

**MINUTES  
CALLED MEETING  
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025  
3:30 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Called Meeting, Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. in the Ware County Commission Chambers, 305 Oak Street, Suite 201 Waycross, Georgia 31501 with Chairman Elmer Thrift presiding.

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	Chairman Elmer Thrift
<b>COMMISSIONERS PRESENT</b>	Commissioner Barry Cox; Commissioner Leonard Burse; Commissioner Timmy Lucas via phone
<b>COMMISSIONERS ABSENT</b>	Jon Tindall
<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	County Manager James Shubert; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
<b>PRESS</b>	Rick Head, WJH
<b>INVOCATION</b>	The invocation was given by Commissioner Burse
<b>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>	The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Elmer Thrift
<b>GUEST SPEAKER: NONE</b>	

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. Resolution 2025-13: Approve Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026**

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

Commissioner Cox made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-13 and adopt the FY 2026 budget as presented. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

County Manager Shubert noted that a public hearing regarding the proposed FY 2026 budget was held on Wednesday, June 18, one week prior to this meeting. More information was added in addition to general fund expenditures. The FY 2026 budget will be a zero-balance budget and include a 3% COLA for all staff.

Accounting Supervisor Beverly York admitted to the Commission that the budget is a little more than the proposed budget because she inadvertently plugged the wrong amount in for one of the items. Commissioner Burse commended the County Manager, Accounting Supervisor, and department heads for working together on this budget. He compared compiling a budget to shooting in the dark. He is hoping extra revenue will be found, which can be used for other

expenses. County Manager Shubert informed the Commission that staff will be reviewing the budget every quarter. At the six-month mark, staff can review for another possible COLA increase above the initial three percent included in the budget.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**B. Approve Annual Senior Center Meals Contract**

This item is to approve the contract between Southern Georgia Regional Commission and Ware County Board of Commissioners to provide meals for the senior citizens of Waycross and Ware County.

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

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the contract with SGRC to provide meals to senior citizens. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Commissioner Lucas asked where the senior meals are served, and he was told they are served at the Nelson Greene Senior Center. Area Agency on Aging gets the grant. Ware County Commission office serves as the pass through to get the money to the McKinney Center. The total amount of the contract is \$81,904. They serve some meals at the center and some are delivered to citizens' homes. County Manager Shubert explained the local match is an in-kind match, so citizen volunteers are needed to assist with this program.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**C. Repair Recreation Department PA System (Adult Side)**

Recreation Dept Director Lance Adamson explained the PA system has an all-call system, which is used to broadcast announcements, such as a lost child, in all areas of the complex. The adult program had been in a decline, so repairs were not made to the PA system in that part of the complex. Now that the adult program has experienced a regrowth, the PA system needs to be repaired so that announcements can be made in that part of the complex. Director Adamson stated he made two attempts to get repair work done by local company. One company's owner has retired, and the other one never responded. The only company he could get to respond, Southern Audio Design, is from Jacksonville. (Address on quote is located in Waycross.) The cost is estimated to be \$11,750. County Manager told the Commission that the Recreation Department has around \$69,000 left in 2014 SPLOST funds. He also noted for transparency, that the company is partially owned by Ware County EMA Director Jonathan Daniell.

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

Commissioner Cox made a motion to approve the repair of the PA system at the recreation department. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**D. Resolution 2025-11: FLOST Referendum**

This resolution calls for a one percent (1%) Floating Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST) to be placed on the November 4, 2025 ballot for approval by the Ware County voters. The proceeds from the one percent (1%) tax would be used exclusively to reduce property taxes. The tax will be imposed for a period of 20 calendar months, and the estimated funds to be raised is \$55 million dollars.

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

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the resolution for FLOST referendum to be put on the November 4, 2025 ballot. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Commissioner Cox stated he was glad that it was being put to the voters to decide rather than having the Commission decide. Chairman Thrift said he felt this would be good for the citizens and the County. Commissioner Burse noted that the monies collected through the FLOST would be strictly for reducing property taxes. The funds cannot be used to purchase tractors or pave roads. When asked, Tax Commissioner Roger Collins stepped forward and reiterated Commissioner Burse's statement. He said the FLOST taxes will be by everyone and will lower taxes and milage rate. He noted that the tax savings would be applied to all properties, including homestead, industrial, personal, agricultural, etc.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**E. Intergovernmental Agreement for FLOST**

Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog told the Commission that the City of Waycross attorneys, Chesslyn Greene and Huey Spearman, contacted her and requested that certain language be added to the agreement. The additional language would refer to: (a) how the funds can be spent, (b) how records of funds are to be kept. Attorney Herzog stated that both of these items are in Georgia statutes and must be followed regardless; however, she felt it would be wise and prudent to include the additional verbiage in the agreement.

Commissioner Lucas brought up the funds distribution by percentage as listed in the agreement. Ware County would receive 58 percent of the collected funds, and the City of Waycross would

receive 42 percent. Commissioner Burse said LOST funds are distributed at 58/42. It was noted that some Commissions are using the 2024 tax base or population. Commissioner Lucas pointed out that would give the County 70% and the City 30%. The City of Waycross approved the agreement with the 58/42 split at the City Commission's regular meeting in June. Previous SPLOST funds have been split 60/40. Much discussion ensued after Commissioner Lucas voiced his concern over the two percent difference between the 60/40 and 58/42 split. It was noted that two percent of \$55 million (the amount to be collected through this FLOST) is only \$1,100,000 over the course of the 5 years, or \$220,000 annually. He remembered something about a meeting with the City and temporarily giving them an extra two percent. The Commission decided to pause this agenda item while County Clerk Melinda Brooks searched through records looking for this agreement. Chairman Thrift asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the agreement with all that is contained and the percentage amounts. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**F. Approve Thrift Brothers Contract for Dirt Street Paving (Paschall Road ROW)**

This item is to approve contract tabled at last meeting due to ROW concerns. Chairman Thrift recused himself due to conflict of interest. His sons are owners of Thrift Brothers, LLC. County Manager explained to the Commission that he located the ROW easement filed in Clerk of Court's office. It allows for a 30-foot right of way on the Fullard portion of Paschall Road.

Vice Chairman Cox asked if there was a motion on this item.

Commissioner Cox made a motion to approve the Thrift Brother contract to pave N. McDonald Road, Cornelius Road, Paschall Road, and approximately 1 mile of Griffin Road. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Cox asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-ABSTAINED.

**G. Purchase Request: F350 for EMA**

EMA Director Jonathan Daniell received three quotes for one F350 to pull EMA trailers. The lowest quote was received from Robbie Roberson in the amount of 63,030.00.

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

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the purchase of the F350 for EMA. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**H. Surplus Request: PC Units without Monitors**

IT requested to surplus 70 PC units that have outlived their lifespan. There are no monitors to go with these PC Units, which can be sold on GovDeals.com.

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

Commissioner Cox made a motion to approve the surplus of the PC units. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**I. Board Reappointment: Planning Commission**

The term for Ware County Planning Commission Post 9 expires on June 30, 2025. Jeffrey Parker currently serves in Post 9. He would like to continue serving. His new term would begin July 1, 2025 and expire June 30, 2028.

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

Commissioner Cox made a motion to reappoint Jeffrey Parker to Post 9 on the Ware County Planning Commission for a term to run from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there is any discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye, Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

**Manager Comments:**

County Manager Shubert told the Commission there will be a bid opening on July 2 for the paving of the short roads (Phase 1) around the city and that Phase 2 will follow in August. GDOT should notify us about SAP grant funding soon. The items in the storage buildings will be on surplus list within the next month. We are currently waiting on the surveyor to look building on corner of Ossie Davis Pkwy and Alice St so that we can put together a bid package to sell this building.

During research, he found some vacant land showing up as being owned by the County. There are only three or four pieces and are mostly in the residential area of City and maybe one in the County. He is asking for permission for the attorney to do a title search to ensure the county does own these

properties so they can be put back on the tax roll. He spoke with the Tax Commissioner who thinks the county assumed ownership after properties didn't sell at tax sale and no one claimed them.

Commissioner Burse asked for an update on renovations at the library. Mr. Shubert said remodeling is on track, and it will look different inside. Commissioner Burse then asked about the extra funds and work on the parking lot. Mr. Shubert said with the project coming in for less than the amount of the grant, they are hoping to at least seal and restripe the parking lot.

**Commission Comments:**

Chairman Thrift told the County Manager to let the Commission know that he has asked to move on buying the property on Albany Avenue for the overpass. County Manager Shubert explained that once the County receives the deed and plat from the engineer, then the property can be appraised. Afterwards he will send the information to the County Attorney to start the purchase process for the ROW and structure purchase

Commissioner Burse asked for the let date on the State Street overpass and the expected construction timeframe. County Manager Shubert said the anticipated let date is September 2025, and construction is expected to last around two years.

Mr. Shubert said he asked transportation engineer doing study how traffic patterns will affect Wacona and Dorothy during construction phase of State St



**ADJOURN**

Commissioner Burse made a motion to adjourn the Called Meeting. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p. m.

Date proposed to be approved: July 14, 2025

**ATTEST:**

  
Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

  
Elmer Thrift, Chairman  
  
Date

