



MCDUFFIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Work Session Meeting
Monday, May 4, 2026, at 6:30 PM
Government Complex Commissioner Room
MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chase Beggs, Chairman
~~Sammie Wilson Sr., Vice Chairman~~
Bill Jopling, Commissioner
Fredrick Favors, Commissioner
~~Steven Hollimon, Commissioner~~
Catherine Kirby, Animal Services Director

COUNTY REPRESENTATION:

Brandon Burton, County Manager
Ashtyn Goodyear, County Clerk
Pam Workman, Finance Director
Robert Spurlin, IT Director
Chief Sewell, Fire/EMS Director

MEDIA: McDuffie Progress

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Beggs called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, acknowledged a quorum of commissioners present and welcomed everyone in attendance.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation and pledge of allegiance was given by Commissioner Favors.

APPROVALS

1. Agenda (Current)

Chairman Beggs asked if there were any corrections to the current agenda or minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Jopling to approve the current agenda as written and was seconded by Commissioner Favors and passed unanimously.

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

2. The Board of Commissioners scheduled meeting for May 19th will be at the Historic Court House due to Elections using the board room. This meeting will not be live streamed.
3. SPLOST VIII Special Election
4. VtheNP Community Health Talk: Break the Silence, Lower the Pressure is scheduled for Saturday, May 9th from 11am to 1pm.

STAFF REPORTS

5. County Manager Comments –

County Manager Burton gave some updates. The final roof inspections are completed for the public works building and soon to be elections building. The baseball tower at Sweetwater Park is still in progress. The Blind Willie McTell Downtown Park is also still in progress. The Raysville fire station is approximately 70% completed. We are working on creating a bid for different scopes of work to the Eubank building. Our health insurance managers will have an update on our insurance in June, Mr. Burton has asked if they could do extensive research in trying to find the best plan. Johnny Crutchfield will retire May 14, 2026. The new permit clerk will begin work May 18, 2026. Mr. Burton let department heads know in a meeting this week to go ahead and start working on budget for 2027. The new time management system is being worked on with Finance and IT and is a work in progress, we will begin using it soon. The Chief tax appraiser estimates tax assessments to go out at the beginning of June. Mr. Burton

congratulated the IT team for winning the G2C Award. This award stems from their hard work in upgrading our technology in the board room and live streaming meetings on YouTube. The Economic Development Director position should be posted online this week. The Wrightsboro Rd Sewer Expansion Phase 2 bid opening is tomorrow. Dr. Jopling asked how we are going to staff the Raysville Fire Station. Mr. Burton said he is working with Chief Sewell on making sure we work out having this fire station staffed as well.

APPOINTMENT/REAPPOINTMENT

6. Discussion on DFACS Advisory Board Appointment

The school board's recommendation for this DFACS appointment last month was not applicable due to the person not living in McDuffie County. The new recommendation is Tellis Leslie.

This item will be added to the May 6, 2026, agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

7. Discussion on Ferrous Rd

Mr. Thomas with GIW presented his power point that is included in the agenda packet. GIW is proposing that GIW be responsible to build a cul de sac at the south end of property and deed to McDuffie County, to build a fence around the cul de sac, and assume all maintenance of closed section of Ferrous Rd. They're proposing that McDuffie County is responsible to close Ferrous Rd to through traffic, deed closed section of Ferrous Rd to KSB GIW, and maintain a 20' utility easement on closed section. GIW is concerned about safety, maintenance, and growth. It was presented that the emergency response changes only 1-2 minutes by closing this road. A full copy of this presentation can be found in the agenda packet. Commissioner Favors mentioned that the last time this was discussed, the citizens who live in the area were concerned about emergency response time. Commissioner Favors asked if he ever met with the IDA. Mr. Thomas spoke with Gloria and she was giving his name to Don Powers, and that he also reached out to the previous County Manager and County Clerk, and was never successful on getting in touch with anyone. Mr. Thomas stated he did meet with James Upchurch with Forward McDuffie to try and get with Don Powers on this subject. Commissioner Favors also stated that he believes this could effect more traffic on the Washington Rd end, and that citizens are not happy with this idea. Commissioner Favors suggested since all these people are no longer here, that Mr. Thomas should be able to sit down with the IDA and discuss this matter. Commissioner Favors respectfully stated he did not agree that there was a lot of speeding on these roads due to the speed bumps and equipment traveling on the road and the curves in the road, that it would be hard to speed. Mr. Burton stated that Don Powers is here temporarily and he will get with him on this subject. Chairman Beggs stated he knows this issue has been going on for years, and thanked Mr. Thomas for having GIW here in McDuffie County.

This item will be added to a future agenda after more discussion is had.

8. Discussion on Data Center Zoning Designation

We currently do not have any zoning designations or permit regulations for future Data Centers. The ordinance presented can be amended to our current development code. This will give future applicants guidance on how Data Centers will be regulated in McDuffie County. Chairman Beggs stated that this ordinance defines data centers for a special exception, just how we would anything else like solar farms, etc. This will set parameters so in the future we will not have to have 31 conditions listed. Dr. Jopling suggested we do this. Chairman Beggs suggested we move ahead with having the first reading.

This item will be added to the May 19, 2026, agenda for the first reading.

9. Discussion on Data Center Moratorium

This moratorium is for a period of 90 days from the date of the adoption of the Resolution. The county will not accept any applications for Data Centers for this time period.

This item will be added to the May 6, 2026, agenda.

10. Discussion on Road Lists for LMIG and LRA 2026

The list presented is gathered from Mr. Burton, ATLAS, and Public Works Director Battle by looking at these roads and seeing what roads on the list are in the most need and what roads can wait. A list of these roads, mileage, and price can be found in the agenda packet. A revised road list will be presented on Wednesday. Chairman Beggs suggested to not use all the TSPLOST money so we can use TSPLOST funds for other road projects.

NEW BUSINESS

11. Discussion regarding Proclamation for Small Business Week

Chairman Beggs, Mayor Darby, and Mayor Axon have signed a proclamation declaring this week small business week.

This was for information only.

12. Discussion regarding Proclamation for Senior Center's Senior Citizen of the Year

Director Walker has sent out the names that will be voted on for this year's Senior Citizen of the Year.

This was for information only.

13. Discussion regarding Special Event Policy for 525 Main Street

This has been discussed several times. Presented is a draft to amend the ordinance for permit requirements and responsibilities for each department, and how code enforcement can handle these special events. Mr. Burton stated this can be changed to only County owned properties and can state that we do not allow any events at the Government Center Complex or the 525 Main street property without permission from the Board. A copy of this proposed ordinance can be found in the agenda packet. Commissioner Favors stated that he thinks the County should adopt this ordinance. Chairman Beggs and Commissioner Jopling stated that they do not want to interfere with restricting private property rights, that we are in a rural county and he feels people should be able to do what they want without the Government's permission, however, we have had events that happened in the last year that were a mess and had no ordinance in place to really enforce any laws on the matter. Commissioner Jopling mentioned events that happen on private property in the community now and how that would affect them. Mr. Burton stated that the way this ordinance is written, if it is over 100 people, the host is charging admission fees, selling alcohol, etc. then they would have to go through the County to get a special event permit. There will be more discussion on this special event policy.

This item will be added to the May 19, 2026, agenda.

14. Discussion on Blind Willie McTell Park Change Order #1

Mr. Burton stated that the construction project was signed for approximately \$3,080,000. There was \$270,000 worth of engineering budgeted to be expended, and \$60,000 worth of grant administration. This project is estimated to be towards \$3.4 million. There are only two funding sources that Mr. Burton is aware of, which are \$1 million out of SPLOST and a \$2.2 million grant. That brings the funds available to \$3.2 million, which has left us over budget already. In SPLOST VII there is allocation for \$125k for a handicap playground. The change order #1 presented tonight is for

\$55,591.37. This is to relocate a 4" gas line that ran through the middle of the project, that no one knew about. This gas line was discovered when the construction company started moving earth. To make this project work, the gas line needs to be moved to the tree line and wrap it around back out to the street. Subsequent to that discovery, there was also some unsuitable materials found – old terracotta lines and other subsurface abandoned utilities that were out there either under or adjacent to the footprint of the building, so these will have to be dug out, suitable fill material imported, recompact and footers constructed out of that. These old utilities lines can be injected with grout or a flowable field and seal up. This change order #2 will be \$88,200. Mr. Burton has spoken to the engineer, Cranston, and these numbers are pretty close and there are no avenues to argue with the contractor on these. To date, we have paid \$755,000 towards construction, a little over \$270,000 to Cranston for our engineering services. We will need an additional \$15,000 for additional engineering for Cranston to review submittals. The issues that have been ran into with making design changes is tying into sewer, there were pipe sizes and elevations not correctly shown on the drawings. So we have had to order manholes and adjust them in the field so they wouldn't stick out into Railroad Street. Some of the water tap sizes were incorrect and had to be upsized. With all of that taken into consideration, we are now \$368,791 over budget for this project. In the agenda packet, Mr. Burton included some cost saving measures we can take on this project. The money is not available to pull from reserves, and we are currently working towards finding a grant to help with this amount that is over budget. Landscaping could be cut from this project to save significant costs. The goal is to cut costs to get back into budget. The gas line change order is in need to be approved, so the project can continue. Chairman Beggs stated that there should be some money available from GA Power, that they will give funds for Economic Development in Counties.

Change Order #1 will be added to the May 6, 2026, agenda.

15. Discussion on Renewal for the Contract for Probation Supervision Services

Chairman Beggs reviewed over this agenda item with the Board. This is a contract for the McDuffie County Probation services which is up for renewal. In accordance with the applicable requirements these agreements are structured as a 12-month term for four-year automatic renewals and updated every five years. Judge Hammond has executed the updated agreement which is attached to the agenda packet.

This contract will be added to the May 6, 2026, agenda.

16. Discussion on Public Works Week and Proclamation

Mr. Burton presented this agenda item stating that Public Works Week will be May 17th – 23rd. City Administrator Teresa Smith spoke with Mr. Burton about making a County-wide celebration of this and is proposing to have a luncheon on May 21st over at the city shop for all Public Works Staff.

This item was for information only.

17. Discussion on Rousseau Creek Boat Ramp and Amity Recreation Area

Chairman Beggs spoke to this agenda item. Several citizens in the Rousseau creek area of the County have reached out about the boat ramps. The Army Corps has met with the County several times about our current leases, and are willing to enter a MOU, so we can repair where the boat ramp joins the County road. The amity recreation area across the bridge is no longer going to be managed by the Army Corps, and Mr. Burton wanted to make the Board aware that we could potentially take this over if the Board was interested. Lincoln County was not interested in managing according to the Army Corps. Chairman Beggs stated that he was unsure if the County wanted to take this on. Mr. Burton responded that we would have to hire a parks manager to manage all the parks, if we were interested. Commissioner Jopling is interested in seeing how it would financially carry itself, unless the other two campgrounds could help it maintain itself, that the amity area is beneficial to our two

parks. The Amity area is still in need of work from Hurricane Helene. The Finance Director mentioned that there is a kiosk to park and use the boat ramp that could produce revenue. Mr. Burton stated he would look into some data and see how much revenue the park has produced in the past. Chairman Beggs went back to the discussion on Rousseau Creek boat ramp and stated that he would like to get an estimate to make this repair, and that the Corps has stated there is no federal funding to help repair the boat ramp.

The Rousseau Creek boat ramp repair will be added to the May 19, 2026, agenda.

18. Discussion on Animal Control Ordinance

This has been discussed before. Our current ordinance is thin in the animal control portion and pertains to dangerous and vicious dogs and it references the state law. This proposed ordinance goes into great detail and gives definitions and lays out certain qualifications of what an abandoned dog is, who has authority to do what, the hold times, impounding standards, and the process of adoption/reclaiming an animal, references rabies, and some language for pet dealers, the kennels, and the Georgia law, defines what is a public nuisance, animal cruelty guidelines. This ordinance will help our animal shelter director to work with law enforcement and be able to enforce this ordinance outside of just a vicious animal. A copy of this proposed ordinance can be found in the agenda packet. Chairman Beggs asked the animal shelter director if she had any comments on the ordinance being amended. Animal Shelter Director Kirby stated that she would like all the sheriff's office and the police department to have a meeting so everyone can be on the same page, because she will need their help. The city admin has agreed to adopt the same ordinance as the County so we can work together on the issue we have with animals in the community. Ms. Kirby also stated that she hoped SPLOST passed, so the shelter can expand so she has more room for strays. The ordinance will state that there is a minimum of 3 days strays will have to stay at the shelter.

This ordinance will be added to the May 19, 2026, agenda.

19. Discussion on Memorandum of Understanding Thomson-McDuffie County Archway Partnership 2027

Chairman Beggs stated that this is our annual agreement with the Archway program. There have been no changes.

This item will be added to the May 6, 2026, agenda.

20. Discussion on Resolution 2026-011 to Convey a Certain Tract of Real Property to the McDuffie County Board of Education

Mr. Burton stated that this is the property he had the public meeting for onsite. The Board of Education requested we transfer these parcels over to them. We have done our due diligence according to the law, and this resolution would allow us to go ahead with the legal instruments to make this transfer.

This item will be added to the May 6, 2026 agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Jopling to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:41 pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Favors and passed unanimously.

MCDUFFIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


Chase N. Beggs, Chairman

ATTEST: 
Ashtyn L. Goodyear, County Clerk