

January 6, 2026

The Walton County Board of Commissioners held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Historic Walton County Courthouse. Those participating in the meeting included Chairman David Thompson, Commissioners Amarie Warren, Pete Myers, Timmy Shelnett, Lee Bradford, Jeremy Adams and Kirklyn Dixon, County Clerk Rhonda Hawk, County Manager John Ward, Assistant Planning Director Kristi Parr, Finance Director Jennifer Wall, Stormwater Manager Tyler Pannell, Facilities Director Hank Shirley and County Attorney Chip Ferguson. A list of employees and citizens in attendance at the meeting is on file in the auxiliary file under this meeting date.

PRESENTATIONS

County Manager John Ward recognized William (Billy) Burt for his retirement from the Sheriff's Office.

MEETING OPENING

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Shelnett gave the invocation.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bradford to adopt the agenda moving the Executive Session as the first item on the agenda. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: *At 6:05 p.m., Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Warren, to enter into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

Motion: *At 6:47 p.m., Commissioner Warren made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bradford, to return to regular session. All district commissioners voted in favor. There were no votes taken in Executive Session.*

FINANCE

Finance Director Jennifer Wall introduced Ryan Jones with Maulding & Jenkins who presented the FY25 Audit.

Presentation of FY25 Audit - Mauldin & Jenkins

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion to accept the FY25 Audit as presented.*

Commissioner Myers seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Current Sheriff's Office/Jail Employees (tabled 12/2/25)

Sheriff Keith Brooks and Kim McCord came before the Board requesting that he be able to give merit increases to staff hired before the end of 2024 and requested a budget amendment in the amount of \$180,000 for FY26. The merit increase will be 2.5%, equal to a step increase.

Motion: *Commissioner Warren made a motion to approve \$180,000 budget amendment to fund the first round of merit-based increases for the Sheriff's Office, to be considered as a pilot program and to be used more widespread after the effects are known. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. Commissioner Dixon asked for clarification on revisiting the pilot program at budget time. Commissioner Warren stated they would review the effectiveness during budget season on an annual basis. County Manager John Ward added that staff take this as direction to further implement it across the rest of the departments at budget time. Commissioner Dixon asked if there was any reassurance beyond this budget year. Commissioner Warren stated that the increase would be for this budget year. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

DISCUSSION

County Manager's Report/Update

County Manager John Ward gave an update and report on county matters to the Board.

Flagpole for VFW

Chairman Thompson discussed donating the flagpole at the old jail to the VFW.

Motion: *Commissioner Bradford made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Adams to donate the flagpole to the VFW. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Planning Director Kristi Parr presented the Planning Commission recommendations.

Z25-0337 - Rezone 2.00 acres from A2 to A for commercial kennel with customer contact and Variance on side, back, and front setback lines - Applicant/Owner: David L Maughon - property located at 1343 Cornish Mountain Church Road - Map/Parcel C0670114B00 - District 4

Planning Commission recommended approval with the following conditions: 1) Approve the setbacks applied for which are 81 ft. on the left side, 113 ft. on the right side, 126 ft. on the rear and 95 ft. in the front in lieu of the required 200 ft. setback and also a Variance for the required 500 ft. setback from a residential district 2) allow a maximum of 4 breeding dogs.

County Attorney Chip Ferguson opened the public hearing on the matter. Donna Maughon

spoke in favor of the rezone and variance. She stated that the rezone for a commercial kennel was necessary to be in compliance with the Dept. of Agriculture. They are not a commercial kennel, but you must have that designation in order to breed more than two litters a year and are only breeding their lab. There was no opposition present. Attorney Ferguson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: Commissioner Bradford made a motion to approve. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion and all district commissioners voted in favor.

Z25-0343 - Rezone 2.72 acres from A1 to R1 to create a 1.15 acre buildable lot -
Applicant/Owner: Brad Echols/Tuiley Homes, LLC - property located at 3600 Mary Lane & Linda Drive - Map/Parcel C0470030 - District 2

Planning Commission recommended approval.

County Attorney Chip Ferguson opened the public hearing on the matter. Brad Echols spoke in favor of the rezone to create a buildable lot. There was no opposition present. Attorney Ferguson closed the public hearing.

Motion: Commissioner Myers made a motion to approve the rezone, seconded by Commissioner Warren. All district commissioners voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of December 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes
2. Contracts & Budgeted Purchases of \$25,000 or Greater
3. Declaration of Surplus
4. Ratification of Actions taken by WCWSA on January 5, 2026
5. Grant Application - Sheriff's Office - Governor's Office of Hwy. Safety - HEAT
6. Grant Application - Sheriff's Office - Bullet Proof Vest

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shelnutt, to approve the Administrative Consent Agenda. All district commissioners voted in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution - Setting time, dates and location of the regular monthly meetings of the Board of Commissioners for 2026

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Dixon seconded the motion; all district commissioners voted in favor.

PUBLIC WORKS

Peyton Woods Subdivision - Detention Pond

Stormwater Manager Tyler Pannell discussed the detention pond maintenance at Peyton Woods.

The detention pond is not being properly maintained. The HOA has been notified of the corrective action needed but failed to get 2/3rds of the homeowners to agree to the repair. The County will need to move forward with the process of repairing.

CONTRACTS

Agreement - UGA Extension Service - Master Gardener Volunteer Program

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shelnutt to approve the agreement. All district commissioners voted in favor.

IGA - City of Social Circle – Water

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shelnutt to approve the agreement. All district commissioners voted in favor.

ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS/PROPOSALS

Proposal - EFIS, Gutter and Downspout Repairs - Walton Co. Government Building

Proposal - Roof Replacement - Walton County Government Building

Motion: Commissioner Dixon made a motion to accept the proposal from Titan Commercial Painting, LLC in the amount of \$139,000 for EFIS, Gutter and Downspout Repairs and to accept the proposal from Dusty Greer Roofing, Inc. in the amount of \$89,100 for roof replacement at the Government Building. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion and all district commissioners voted in favor.

Bid - Farm Lease - Anglin Road

Bid - Farm Lease - Baker Property

Motion: Commissioner Shelnutt made a motion to accept the bid from Paul Jones (\$1500) on the Anglin Road property and the bid from Charlie Pittman (\$2155) on the Baker property. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. All district commissioners voted in favor.

APPOINTMENTS

County Clerk

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Myers, to reappoint Rhonda Hawk as County Clerk. All district commissioners voted in favor.

Assistant County Clerk

Motion: Chairman Thompson made a motion to reappoint Gretchen Thurmond as Assistant

County Clerk. Commissioner Shelnutt seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

County Attorney

Motion: *Chairman Thompson made a motion to reappoint Chip Ferguson and the firm of Atkinson-Ferguson, LLC as County Attorney. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion and all district commissioners voted in favor.*

Vice Chairman

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Myers to reappoint Timmy Shelnutt as Vice Chairman. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

Walton County Planning Commission

Motion: *Chairman Thompson made a motion to appoint Mark Banks to the Walton County Planning Commission due to the resignation of Wesley Sisk. Commissioner Shelnutt seconded the motion and all district commissioners voted in favor.*

Board of Assessors

Motion: *Commissioner Dixon made a motion to reappoint Mark Peavy to the Board of Tax Assessors for a six-year term. Commissioner Warren seconded the motion. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ron Sack, Cynthia Green and Gareth Fenley (Walton in Action) spoke during Public Comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Dixon, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.*

All documents of record for this meeting are on file in either the addendum book or auxiliary file under this meeting date.

DAVID G. THOMPSON, CHAIRMAN

RHONDA HAWK, COUNTY CLERK