

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026
3:30 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, June 10, 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 (via phone), 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

GUEST SPEAKER: Ken Taft – Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Mr. Taft spoke to the Commission about the GICH Committee, a joint partnership comprising 26 team members from the City and County Government, the local board of education, and the public. GICH is a three-year program offering Georgia communities technical assistance, training, and collaboration to address local affordable housing and community development needs. Every year, the state of Georgia chooses five communities to fund their housing projects. GICH gives communities the opportunity to submit a support letter for a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) development, to apply for DCA’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) annually instead of every other year, and to receive additional points in the competitive scoring of the Community Home Investment Program (CHIP). He named some existing LIHTC projects: Bunn Building, Ocean Breeze, Ware Hotel, Waring Apartments, Ware Manor, Peachwood Place, and Westport Village. He noted that Waycross is below the national average for homeownership and that the average age of the homes is much older than the state and national averages. He explained what affordable housing is and noted that housing costs should not exceed 30% of household income.

Mr. Taft updated the Commission on the committee’s progress, noting that they attended the 2025 Spring and Fall Retreats. They have approved bylaws and formed subcommittees for

policy and education, to gain community engagement, and for project review and recruitment. They are most proud that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has awarded the City a LIHTC project, Vine Street Village, a 53-unit apartment complex. They are currently working with the Waycross-Ware County Development Authority on a housing assessment that has not been conducted in 25 years. This will help define the community's needs to develop a housing plan. They are currently working on a 2026 LIHTC application. They will attend the 2026 spring and fall retreat. While actively engaging the community, they hope to develop a work plan to address housing needs. Mr. Taft thanked the Commission for their support during this process.

AGENDA ITEMS:

A. Right of Way Mowing Contract

County Manager James Shubert presented this item, explaining that the contract would be extended for one year for \$193,320. The arm mowing along the back edge of the right-of-way was removed from the contract. There will be three mowing cycles and three litter removal cycles. He noted that this contract is funded by T-SPLOST.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

B. 2023 Local Funds Phase 1 – Coastal Engineering – Change Order: Jim Mixon Road and Camp Branch Road Pipe Replacement

County Manager Shubert presented the request for a change order for the purpose of replacing existing cross drains in six locations on Jim Mixon Rd, as well as repaving all areas disturbed during the pipe replacement process. The change order also included cutting the asphalt surface on Camp Branch Road to access the pipe, then resealing the pipe before repaving the disturbed section.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

C. Airport Ground Lease Amendment – Michael and Vickie Franklin

County Manager Shubert explained to the Commission that a land lease had been approved for the Franklins at the January 12, 2026, meeting to allow them to construct a private aircraft hangar. However, the site was not approved by the FAA, and another location had to be chosen. The site consists of approximately 80 feet by 100 feet, totaling 8,000 square feet. The lease rate is \$.04 per square foot annually, for a total annual lease cost of \$320.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: None

COMMISSION COMMENTS: None

The Commissioners brought up individual concerns from their districts for the County Manager to look into. Commissioner Tindall mentioned trash blowing off the trash truck when going down Central Avenue. He also noted there are some issues with concrete/paving at Seminole Trail and Highland Drive. Also, there is concrete sinking on Andrea Drive. Commissioner Cox brought up the road list for TSPLOST, TIA, and CBDG projects. It was also noted that Lucy Moore Road needs to be resurfaced.

Commissioner Lucas asked about the loose rocks on Paschall Road. Chairman Thrift and County

Manager Shubert explained that once the asphalt heats up under the summer sun, that issue will be eliminated. He mentioned flashing lights at the intersection of Wacona Drive and Jamestown Highway. That is a state route, so GDOT will have to place any lights there. Commissioner Burse mentioned the US1/Pebble Hill Road study.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Tindall made a motion to adjourn the Work Session. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Work Session adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Date proposed to be approved: April 13, 2026


Elmer Thrift, Chairman


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

4-15-2026
Date

