



**Columbia County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes of Tuesday, April 21, 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
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 five Commissioners present.

E. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(E1) March 17, 2026 and (E2) March 17, 2026 Budget Work Session

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the March 17, 2026 Commission and March 17, 2026 Budget Work Session minutes. Commissioner Steed 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

(G1) Declaration

(G1a) Proclaiming May 1, 2026 as Loyalty Day

Vice Chair Couch presented to Ronald Gilchrist and members of the Columbia County Memorial VFW Post 6445 a proclamation proclaiming May 01, 2026 as Loyalty Day.

(G1b) Proclaiming April 2026 as Safe Digging Month

Vice Chair Couch presented to Hope Marshall with the Utility Coordinating Committee a proclamation proclaiming April 2026 as Safe Digging Month.

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 Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H1) Community and Emergency Services Committee

(H1a) Animal Services Donations

Approved the donation of \$200 to Columbia County Animal Services for the medical care of shelter animals.

(H1b) Lease with Columbia County Cares, Inc.

Approved the lease with Columbia County Cares, Inc.

(H1c) Proclamation Observing May 1, 2026 as Loyalty Day

Approved a Proclamation observing May 1, 2026 as Loyalty Day.

(H1d) Contract Renewal Number 8 with Columbia County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.

Approved Contract Renewal Number 8 with Columbia County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.

(H1e) Independent Contractor Agreement with Patricia Essick for the Senior Center Ceramics Instructor

Approved Independent Contractor Agreement with Patricia Essick for the Senior Center Ceramics Instructor.

(H1f) Contract Agreement with Ignite Soccer Academy, LLC.

Approved a Contract Agreement with Ignite Soccer Academy, LLC.

(H1g) Independent Contractor Agreement with Hain Tennis Academy, LLC

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with Hain Tennis Academy, LLC.

(H1h) Contract Renewal Number 3 with Petersburg Tennis Academy

Approved Renewal Number 3 with Petersburg Tennis Academy.

(H1i) Contract Renewal Number 5 with Professional Disc Golf Association Inc.

Approved Contract Renewal Number 5 with Professional Disc Golf Association, Inc.

(H1j) Contract Renewal Number 1 with Georgia Glamping Company, LLC

Approved Contract Renewal Number 1 with Georgia Glamping Company, LLC.

(H1k) Contract Renewal Number 3 with Keg Creek Watersports LLC.

Approved Contract Renewal Number 3 with Keg Creek Watersports, LLC.

(H1l) Contract Renewal Number 4 with Savannah Rapids Kayak Rental for Bicycle Rental Service

Approved Contract Renewal Number 4 with Savannah Rapids Kayak Rental for bicycle rental service.

(H1m) Canoe, Kayak and Paddle Board Rentals at Savannah Rapids and Wildwood Parks Concessionaire Agreement with Savannah Rapids Kayak Rental, LLC.

Approved Canoe, Kayak and Paddle Board rentals at Savannah Rapids and Wildwood Parks Concessionaire Agreement with Savannah Rapids Kayak Rental, LLC.

(H1n) Georgia Department of Transportation FY 2022 Surplus Vehicle #3568

Approved the surplussing of vehicle Number 3568 back to Georgia Department of Transportation.

(H1o) Georgia Department of Transportation FY2026 Transportation Trust Fund Program Application

Approved the application and acceptance of the awarded grant for FY2026 from the Georgia Department of Transportation Trust Fund program in the amount of \$202,426.

(H1p) Fire Services Automatic Aid Agreement with the City of Harlem, GA.

Approved the Fire Services Automatic Aid agreement with the City of Harlem.

(H2) Management and Internal Services Committee

(H2a) Juvenile Court Independent Contractor Agreements with Margaret Adams, Angela Chambers, Kathleen Conner, Brendan Fleming, Jordan Hanson, Krista Marie Johnson, Kelly Kitchens, Joseph Pride and Sheila Wahman

Approved Independent Contractor Agreements with Margaret Adams Program Director, Angela Chambers Court Reporter, Kathleen Conner Attorney Guardian Ad Litem, Jordan Hanson Indigent Defense, Krista Marie Johnson Coordinator Children in Need of Services, Kelly Kitchens Indigent Defense, Brendan Fleming Prosecutor for Children in Need of Services, Joseph Pride Attorney Guardian Ad Litem and Sheila Wahman Attorney Guardian Ad Litem.

(H2b) Contract Renewal/Amendment Number 3 with CorrectHealth Columbia, LLC. for Inmate Medical Services

Approved Contract Renewal and Amendment Number Three with CorrectHealth Columbia, LLC. for Inmate Medical Services.

(H2c) Contract Renewal Number 2 with Oasis Management Systems, Inc. for Inmate Commissary Services

Approved Contract Renewal Number Two with Oasis Management Systems, Inc. for Inmate Commissary Services.

(H2d) Contract Renewal Number 1 with Guardian Mortuary Transport, Inc. for Coroner Transport Services

Approved Contract Renewal Number One with Guardian Mortuary Transport, Inc. for coroner transport services.

(H2e) Contract Renewal Number 1 with The Nelson Law Group for Conflict Counsel for Tax Appeals

Approved Contract Renewal Number One with The Nelson Law Group for conflict counsel for tax appeals.

(H2f) Memorandum of Agreement with Federal Emergency Management Agency Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS)

Approved Memorandum of Agreement with Federal Emergency Management Agency Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS).

(H2g) Resolution Number 26-09 Authorizing Adoption of the Columbia County, Georgia Multi-Jurisdictional Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan

Approved Resolution Number 26-09 Authorizing Adoption of the Columbia County, Georgia Multi-Jurisdictional Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan.

(H2h) Agreement Amendment Number 2 with Debristech, LLC for Disaster Debris Monitoring Services

Approved Agreement Amendment Number Two with Debristech, LLC. for disaster debris monitoring services.

(H2i) Intent for Funding 45 Percent Cost Share of a New Mobile Operation Center to be used as a Primary Regional Asset

Approved the intent for funding 45 percent cost share of a new mobile operation center to be used as a primary regional asset.

(H2j) Employee On-Site Clinic and Medical Services Professional Agreement with MedNow Urgent Care

Approved an Employee On-Site Clinic and Medical Services Professional Agreement with MedNow Urgent Care.

(H2k) Agreement with Cushman Paint & Body, Headway Collision Center, Rick's Paint & Body Towing, LLC, and Crash Champions, LLC, for Auto Collision Repair Services

Approved Agreements with Cushman Paint & Body, Headway Collision Center, Rick's Paint & Body Towing, LLC. and Crash Champions, LLC. for auto collision repair services.

(H2l) Cisco Network Equipment Lifecycle Purchase from DSI

Approved Cisco network equipment lifecycle purchase from DSI in the amount of \$849,233; 3503552.601090.35566.

(H2m) Broadband Utility Forklift Purchase from Hyster-Yale Materials Handling

Approved Broadband Utility forklift purchase from Hyster-Yale Materials Handling in the amount of \$44,563; 3503552.601090.35567.

(H2n) Award RFP # 2026002-RFP3289 and Contract to Duckworth Development, LLC for the Construction of the Savannah Rapids Pavilion Renovation and Addition

Approved awarding the bid and contract to Duckworth Development, LLC. for the construction of the Savannah Rapids Pavilion renovation and addition in the amount of \$11,438,000; 24190.34.015.

(H2o) Independent Contractor Agreement with WSP USA, Inc. for Special Inspection and Material Testing Services for Savannah Rapids Pavilion Renovation and Addition

Approved an Independent Contractor Agreement with WSP USA, Inc. for special inspection and material testing services for Savannah Rapids Pavilion renovation and addition.

(H2p) Purchase of Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment from Weinberger's for the Emergency Operations Center Renovation

Approved the purchase of furniture, fixtures and equipment from Weinberger's for the Emergency Operations Center renovation in the amount of \$92,291.62.

(H3) Development and Planning Services Committee

(H3a) Agreement with Sunset Auction Company for the Columbia County Surplus Items Auction

Approved an Agreement with Sunset Auction Company for the surplus items auction.

(H3b) Automatic Forfeit Extension for Gregory M Parker Inc dba Parker's #149 located at 3900 Washington Road

Approved the request from Gregory M. Parker, Inc. dba Parker's #149 located at 3900 Washington Road to extend the automatic forfeit date to August 31, 2026.

(H3c) Alcoholic Beverage License Melina 25 LLC dba Habaneros Mexican Grill

Approved the Alcoholic Beverage License for Melina 25 LLC dba Habaneros Mexican Grill.

(H3d) Alcoholic Beverage License Kyoto Inc dba Kyoto Japanese Cuisine

Approved the Alcoholic Beverage License for Kyoto Inc. dba Kyoto Japanese Cuisine.

(H3e) Easement Encroachment Agreement for 1420 Dooley Lane, Tax Map 051 Parcel 319

Approved an Easement Encroachment Agreement for tax map 051 319.

(H3f) Easement Encroachment Agreement for 4465 Baywood Trail, Tax Map 059 Parcel 967

Approved an Easement Encroachment Agreement for tax map 059 967.

(H4) Public Works and Engineering Services Committee

(H4a) Renewal Number 3 with Goodwyn Mills Cawood for the Periodic Maintenance of Hydraulic Model for 2027

Approved Renewal Number 3 with Goodwyn Mills Cawood for the periodic maintenance of hydraulic model for 2027 in the amount of \$18,000; 511.5125.601090.

(H4b) Emergency repair of the 22H Vertical Turbine Pump

Approved emergency repair of the 22H vertical turbine pump at the Blanchard Water Treatment Plant in the amount of \$71,395; 511.5105.533060.

(H4c) Encroachment Agreement with Atlanta Gas Light for the Euchee Creek Harlem Interceptor Project

Approved an Encroachment Agreement with Atlanta Gas Light for the Euchee Creek Harlem Interceptor project.

(H4d) Meter Reading Agreement with Jefferson Electric

Approved a Meter Reading Agreement with Jefferson Electric in the amount of \$1,020; 511.5000.533035.

(H4e) Proclaiming April 2026 as Safe Digging Month in Columbia County

Approved Proclaiming April 2026 as Safe Digging Month in Columbia County.

(H4f) 2026 Amendments of the Columbia County Radar Permit for the Columbia County Sheriff's Office

Approved 2026 Amendments of the Columbia County Radar Permit and authorizing the Engineering Services Director to execute the final permit after all associated resubmittals and amendments are approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

(H4g) Contract #2026-3470 with Mid State Construction & Stripeing, Inc for the FY 2025/2026 Safety Striping Project B

Approved awarding the bid and contract with Mid State Construction & Stripeing, Inc. for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Safety Striping Project B in the amount of \$88,413.95; 2342710.522137.

(H4h) Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement with GDOT for the Installation of Right Turn Lanes on Wrightsboro Rd (SR 223) and Louisville Rd

Approved an Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation for the installation of right turn lanes at the intersection of Wrightsboro Road and Louisville Road.

(H4i) Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement with GDOT for Right Turn Lane Improvements on Washington Rd (SR104) from River Watch Pkwy to N. Belair Rd
Approved an indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation for right turn lane improvements on Washington Road from River Watch Parkway to N. Belair Road.

(H4j) Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement with GDOT for the Installation of "Welcome to Historic Appling" Gateway Signs on State Route 47 (US 221)
Approved an Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation for the installation of "Welcome to Historic Appling" gateway signs on State Route 47.

(H4k) Project Framework Agreement with GDOT for PI 0021250 - Washington Rd Widening from William Few Pkwy to Tubman Rd
Approved the Project Framework Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation for the Washington Road widening from William Few Parkway to Tubman Road and authorizing the issuance of an additional \$2,031,120 purchase order to Pond & Company.

(H4l) Bid #2026006-BID5200 and Contract #2026-3469 with Cajenn Construction & Rehabilitation Services for the 2026 Storm Water UV Lining Projects
Approved awarding the bid and contract to Cajenn Construction & Rehabilitation for the 2026 Storm Water UV lining project in the amount of \$95,659; 5215200.601100.

(H4m) Acceptance of Improvements for Flex Space of Evans, LLC
Approved the acceptance of improvements for Flex Space of Evans, LLC as shown on the plat by James Swift and Associates dated January 16, 2026 contingent upon staff's approval.

(H4n) Purchase and Installation of Equipment from Willo Products Company to Replace Locks for Existing Dorm at the Columbia County Jail
Approved the purchase and installation of equipment from Willo Products Company and to establish a budget for the replacement of locks for existing dorms at the Columbia County Jail in the amount of \$285,000; 350.3550.53303535518.

I. DEBATE AGENDA

(I1) Unfinished Business

(I1a) Management and Internal Services Committee

(I1a1) 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 - *Second Reading*
Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Second Reading of Resolution Number 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 Melear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2) New Business

(I2a) Management and Internal Services Committee

(I2a1) Independent Contractor Agreement with Kawahna McFadden to serve as MAT Program Clerk for the Columbia Judicial Circuit

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

(I2a2) Independent Contractor Agreement with Serenity Behavioral Health Systems to provide MAT Consultation and Clinical Services for the Columbia Judicial Circuit Accountability Courts

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Independent Contractor Agreement with Serenity Behavioral Health Systems to provide MAT Consultation and Clinical Services for the Columbia Judicial Circuit. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2a3) Independent Contractor Agreement with Martinez Urgent Care, Inc. to provide MAT Consultation and Clinical Services for the Columbia Judicial Circuit Accountability Courts

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to approve the Independent Contractor Agreement with Martinez Urgent Care, Inc. to provide MAT Consultation and Clinical Services for the Columbia Judicial Circuit. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b) Development and Planning Services Committee

(I2b1) RZ26-03-08, Major PUD (Planned Unit Development) Revision, 4102 Shady Oaks Drive, Tax Map 081B Parcel 1081, 0.28 +/- acres, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the request for the major PUD revision for property located at tax map 081B parcel 1081 to reduce the rear setback to 5 feet for a proposed pool. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(I2b2) RZ26-03-09, Rezoning from M-1 (Light Industrial) to C-2 (General Commercial), 475 Lewiston Road, for a 1.0 +/- acre portion of Tax Map 061 Parcel 030L, 32.25 +/- total acres, and currently zoned M-1 (Light Industrial).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the request for the rezoning from M-1 to C-2 for a portion of property located at tax map 061 parcel 030L subject to the following conditions:

Planning: 1. A subdivision plat delineating the C-2 and M-1 zoning on the parcel must be recorded prior to site plan approval.

2. No vehicles shall be parked within the driveway leading from Lewiston Road to the site.

Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Attorney Kurt Worthington, who represents the next-door property owner, requested that the Board require the applicant to include a curb cutout to allow vehicular traffic to go to his property.

Robert Titus, the engineer for the property owner, stated that it would be illegal for the Board to add the requested condition.

(I2b3) RZ26-03-10, Major S-1 (Special) Revision, 830 Louisville Road, Tax Map 052 Parcel 001J, 5.0 +/- acres, and currently zoned S-1 (Special).

Commissioner Melear made a motion to approve the Major S-1 revision located at tax map 052 parcel 001J subject to the following condition:

Planning: The minimum 5 foot front setback requirement must be shown on the site plan submitted for permitting. Vice Chair Couch 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

(L1) Channing Von-T Taylor, Karin Parham, Howard Johnson, Susan Warren and Marlena Bergeron.

Candidate House District 127 Channing Von-T Taylor introduced himself to the Board.

Karin Parham stated that the Columbia County Library system failed to comply with the Collection Development Policy that was adopted on January 06, 2026.

Howard Johnson is opposed to Loyalty Day because it has historically been used to suppress labor movements.

Susan Warren is opposed to data centers.

Marlena Bergeron stated that natural resources need to be protected.

M. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(M1) Property

(M1a) Brighton Landing Homeowners Association, Inc. parcel 062 3428 and donation from Branch Springs Development, LLC. parcel 062 085S to obtain right of way, permanent easement and temporary easements for the Horizon South Parkway and Chamblin Road connector project.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve \$2,000 to Brighton Landing Homeowners Association, Inc. parcel 062 3428 and accept the donation from Branch Springs Development, LLC. parcel 062 085S to obtain right of way, permanent easement and temporary easements for the Horizon South Parkway and Chamblin Road connector project. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1b) Amending the March 18, 2025 approved temporary easement from .05 to .02 acres for parcel 062 037 for the Chamblin Horizon connector project.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve amending the March 18, 2025 approved temporary easement from .05 to .02 acres for parcel 062037 for the Chamblin Horizon connector project. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1c) Purchase and Sale Agreement with Wellstar Health System, Inc. for the .62 acre parcel and the acceptance of the associated drainage easements.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement with Wellstar Health System, Inc. for the .62 acre parcel and the acceptance of the associated drainage easements. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1d) Dorothy Watkins parcel 073 007, Jung & Peter Lee parcel 067 008, Gayle & U.S. Duffie, Jr. parcel 067 007A and Mary Morris, John Davitte, Jr., George Davitte, Joseph Davitte, Holly Davitte & The Estate of William Davitte for parcels 072 129, 072 129K & 072 129W to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve \$500 to Dorothy Watkins parcel 073 007, \$1,100 to Jung & Peter Lee parcel 067 008, Gayle & U.S. Duffie, Jr. parcel 067 007A and \$103,700 to Mary Morris, John Davitte, Jr., George Davitte, Joseph Davitte, Holly Davitte & The Estate of William Davitte for parcels 072 129, 072 129K & 072 129W to obtain right of way and/or easements for the Hereford Farm Road widening project. Vice Chair Couch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(M1e) Agreement of Purchase and Sale with Euclée Creek Development Co. Inc. parcel 029 048A and 029 048B.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to approve the Agreement of Purchase and Sale with Euclée Creek Development Co. Inc. parcel 029 048A and 029 048B. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Couch made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. Commissioner Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.



Alison G. Couch, Vice Chair



Patrice R. Crawley, County Clerk