

**MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026  
3:30 p.m.**

**The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session, Monday, January 12, 2026, 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
<b>COMMISSIONERS ABSENT</b>	Commissioner Jon Tindall
<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	County Manager James Shubert; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
<b>PRESS</b>	Danny Bartlett - 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

**GUEST SPEAKER(S): None**

**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR – Adam Herrin**

Human Resources Director Theresa Young and County Manager James Shubert presented Waycross – Ware County Airport employee Adam Herrin with the County Employee of the Month. He was presented with a certificate and a check in appreciation for his dedication and loyalty.

**EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – Pam Neely**

Human Resources Director Theresa Young and County Manager James Shubert presented Facilities Maintenance employee Pam Neely to the Commission as the County Employee of the Month. She was given a \$100 check as a token of appreciation for her dedication and loyalty.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**A. Vice-Chairman of Ware County Board of Commissioners**

The Commission discussed who should be appointed to replace Commissioner Cox as the Vice-Chairman for 2026. Commissioner Burse was the decided appointee.

**B. Ex-Officio for Waycross-Ware County Public Library**

The Commission discussed who should be appointed as the Ex-Officio member of the Waycross-Ware County Public Library to replace Commissioner Lucas, who has served for the past couple of years.

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

**A. Airport Land Lease**

Airport Manager and Fire Chief Dee Meadows presented the land lease for Michael and Vickie Franklin, stating they plan to construct a private aircraft hangar on the leased property. The leased parcel is approximately 60 feet by 100 feet, totaling 6,000 square feet. The annual lease rate is \$.04 per square foot, for a total of \$240 per year. County Manager Shubert explained that the drawing in the agenda packet shows the hangar at an angle, but it will likely be rotated so it sits parallel to the apron.

Chief Meadows asked for permission to get prices to grub the acreage where the timber was cut in 2025. He stated the purpose is to clean up the land and prepare it for future use. The Commission consented to the request, with Commissioner Lucas stating that he would prefer a local vendor be used if at all possible.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**B. Completion of Paving on Emerson Park Roads**

County Manager Shubert explained to the Commission that these roads need to be reevaluated for drainage because they lack ditches. If the roads are simply paved as they are, there could be flooding in the area. He noted that adding drainage to paved roads increases the cost. Commissioner Cox encouraged him to look at paving in Millwood (about ½ mile).

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**C. Approve Contract for The Scruggs Company – Phase 2 Local Funds Paving**

Chairman Thrift stated he did not see an issue. County Manager Shubert explained that the contract must be approved before paving work can begin.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**D. Approve Proposal for Trembling Earth Complex Master Plan – Pickleball**

Recreation Department Director Lance Adamson explained to the Commission that the original designer of the Trembling Earth Complex Master Plan is still with Lose Designs. He said Lose Designs planned the facility in 1999 and subsequently developed several sets of construction documents for various phases of SPLOST campaigns. The designer has submitted a proposal for \$12,650 to update the plans to include pickleball courts. There will be two stages of this plan. First would be the project initiation, which would consist of meeting with the Commission, staff, and stakeholders, and checking out what may have evolved since the last set of plans was developed. The second would be conceptual planning and advising the County on what needs to be done. He did say it appears the Wadley side of the complex would be the cheapest option, to which Commissioner Burse responded that the County needs to try to do the wise and prudent thing.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**E. Reappointment to Board of Zoning and Appeals – Audra Padgett and Amelia Teston**

County Manager Shubert explained the BOZA appointments expired on December 31, 2025. Both want to serve again. Their terms are for three years, expiring on December 31, 2028.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**F. Alcohol License Request**

Code Department Head Lt. Dave Hanson presented this item to the Commission. He explained that Mr. Tariq has met all of the requirements of the license application. He has no disqualifiers. Commissioner Cox asked if the previous owner had an alcohol license. Lt. Hanson stated that he did have one.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**G. Resolution 2026-01: Set Qualifying Fees**

This resolution establishes the qualifying fees for the upcoming election in accordance with state requirements. The fees are as follows:

County Commission, Districts 1 and 3	\$144
Solicitor	\$1,714.79
Board of Education, Districts 4, 5, 6	\$216

Board of Elections Supervisor Carlos Nelson reported to the Commission that the Ware County Board of Elections recently hosted the Region 14 meeting. He said they had a great turnout, including the State Board of Elections Chair and the Elections Director from Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger's office.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**H. Resolution 2026-02: VOCA Grant Application**

This resolution approves a Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) grant application submittal (\$129,185.00) to the Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia for federal funding from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for 2026. This action is a formality, but it is required.

**Added to the Regular Meeting Agenda**

**I. Resolution 2026-03: Memorandum of Understanding for Rec Dept BOOST Grant**

This resolution would authorize the approval for a Memorandum of Understanding with the Georgia Recreation and Park Association for participation in the BOOST 2.0 program. The program includes a \$45,000 grant to support out-of-school time services focused on learning acceleration, academic development, student connectedness, and student well-being for Georgia students. Local educators are also involved in delivering these services to the students.

**Added to the Regular Meeting Agenda**

**J. Discussion of Dumpster Sites**

Chairman Thrift introduced the idea of placing about four dumpsters around the county. The sites would be fenced, gated, and have cameras. County Manager Shubert said the discussion would be whether to have these sites available weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Commissioner Burse stated he would support this if it is done correctly. Otherwise, it

could backfire, as people will abuse the situation by dumping tires, furniture, etc., whenever and wherever they want. The Commission granted the County Manager permission to look into available options.

**Added to the Regular Meeting Agenda**

**K. Purchase of Pipe for Public Works**

County Manager Shubert explained that this request is to purchase driveway pipe for inventory. Citizens pay for the installation of the pipe in their driveways. The requested purchase amount is \$14,704.87.

**Added to the Regular Meeting Agenda**

**L. 2% Cost of Living Adjustment for all Employees**

County Manager Shubert requested approval for a 2% COLA for Ware County employees. At the time of FY26 budget adoption, employees were given a 3% COLA. Staff were instructed to re-evaluate the budget mid-year to determine if an additional 2% could be provided. At the end of December 2025, county expenditures were approximately 1% (\$324,267.22) below the projected amount. The estimated cost for the 2% COLA through the end of FY26 is approximately \$200,000.

**Added to Regular Meeting Agenda**

**COUNTY MANAGER COMMENTS: None**

**COMMISSION COMMENTS: None**

**ADJOURN:**

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to adjourn the Work Session, with Commissioner Cox seconding the motion, which passed unanimously. The Work Session adjourned at 4:39 p. m.

Date proposed to be approved: February 9, 2026

  
Elmer Thrift, Chairman

  
Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

2-10-2026  
Date

