

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2025
3:30 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session, Monday, December 8, 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.

CALL TO ORDER	Chairman Elmer Thrift
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT	Commissioner Barry Cox, Commissioner Leonard Burse, Commissioner Jon Tindall, and
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	Commissioner Timmy Lucas
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager James Shubert; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
PRESS	Danny Bartlett – WJH
INVOCATION	The Invocation was given by Commissioner Tindall
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Elmer Thrift

GUEST SPEAKER(S):

Rev. Ferrell Malone – Macedonia Baptist Church and Concerned Clergy of South GA
Reverend Malone addressed the Commission as part of the concerned clergy in the community of Waycross and Ware County. He alluded to a recent event at the local fair, stating excessive force was used. He noted the Sheriff has referred the incident to the GBI for further investigation. However, in a positive effort to prevent any situations such as this in the future, he is proposing a resolution. This resolution would call for mindset-de-escalation training for post-certified officers, mandatory use of body cams, and establish a citizen review board. He noted the Sheriff has always been amenable to discussing concerns with him. He thanked the Commission for their time and welcomed them to come to him with any questions.

Danny Bartlett – Waycross Exchange Club

Mr. Bartlett addressed the Commission regarding installing a Freedom Shrine in the County Administration Building. He explained there are 30 plus items included in the Freedom Shrine. The cost is \$1,300.00 and would be installed by members of the Exchange Club. He suggested putting it on the wall of the Commission Chambers. Some of the Commissioners mentioned that it may be a better idea to display it in the downstairs lobby, where everyone coming into the building could see it. Otherwise, it would only be viewed those entering the Commission Chambers, where meetings are only held once or twice per month.

AGENDA ITEMS:

A. Board of Assessors: Reappoint Darrell Roberson

Chief Tax Appraiser Billy Carter explained to the Commission that Mr. Roberson has served for a number of years on the Board of Assessors, most recently as Chairman. He has submitted a letter seeking reappointment. Mr. Carter is asking that the Commission reappoint Mr. Roberson.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

B. Recreation Board: Reappoint Carlos Nelson, Post 1 and Ramona Thrift, Post 5

County Manager James Shubert explained this item is a simply a reappointment request for the Recreation Board. Both Mr. Nelson and Mrs. Thrift have agreed to continue serving on the board. This new term will begin on January 1, 2026 and expire on December 31, 2031. When the Recreation Board was reactivated in January 2025, board members were given staggered terms from one to three years. Upon reappointment, each board member will serve the required five (5) years.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

C. Approve Electrical Contractor for EMA Storage Building

County Manager Shubert explained to the Commission that quotes were requested for electrical work on the EMA storage building. Three were received, with the lowest one being from Carter Electric in the amount of \$16,994.93.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

D. Bid Award: 2023 Local Funds Phase 2 – The Scruggs Company

Vice-Chairman Barry Cox read this item due to Chairman Thrift having family members submit a bid. Sealed bids were received for the 2023 Local Funds Phase 2 Streets: Palmetto Drive, Lake Drive, Crystal Street, Dasher Street, Bennett Lane, and Astoria Road. Bids were received from the following bidders: East Coast Asphalt, LLC Douglas, GA \$1,097,451.90, The Scruggs Company, Waycross, GA \$657,638.57.00, and Thrift Brothers, LLC, Waycross, GA \$751,981.00. Design engineer for the project, Coastal Engineering Consultants, Inc. (CEC), has reviewed the bids received on November 20, 2025, for the subject project. The lowest responsive and responsible bid was received from The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$657,638.57. CEC recommended an award to The Scruggs Company in the amount of the bid.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

E. Approve County Manager Contract

This item is to extend County Manager James Shubert's employment from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028 by offering a three-year contract. Mr. Shubert's current contract, which was for a probationary period of one year, will expire on December 31, 2025.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

F. Approve Work Order 25-15 with Passero Associates, LLC for Tree Obstruction Study and Removal Project Phase 1

County Manager Shubert advised the Commission that GDOT has identified several trees that are in violation of the glide pattern approaching Runway 1/19, which runs north to south. As part of the Capital Improvement Plan for the airport, Passero Associates, LLC

will facilitate the removal of the trees. Mr. Shubert gave the total cost of \$7,500, stating the cost would be covered by the Airport Fund. Commissioner Burse asked what would happen if the trees were not removed. County Manager Shubert explained that if the process does not get started, the airport could lose federal and state funding.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

G. Approve Work Order 25-12 with Passero Associates, LLC to Rehabilitate Runway 1/19 (Design)

County Manager Shubert told the Commission that GDOT has determined that Runway 1/19 needs to be rehabbed. This work order with Passero Associates, LLC is for the design of the project. The entire cost is \$137,516.00. Usually, the funding is split – 90% paid by federal government and 10% paid by state and local government. This year, the split is 95/5. Ware County will only be responsible for 2.5% of the design cost, which is approximately \$3,347.90. Mr. Shubert explained this decrease in the percentage to be paid by local government is another reason that the previous agenda item (runway obstruction) needs to be approved.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

H. Road Closing/Abandoning: Center Street, Located in the South Deenwood Subdivision

This item was tabled from the November 10 meeting after having been through two (2) public hearings. The Commission was to gather more information about the property behind section that would be closed.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

I. Resolution 2025-25: Approve Language Access Plan (LAP) for CDBG

County Clerk Melinda Brooks explained to the Commission that they must adopt a revised Language Access Plan for every CDBG, DCA, HUD, and other federal funded grants. Approving this resolution shows that the Commission has adopted the LAP in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

COUNTY MANAGER COMMENTS: None

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Chairman Thrift said he had received a call from Representative Burchett, who told him the question of a perimeter road would be placed on the May 19 ballot. He is unsure of the wording that will be on the ballot, but said there will be no more discussion until the vote.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Burse made a motion to adjourn the Work Session. Commissioner Tindall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Work Session adjourned at 4:10 p. m.

Date proposed to be approved: January 12, 2026


Elmer Thrift, Chairman


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

1-13-2026
Date

