3BU in the amount of \$249,772.08. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b) Development and Planning Services Committee

(I2b1) RZ26-03-01, Rezoning from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to R-1 (Single Family Residential), 1422 Old Appling Harlem Highway, Tax map 030 Parcel 007, 4.03 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Commissioner Steed made a motion to approve the request for the rezoning from R-A to R-1 for property located at tax map 030 parcel 007 subject to the following conditions:

Planning:

Provide a 25 foot wide no access easement and natural buffer along Appling Harlem Road for the lots shown as G2 & G3 on the provided proposed subdivision plan. The natural buffer shall be planted prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy for any structure on the lots.

Pre-Construction:

- 1. Existing driveways for Tract G1 may remain in the current locations. If they are going to be moved in the future, permits will be required through the Pre-Construction Department.*
- 2. Driveway location for Tract G2 will only be available at Old Appling Harlem Highway*
- 3. Driveway location for Tract G3 will only be available at Old Appling Harlem Highway*

Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. Commissioner Carraway abstained. The motion carried.

(I2b2) VA26-03-01, Variance to Section 90-53 List of lot & structure requirements, 1422 Old Appling Harlem Highway, Tax map 030 Parcel 007, 4.03 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Commissioner Steed made a motion to approve the request for the variance to section 90-53 for property located at tax map 030 parcel 007 to reduce setback requirements for the existing residence and the accessory structure shown on lot G1 subject to the following conditions:

Planning:

The setback reduction shall apply only to the two structures as shown on tract G1. New construction on lot G1 shall have minimum front setbacks of 20 feet from the property line on Old Appling Harlem Highway and 30 feet from the property line on Appling Harlem Road.

Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. Commissioner Carraway abstained. The motion carried.

(I2b3) RZ26-03-02, Rezoning from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to C-2 (General Commercial), 4933, 4935, & 4937 Washington Road and off Hardy McManus Road, Tax map 066 Parcels 028, 029, 030A, & 031, 3.41 +/- acres combined, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to allow the applicant to withdraw without prejudice the request for the rezoning from R-1 to C-2 for property located at tax map 066 parcels 028, 029, 030A and 031.

Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b4) RZ26-03-03, Conditional Use for Massage, 218 Oak Street North, Tax map 078D Parcel 128, 1.07 +/- acres, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the request for the conditional use for massage for property located at tax map 078D parcel 128. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b5) RZ26-03-04, Rezoning from R-A (Residential Agricultural) & M-1 (Light Industrial) to D-C (Data Center), off Morris Calloway Road, Tax map 019 Parcel 002C, 37.03 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural) & M-1 (Light Industrial).

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the request for the rezoning from R-A & M-1 to D-C for property located at tax map 019 parcel 002C for a proposed data center subject to the following conditions:

Water & Sewer:

- 1. The developer will fund all necessary water and sewer upgrades for the proposed project.*
- 2. Prior to approval of a building permit for any structure on the site, provide a 5-year projection to include water projections and sanitary sewer projections. This will be updated, at a minimum, annually and will be required until full-scale project development is complete and/or when major technological changes or site*

infrastructure changes affect water usage.

3. A water and sewer usage agreement and/or drought management plan may be required. This will be assessed during site plan review or with the 5-year projection noted above.

Traffic Engineering:

The narrative does not address the roadway improvements recommended to accommodate development-related traffic, as identified in the June 2025 Traffic Impact Study prepared by Kimley-Horn. All improvements shall be designed and constructed by the developer.

Planning:

Any access point to Morris Calloway Road or Bill Dorn Road shall be for emergency access only and designed as such.

Board of Commissioners:

Sound from the project shall not exceed 65 decibels at the property line.

Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b6) RZ26-03-05, Rezoning from R-3 (Single Family Residential) to C-3 (Heavy Commercial), 249 Settlement Road, Tax map 078C Parcel 518, 0.96 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-3 (Single Family Residential).

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the request for the rezoning from R-3 to C-3 for property located at tax map 078C parcel 518 subject to the following conditions:

Planning: The building is to have walls faced with bricks, stucco, structural masonry, split face block, wood siding or wood shingles or decorative pre-cast concrete and be architecturally integrated with the other elevations of the building. Vinyl siding, corrugated metal siding or unadorned painted masonry units may be used on the side or rear elevations of industrial buildings.

Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b7) VA26-03-02, Variance to Sections 90-98 List of lot & structure requirements & 90-139 Buffers & screening, 249 Settlement Road, Tax map 078C Parcel 518, 0.96 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-3 (Single Family Residential).

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the request for the variance to sections 90-98 & 90-139 for property located at tax map 078C parcel 518 to reduce the side building setbacks to 20 feet and buffers along the side lot lines to 10 feet. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b8) RZ26-03-06, Rezoning from R-2 (Single Family Residential) to C-2 (General Commercial), 8101, 8102 & 8104 Sir Galahad Drive, Tax map 072A Parcels 122, 164, & 163, 3.77 +/- acres combined, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to allow the applicant to withdraw without prejudice the request for the rezoning from R-2 to C-2 for property located at tax map 072A parcels 122, 163 & 164. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b9) RZ26-03-07, Major PUD Revision, 833 Audubon Way, Tax map 081 Parcel 681, 0.36 +/- acres, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development) and easement encroachment agreement.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the request for the Major PUD Revision and encroachment agreement for property located at tax map 081 parcel 681 to allow a retaining wall over six feet in height to be constructed within the side and rear setbacks and allow a pool to be constructed within the rear setback subject to the following condition:

Stormwater: An easement encroachment agreement will be required.

Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b10) Georgia Power Underground Easement for Distribution Line Relocation at 630 Ronald Reagan Drive, Parcel 072 045B

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the Georgia Power Underground Easement for Distribution Line Relocation at 630 Ronald Reagan Drive, Parcel 072 045B. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I3) Items Added at the Meeting

J. LEGAL MATTERS

K. REQUESTS FOR REVIEW BY COMMITTEE

L. PUBLIC COMMENTS

M. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(M1) Property

(M1a) William Altman, Jill Altman & Francie Connell parcel 067C072, Jeff Bishop parcel 072A001B, \$63,000 to Amanda Seamon & Daniel Anderson parcel 072J001 and Four Oaks Homeowners Association, Inc. parcels 0601571 & 060157A to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve \$85,200 to William Altman, Jill Altman & Francie Connell parcel 067C072, \$43,900 to Jeff Bishop parcel 072A001B, \$63,000 to Amanda Seamon & Daniel Anderson parcel 072J001 and \$20,000 to Four Oaks Homeowners Association, Inc. parcels 0601571 & 060157A to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1b) Resolutions 26-07 and 26-08, Declaration of Takings and Order by Condemnations for a portion of tax map 060035 and 072A001C for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve Resolutions 26-07 and 26-08, Declaration of Takings and Order by Condemnations for a portion of tax map 060035 and 072A001C for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1c) Settlement Agreement with Dharma D. Sinha for parcel 067015 for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road widening project.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve a Settlement Agreement with Dharma D. Sinha for parcel 067015 for the improving, widening, paving, aligning and maintaining of Hereford Farm Road widening project. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 p.m. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.



Douglas R. Duncan, Jr., Chairman



Patrice R. Crawley, County Clerk