Thomson & Dearing McDuffie County, Georgia

MCDUFFIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Session Meeting
Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 10:00 AM
Government Complex Commissioner Room
MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Chase Beggs, Chairman
Sammie Wilson Sr., Vice Chairman
Bill Jopling, Commissioner
Fredrick Favors, Commissioner
Steven Hollimon, Commissioner

COUNTY REPRESENTATION:
Brandon Burton, County Manager
Ashtyn Goodyear, County Clerk
Pam Workman, Finance Director
Robert Spurlin, IT Director
Catherine Kirby, Animal Shelter Director
Stacey Thomas, Tax Commissioner
Gina Timmerman, Clerk of Superior Court
Trevor Welcher, Recreation Director
Stephanie Walker, Senior/Transit Director
Chief Sewell, Fire & EMS
Paul Johnson, Coroner
Elizabeth Vance, Tourism Director

MEDIA: McDuffie Progress

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Beggs called the meeting to order at 10:00 am, acknowledged a quorum of commissioners present and welcomed everyone in attendance.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Favors offered the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
we will support.

APPROVALS

1. <u>Agenda (Current)</u>
Chairman Beggs asked if there were any corrections to the current agenda or minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Hollimon to approve the current agenda as written and was seconded by Vice Chair Wilson and passed unanimously.

2. <u>Minutes</u>
Regular Session – December 16, 2025
Executive Session – December 16, 2025
Chairman Beggs asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Favors and passed unanimously.

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

3. Springs Sports Registration

STAFF REPORTS

4. **County Manager Report –**

County Manager Burton gave an update on Gilpin Rd and Stagecoach Rd, the paving is complete, but the work is not. The shoulders need still rebuilding and to adjust a few things like driveway aprons and drop-offs. The project engineer is aware of these things. The back parking lot at Sweetwater has been paved and striped. There are two items out at Sweetwater, there is a door that has been broken for some time that we are getting fixed, and the fence around the electrical panel. There has been a grounding/electric issue, and the fence will help us create safety. Burton has directed the road department to do some patching on Bowden Pond Rd from where the city made a utility cut. We made a purchase order to start the work on the electrical issue at Eubanks Park. The last FEMA payment has been made, there are some smaller funds that are outstanding, but they are working on those items. Solid Waste and its bid are due Friday, January 9th. Raysville Fire Station interior rebuild bid opening is January 20th. The roofs for Public Works and the Elections building bids are due Friday, January 9th. We have issued a NTP for Blind Willie Park, CM Merrill will begin to move stuff in this week to begin erosion control and site prep. We will get a schedule from contractor and plan a groundbreaking ceremony. The last of November we worked with Nicee, with CDBG to get architect engineer services for the gym. We received one response and Nicee is checking with the procurement channels to make sure that is ok, and we don't have to re-solicitate. We are waiting for more final updates on the Wrightsboro Rd Sewer Project. The engineer reached out and stated they are finalizing the engineering drawings. Burton had a conversation with Spratlin regarding the Sweetwater Park towers, Burton asked if they would make some changes to their contract, so we hope to have a contract in hand by the end of the week. Knox Rivers Rd is a project with a new water line upgrade; there is a preconstruction conference set for Friday to get the project moving along. We are working on the Rock House Rd ROW negotiations. The county attorney is working on the letter, and we are beginning the process of making contact to the landowners. The ROW drawings have been submitted to GDOT and the TIA team. We had a gentleman stop by from Ossoff's office to have a general conversation if there is any congressional funding we would be interested in. Burton asked the Board to let him know if any projects come to mind. Mr. Burton mentioned to the gentleman from Ossoff's office that he was looking at needing $30 million for water and sewer, that that is our biggest need as far as infrastructure, outside of transportation. The congressional funding team is going to meet back with Mr. Burton to begin these conversations. Wilkes County and Washington have lost their solid waste transfer station in a fire. Due to this, we are taking their solid waste and hauling it out. Taliaferro County had been taking their waste to Wilkes County; due to this we are also taking Taliaferro County. Burton explained we are starting to work on SPLOST VIII, we are looking at list from department heads and speaking with the city to finalize SPLOST VIII needs. Public Works Director Torrie Battle indicated that the speed sign indicators on various roads, have had a bad batch of batteries (this also happened in other counties). We are waiting to get the new batteries to fix this issue. Burton spoke with Civic Plus on recodification; they are working on a few things on their end and then send us some documents. This process hopefully will begin in March. LMIG is due the first of February and Burton asked the Board to give him some input on this LMIG list. The two interns we applied for last year through UGA/ACCG, we were awarded. One will work on asset management and policies, and one will work on records and record management.

5. **Recreation Department Update –**

Director Welcher gave a recreation department update. Welcher says the staff positions have all been filled for about two months. He would like to update the park equipment at all parks. Welcher, Burton, and the IT department have been working on a project they hope to show to the Board soon. Welcher is providing more information soon about resurfacing the tennis court. The athletic department basketball season begins tonight. Springs Sport registration is online now. Diamond Youth baseball has minor issues with other agencies, and he is getting more information. We will be doing Diamond Youth this year. Jose will be spear heading DYB along with three other staff members. He encourages the community if they see something to please say something regarding vandalism and trash. Chairman

Beggs mentioned that we have cameras on the new buildings at Sweetwater, and that the Sheriff's office has handled vandalism cases. Chairman Beggs asked if we need more cameras at more parks. Welcher said the drone footage showed that aerial cameras at different parks would be helpful. That they steadily pick up trash.

APPOINTMENT/REAPPOINTMENT

6. **Consideration to Re-Appoint County Clerk, Ashtyn Goodyear**
   Chairman Beggs asked for a motion for approval.

   Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to re-appoint County Clerk Ashtyn Goodyear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Favors and passed unanimously.

7. **Consideration to Re-Appoint County Attorney, Davis Dunaway**
   Chairman Beggs asked for a motion for approval.

   Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to re-appoint County Attorney Davis Dunaway. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jopling and passed unanimously.

8. **Consideration to Appoint Vice-Chair**
   Chairman Beggs asked for a motion for approval. He asked Vice Chairman Wilson how long he has been Vice Chair. Vice Chair Wilson has been serving for 24 years.

   Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to re-appoint Vice Chair Wilson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Favors and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

9. **ACO report for December 2025**

Tax Commissioner Stacey Thomas gave the ACO report update. She removed $4,902.51 in the property tax digest and made no changes to the mobile home digest. The decrease to the property tax digest is from appeals being settled and deleting old personal property accounts that were no longer owned by the taxpayers.

Commissioner Jopling made a motion to approve this ACO report. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Wilson and passed unanimously.

10. **Consideration of Resolution 2026-001 to Establish filing fees for elections in 2026**

Chairman Beggs stated Mr. Burton has a report on this item. Burton stated that the Elections Director Phyllis sent this over. There are several elections this year and we will need to establish the filing fees. There is one change needed. Total gross salary will be changed to Total gross stipend. She recommended this due to the BOE members getting a stipend rather than salary.

Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to approve this resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Favors and passed unanimously.

11. **Consideration of Stryker Preventive Maintenance Plan Renewal**

Chairman Beggs stated Chief Sewell has a report on this renewal. Chief Sewell said good morning to the Board and asked for approval on this plan renewal. This is the cardiac monitors, AEDs, power cots, power loads, etc. This is a budgeted item; we have it each year. They come in each year and do calibration maintenance; we don't pay for any parts during the year if something needs to be replaced.

Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to approve this renewal. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Wilson and passed unanimously.

12. Consideration to approve The Baird Audit Group

Chairman Beggs stated that Mr. Burton has an update on this. Burton explained this is to continue our relationship with The Baird Audit group to conduct our annual audit. This is due by June 30th. Burton explained he had thought about getting a new audit group, to have a set of fresh eyes, however, he rather continues to use them to close out 2025. In the future, Burton will be bringing it to the board to look for a new audit group for competitiveness and for a fresh set of eyes. It has been five years plus since we have resolicited, and Commissioner Jopling thinks it's a good idea to bid this out again due to the five years.

Commissioner Jopling made a motion to approve the audit group. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Wilson and passed unanimously.

13. Consideration of Change Order #1 – Sweetwater Seal Coating

Chairman Beggs stated that Mr. Burton has an update on this. Regarding the parking lot in front of the gym, Mr. Burton would like to re-pave completely in the future, but to preserve the life of the existing pavement, he recommends to seal coat and re-stripe the parking lot to get us by for a few more years. The back parking lot was just completed, and seal coating and re-striping the parking lot in front of the gym will make the entire park look more appealing. Mr. Burton said this bid is competitive to his research. Commissioner Hollimon asked if we have to re-bid? Mr. Burton said that since the work is similar, we can do a change-order.

Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to approve this change order. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jopling and passed unanimously.

14. Recreation Survey

Mr. Burton explained that he wants feedback from the Board on this. Burton wants to make positive improvements with recreation. This survey is to be released to the public. Burton asks for feedback from the Board on any changes they see they want to make to the survey. This survey should help us make strategic decisions. Chairman Beggs asked if the survey will be completed before our final SPLOST discussion. Mr. Burton said he would like to have the open period from 30-45 days, and then it will take several weeks to take the data and put it into a presentation. Chairman Beggs would like to see this data before we finalize the SPLOST list. Mr. Burton said we will work towards that. Commissioner Hollimon asked how this will be sent out. We will create a QR code and have it on our website, so you can scan or go to the link. This will also be shared on Facebook. We can hang up flyers with the QR code as well. Commissioner Hollimon asked to add to the grading part, to rate the Communication of the Recreation staff.

This item was for discussion only.

15. Town of Dearing Annexation

Burton shared with the Board that we received a letter from the Town of Dearing for their intentions to annex a couple of parcels into their corporate limits. The County has a 45-day comment period if there any objections. It does require a vote from the Board unless there are any objections. Commissioner Favors asked if we could have a work session prior to the Tuesday meeting so the Board can have some discussion on this item.

This item was for information only.

16. Harrison Drive Traffic Engineering Report

During public input in a previous meeting, we were presented with a petition to address speed concerns on Harrison Drive. Our consulting engineer came back with a recommendation to mitigate some of this speeding. They did a traffic count and speed study, and they came back stating that they need to do speed humps. They are not as wide as tables. Burton wants to stay away from speed bumps, as the humps and tables seem to be quieter. Burton asked for guidance if the Board would like him to continue and find quotes and initiating this due to the engineer study. The County Clerk certified the petition that it was accurate, and due to the speed studies, it showed that they exceed the 85-percentile meeting the requirements to have speed humps. Commissioner Jopling and Commissioner Favors stated that they were not for the speed tables, that they are awful on Ellington Ave. Commissioner Jopling made a comment, asking Chief Sewell if this made a difference for public safety. Chief Sewell said that response time is not affected by this, that the drivers are instructed to always drive safely.

Commissioner Favors made a motion to approve this report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jopling and passed unanimously.

17. Transportation Improvement Plan

Burton gave a presentation of his draft Transportation Plan. A copy of this presentation can be found in the agenda packet.

This item was for information only.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL

Enter: Commissioner Hollimon made a motion to enter executive session at 10:54am. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jopling and passed unanimously.

Exit: Commissioner Favors made a motion to exit executive session at 11:22am. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jopling and passed unanimously.

ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION (if any)

No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Jopling to adjourn the regular meeting at 11:23am. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Wilson and passed unanimously.

MCDUFFIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chase N. Beggs

Chase N. Beggs, Chairman

ATTEST: Ashtyn L. Goodyear

Ashtyn L. Goodyear, County Clerk