

**MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2024
10:00 a.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting, Tuesday, December 31, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in the Ware County Commission Chambers, 305 Oak Street, Suite 201, Waycross, Georgia 31501 with Chairman Elmer Thrift presiding.

CALL TO ORDER	Chairman Elmer Thrift
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT	Commissioner Sammy Hendricks, Commissioner Leonard Burse, Commissioner Timmy Lucas, Commissioner Jerry Pope
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	None
STAFF PRESENT	Interim County Manager Melinda Brooks; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; Deputy County Clerk Melissa Bennett
PRESS	unknown
INVOCATION	The invocation was given by Commissioner Burse
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairman.

Guest Speakers for Items Not on the Agenda:

Roy Rhodes – Ware County Bicentennial

Mr. Rhodes presented the Commission with a framed proclamation from Georgia's Governor Kemp and a signed Congressional Record from U. S. Congressman Buddy Carter. Commissioner Lucas accepted both items and read them aloud for the audience.

AGENDA ITEMS

A. Consider Request to Enter into Executive Session

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel. Commissioner Hendricks seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Commissioner Burse asked if the meeting had been advertised. Interim County Manager Brooks stated that it had not, but it was due to oversight. There was discussion among the Commissioners regarding whether or not the meeting would be legal. Some Commissioners noted they were aware of communication with the newspaper amongst themselves. Commissioner Burse asked Assistant County Attorney Herzog if this meeting would be considered legal. Mrs. Herzog responded that the legal organ has to be notified of a special called meeting at least 24 hours in advance. Because the

newspaper only runs once per week, the meeting does not have to be advertised in the paper, but the paper must be notified. She stated that because the meeting was advertised on the website, and if the newspaper (legal organ) was aware of the meeting like three of the Commissioners have stated, then the meeting would be considered legal.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-NO; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye (he said as long as the meeting would be considered legal); Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Sammy Hendricks-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 10:08 a.m.

The Commission came back into the Chambers. Commissioner Lucas made a motion to exit Executive Session and re-enter the regular meeting. Commissioner Hendricks seconded the motion. The Commission exited Executive Session at 2:45.

B. Amend Agenda to add HB 311

Tax Commissioner Roger Collins asked to address the Commission regarding HB 311.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Burse made a motion to amend the agenda to add HB 311. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Barry Cox-no; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-no.

C. HB 311 Accept List for Optional Tax Relief from Board of Assessors

Tax Commissioner Roger Collins explained that House Bill 311 made provisions for temporary tax relief for certain properties located in nationally declared federal disaster areas. EMA Director Jonathan Daniell and Chief Appraiser Billy Carter worked together to determine which properties qualified for the list of damaged and destroyed homes to receive temporary tax relief. The damaged homes on the list will receive a \$50,000 tax exemption on the 2024 assessed tax value. The destroyed homes on the list will receive a \$100,000 exemption on the 2024 assessed tax value. When asked by the Commission, Mr. Collins reiterated that this is a predetermined list. Citizens cannot sign up to be put on the list.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to accept HB 311 as laid out by the Tax Commissioner and the list of properties prepared by the Board of Assessors' office and the EMA Director.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jerry Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Sammy Hendricks-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: None

ADJOURN

The Commissioners agreed to meet on the following Monday, January 6, 2025 at 10 a. m. to appoint a new County Manager. Commissioner Burse made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hendricks seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:06 p. m.

Date proposed to be approved: June 9, 2025

ATTEST:


Melissa Bennett, Deputy County Clerk


Elmer Thrift, Chairman

7/16/2025
Date

[SEAL]

