

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2026
3:30 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session, Monday, April 13, 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.

CALL TO ORDER	Chairman Elmer Thrift
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT	Commissioner Leonard Burse, Commissioner Barry Cox, Commissioner Timmy Lucas, and Commissioner Jon Tindall
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	None
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager James Shubert, Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog, County Clerk Melinda Brooks
PRESS	Danny Bartlett - WJH
INVOCATION	Commissioner Jon Tindall
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	Chairman Elmer Thrift

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

Human Resources Director Theresa Young and County Manager James Shubert presented Deputy Tax Commissioner Laura Cox as Employee of the Month. She was nominated by her supervisor, Tax Commissioner Roger Collins. Mrs. Cox was given a certificate and a \$100 check in appreciation of her dedication. Tax Commissioner Collins praised Mrs. Cox's dedication to her job and for stepping up to run the office while he was on emergency medical leave.

GUEST SPEAKER(S):

Danny Bartlett, Ware County Exchange Club

Mr. Bartlett told the Commission that the Exchange Club is sponsoring a Field of Honor for the 250th birthday of the United States. Citizens and corporations can purchase flags in honor of their loved ones for display during the celebration.

John Ratcliff, Thrill of the First Flight

Mr. Ratcliff invited the Commission to the Thrill of the First Flight, a fly-in event, to be held at the Waycross-Ware County Airport. This event allows children aged 9-19 to take a flight in a small airplane and get a front-seat aerial view of their hometown.

AGENDA ITEMS:

A. **Bid Award – Recreation Department Beverage Contract**

County Manager James Shubert told the Commission that Coca-Cola Bottling Company was the only bidder for the Recreation Department. Beverage product was priced per case: 20 oz carbonated - \$33.49, 16.9-20 oz water - \$26.74, and 20 oz isotonic - \$32.10. Additional contributions include: \$10,000 – one-time donation for a utility buggy; \$6,000 – volunteer appreciation (\$2,000/year x 3 years); \$3,000 – Coolers, hand towels, etc. (\$1,000/year x 3 years), and \$7,500. There will also be a 20% commission earned on most products.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

B. **Bailey Street Pool – Operator Agreement and Proposal**

County Manager Shubert told the Commission that this is a two-part request for approval. The YMCA will operate Bailey Street Pool from May 23, 2026, through August 1, 2026; Tuesday-Saturday, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. The YMCA will provide certified lifeguards for the duration of the agreement. The total cost for pool operations is \$11,000, payable in two installments: \$5,500 due on June 1, 2026, and \$5,500 due on July 1, 2026.

Sully’s Pool Service and Safety Training will provide Certified Pool Operator (CPO) services, including chemical management, cleaning and sanitation, filtration and equipment oversight, and safety compliance. The cost for CPO services is \$2,400 per month (prorated) for a total of \$7,200. Some Recreation Department employees will receive CPO training, reducing costs by approximately 50%.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

C. **Resolution 2025-6: Local Legislation for Technology Fees**

County Manager Shubert explained that this agenda item is a resolution supporting local legislation that authorizes the Ware County Magistrate Court, Probate Court, and State Court to assess and collect a \$10 technology fee for each civil action and a \$10 surcharge on each assessed fine. Assessment of these fees will not become effective upon the Governor’s signing of the local legislation. The assessment shall terminate on July 1, 2036.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

D. **Bid Award – Airport Runway 1/19 Rehabilitation**

County Manager Shubert told the Commission that bids were received and opened on March 5, 2026, for the rehabilitation of airport runway 1/19. Three bids were received: East Coast Asphalt, LLC - \$ 1,731,196.00; The Scruggs Company - \$2,014,243.20; Thrift Brothers - \$3,074,191.00. The low bid was from East Coast Asphalt, LLC. The cost split of the project is 95% Federal (\$1,644,636.20), 2.5% State (\$43,279.90), 2.5% Local (\$43,279.90).

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

E. **Library Board Reappointment – Unexpired Term of Tawanna Harris**

County Manager James Shubert told the Commission that Tawanna Harris has moved from Ware County and can no longer attend these meetings. Her term will expire in 7.5 months on December 31, 2026. This agenda item is to appoint someone to fill Ms. Harris's unexpired term. Mrs. Stacey Thrift was the only applicant for this position.

Once this term is up, the Commission can suggest names for the January 1, 2027 appointment/reappointment.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

F. 2026 Local Road Assistance (LRA) – Approve Roads for Application

The 2026 LMIG LRA application portal is now open with a total available funding of \$1,373,079.19. Two roads are being considered for resurfacing: Beach Road (3.689 miles) and Lucy Moore Road (4.923 miles). The engineering cost estimate for Lucy Moore Road is \$896,169.02, and for Beach Road it is \$695,064.30. The total estimate is \$1,591,233.32, which is \$218,154.13 more than the funding from LRA

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

G. WCSO Purchase Request – 5 Ford Explorers

County Manager Jame Shubert explained that Sheriff Carl James is requesting to purchase five (5) 2026 Ford Explorers to replace his aging fleet. All five vehicles will come with patrol equipment already installed, priced at \$56,140.00 each, for a total of \$280,700.00. 2022 SPLOST will fund this purchase as designated in the referendum.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

H. HB 1566 Homestead Exemption from Ware County School District Ad Valorem Tax for Residents aged 75 and Older

The Governor’s Office asked for a letter of support. If approved, taxes could be reduced by \$400,000. All of the Commissioners agreed they would prefer to speak with members of the Board of Education to get their take on this resolution before offering support.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

I. Resolution 2026-06: Approve GDOT TIA Agreement for P.I. 0020590

This resolution approves an agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for Ware County to receive reimbursement for a Transportation Reinvestment Act (TIA) project involving Solomon Street, 4th Avenue, South Avenue, and 6th Avenue. These streets are included in the TIA program, with a scheduled let date of March 1, 2032. Ware County will be reimbursed for project costs when funds become available in 2032. County Manager Shubert explained that this agreement is being signed now to secure reimbursement for these streets, which are only a portion of the project.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

J. Resolution 2026-7: Approve GDOT TIA Agreement for P. I. 0020589

This resolution approves an agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for Ware County to receive reimbursement for a Transportation Reinvestment Act (TIA) project involving Katie Lane and Dusty Lane. These streets are included in the TIA program, with a scheduled let date of June 1, 2028. Ware County will be reimbursed for project costs when funds become available in 2028. County Manager Shubert explained that this agreement is being signed now to get reimbursement for these streets, which are only some of the streets in this project. Katie Lane and Dusty Lane are part of the 2023 CDBG project.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

K. Alcohol License Request: 1200 E. Blackshear Avenue

County Manager Shubert presented this alcohol license request from Nitulbhai K. Patel

for 512 E. Blackshear Street. He has no disqualifiers. When asked, Mr. Shubert said the closest church is outside the minimum distance requirements.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

L. Borrow Pit – Rusty Tatum

This item requests approval of a borrow pit agreement with Rusty Tatum for approximately 1 acre on Ammons Road. The county had a previous agreement with Mr. Tatum on a different piece of property. The quality of dirt is good and beneficial to building and repairing Ware County Roads.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

M. Ware County Board of Health Reappointment

The County Manager stated Dr. Jill Goggans-Bryant's term on the Ware County Board of Health expired on December 31, 2025. She has agreed to serve another 5-year term, ending on December 31, 2026.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

COMMISSION COMMENTS: None

Commissioner Cox gave an update on the local bridge repair. Work on the Gum Swamp Bridge should begin in the middle of May, while the Hog Creek Bridge repair will start in July. He noted that the study for the need for red flashing lights at Pebble Hill will take about a year. He also discussed truck weight limit signs, resurfacing, and striping on Zion Hill Road. He is interested in having the County look into organizing a scrap tire drive like the City recently held.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: None

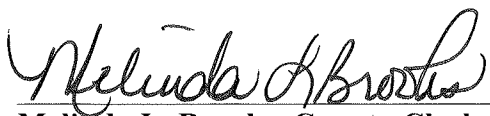
Mr. Shubert told the Commission that he has some maps for the Commission to look at regarding ROW acquisition for the Albany Avenue overpass.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to adjourn the Work Session. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Work Session adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Date proposed to be approved: May 11, 2026


Elmer Thrift, Chairman


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

5-11-2026
Date

