

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2025
5:00 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting, Monday, November 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.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 Barry Cox; Commissioner Leonard Burse; Commissioner Timmy Lucas (via telephone); Commissioner Jon Tindall
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	None
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager James Shubert; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
PRESS	Mittie Vaughan – Ware Press Express
INVOCATION	The invocation was waived from the Work Session
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was waived from the Work Session

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

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

GUEST SPEAKER: **None**

AGENDA ITEMS

A. Resolution 2025-22: Approve Tri-County Resolution Supporting a Perimeter Road

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-22, to approve the tri-county resolution supporting a perimeter road. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was any discussion.

Commissioner Tindall stated that this is not a vote to approve a route for a perimeter road. It is a vote to approve the concept to move forward to communicate with GDOT, who will come up with the final plan and route.

Commissioner Cox asked once GDOT comes up with a route if the Commission would have any input. County Manager Shubert explained there would be several preliminary routes and public information meetings. Commissioner Tindall stated that when this project came up before (\$70 million project mentioned in the Work Session), there were about four (4) viable options, with one being the most preferred option. Those were presented to the public.

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 Air Evac Lease

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

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the Air Evac lease. Commissioner Tindall seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was any discussion.

Commissioner Tindall explained Air Evac will now be housed in Ware County 24/7. Crew members will be in a bunkhouse when not in service.

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. WWDA Board Vacancy-Seat 2: Appoint Kim Bennett Callahan

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to appoint Kim Bennett Callahan to Seat 2 of the Waycross Ware County Development Authority. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was 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. Proposal From Roberts Civil Engineering, LLC to Handle Utility Coordination

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to accept the proposal from Roberts Civil Engineering, LLC to handle utility coordination. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was any discussion.

Commissioner Tindall noted that this will help decrease the workload on the County Manager. He would like to have an in-house staff person to take care of these types of items. The cost of this service on one or two of these projects a year would cover the annual salary of a staff member. He would like to explore other options to cover this duty and feels it would be a good savings for the County. Commissioner Burse concurred with Commissioner Tindall, stating he had mentioned having a County Inspector before. Having someone on staff doing that and a list of other things would prove to be a vital savings and help to the manager.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

E. Resolution 2025-03: Public Defender Contract for First Half of Calendar Year

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to approve the public defender contract for the first half of the calendar year. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was any discussion.

Commissioner Burse clarified for the public that the Commission only approves a one-half-year contract at a time due to different budget year schedules. County Manager Shubert explained that the County budget runs with the fiscal year, while the public defender budget runs with the calendar year.

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 Contract for 2023 CDBG Dirt Road Drainage & Paving – Katie Lane & Dusty Lane

Chairman Thrift handed this item to Vice-Chairman Barry Cox due to a conflict of interest. Vice Chair Cox read the agenda item.

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the 2023 CDBG Dirt Road Drainage & Paving for Katie Lane and Dusty Lane. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion. Commissioner Burse explained that this is the second part of the 2023 CDBG. The original contract was finished under budget, so these two nearby roads were selected to be paved to use the rest of the project funds. It was noted that these two short roads will no longer require maintenance by a motor grader.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-ABSTAIN-due to conflict of interest.

G. Bid Award – Two (2) Motor Graders

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

Commissioner Burse made a motion to approve the lease of Caterpillar motor graders at the price of \$4611.00 per month per machine for 5 years with a preventative maintenance program.

Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was any discussion.

Commissioner Cox noted that the lease brings a maintenance contract, and the machines will be replaced at the end of the lease, or there is a purchase option of \$109,410.00 per machine. County Manager Shubert confirmed one of the current motor graders will be sold.

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. Bid Award – Two (2) Tractors with Two (2) 7' Mowers

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to accept the bid of two (2) Mahindra 75 HP models with 7-foot Bush Hog rotary mower attachments for \$88,024.00 each. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

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. Bid Award for One (1) Dump Truck

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to accept the bid from Tom Nehl of Waycross for \$155,494.00 for a 20274 Freightliner dump truck. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was any discussion.

*Commissioner Burse had stepped out of the Commission Chambers during the discussion on agenda item H before the vote was taken. He came back in as Commissioner Tindall was making the motion on agenda item I. Chairman Thrift asked Commissioner Burse for his vote on agenda item H. Commissioner Burse said he chose Dixon Tractor, but changed his response to “aye” as the motion was to award the bid to Dixon Tractor for the Mahindra tractor. His vote was recorded at this time.

Commissioner Tindall asked about the size of the dump truck. County Manager Shubert confirmed it comes with a 46-lb axle and a 16-ft Ox body dump bed.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Pope-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

J. Bid Award for One (1) Excavator

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

Commissioner Burse made a motion to accept the bid from National Equipment Dealers, LLC for \$195,500. County Manager Shubert noted that it would be a purchase. Chairman Thrift asked if he wanted to go with the Hyundai vs the Caterpillar or the Hyundai. Commissioner Cox stated he would like to look at the leasing. County Manager Shubert reminded the Commission that they needed a second to the motion to go to discussion. Other options would be to withdraw the

Commissioner Burse withdrew his motion to purchase the Hyundai Excavator. Discussion ensued regarding Caterpillar vs Komatsu. The lowest purchase price was for the Hyundai at \$195,500.00. Chairman Thrift stated his preference for a Komatsu, which could be purchased for \$259,169.00. The purchase price for Caterpillar was \$264,840.00. Commissioner Cox stated that if the choice is to lease, he would recommend Caterpillar, as the monthly lease is lower, and there is a buy-back option at the end of the lease. The monthly lease for the Caterpillar excavator is \$3,989.88 for a 5-year lease. The total lease amount is \$239,392.80, lower than the purchase price of both the Komatsu and Caterpillar.

Commissioner Burse made a motion to lease the Caterpillar excavator in the amount of \$3,989.88 per month for 60 months. Commissioner Tindall seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

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

K. Establish a 120-Day Moratorium on Alcohol Delivery Service

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to approve the 120-day moratorium on alcohol delivery service. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion.

Chairman Thrift asked if there was discussion on this item.

Commissioner Tindall explained this will allow the codes department to research and decide if they need to add more specific wording beyond what is in the Georgia Code. County Manager Shubert specified that this is for home delivery of sealed alcohol.

Roll Call Vote:

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

L. Resolution 2025-24: Approve Ware County Safety Incentive Pay

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

Commissioner Cox made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-24 to approve safety incentive pay for employees. Commissioner Tindall seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye.

M. Request to Close and Abandon 50' x 400' section of Center Street

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

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to table this item until further research is completed. Commissioner Burse seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion. He then asked if the Commission chose to vote to close the road instead of tabling the issue, if someone could look at the possibility of putting a culvert pipe in the ditch that runs across the Kirkhart property, based on the County policy that the property owner purchases the pipe and dirt. County Manager Shubert said the problem lies in that the County dump truck cannot go down the ditch (on private property). Commissioner Burse asked if the Commission could vote to close the road and then have a pipe installed. Mr. Shubert said that was a possibility. Chairman Thrift said that before anything could be confirmed, someone would have to go look at the property. He felt it would be a good idea to have a second opinion on the property.

Roll Call Vote:

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

N. Consider a Motion to Enter into Executive Session

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

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel, litigation, and/or real estate acquisition. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Leonard Burse-aye; Commissioner Jon Tindall-aye; Commissioner Timmy Lucas-aye; Commissioner Barry Cox-aye; and Chairman Elmer Thrift-aye

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 7:25 p.m.

When the Commission reconvened in the Commission Chambers, Commissioner Tindall made a motion to exit Executive Session. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Executive Session was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT:

County Manager Shubert gave the Commission an update on the Albany Avenue overpass. The revised preliminary plans should be received by the end of November. He noted the attorney's

office is working on appraisals for property acquisition. Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog explained to the Commission that the title work on Albany Avenue has been completed and sent to the appraiser. The McDonald Road survey plans are being revised before going to the appraiser. Gibbs Lane and the other roads will follow. Negotiations for property on Albany Avenue and McDonald Road should begin in December.

County Manager Shubert told the Commission the State Street overpass is still on schedule to be let in November. He spoke with the GDOT area supervisor regarding the 180-day road closure for the Hog Creek Bridge road closure, and he will be checking back with the manager when he has the needed information. Mr. Shubert also reminded the Commission of the Tri-County meeting to be held at the Ware County Admin building on Monday, December 1, 2025, at 10 a.m. He also reminded them of the collaborative meeting with the City of Waycross, Board of Education, and other local stakeholders, which will also be held at the Ware County Admin building on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 10 a.m.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Chairman Thrift told the Commission that he has requested help from the Regional Commission on the perimeter road. Pierce County Commission Chairman Neal Bennett also chairs the Regional Commission Council. He has promised to present this to the Council.

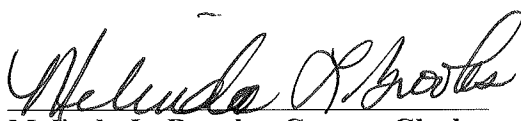
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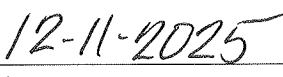
Commissioner Burse made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Date proposed to be approved: December 8, 2025


Elmer Thrift, Chairman

ATTEST:


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk


Date

