



Damon M. Rahn, Chairman at Large
Forrest F. Floyd, District 1
Roger Burdette, District 2
Jamie Deloach, District 3
Elizabeth Helmly, District 4
Phil Kieffer, District 5

BOARD AND STAFF RETREAT MINUTES OCTOBER 3-5, 2025

FRIDAY OCTOBER 3, 2025

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Damon Rahn, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Roger Burdette, Mr. Jamie Deloach, Ms. Beth Helmly and Mr. Phil Kieffer met in a retreat session at 2:00 pm Friday, October 3, 2025 in the Butler Room at The King & Prince Hotel located 201 Arnold Road St. Simons Island, GA 31522.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tim Callanan – County Administrator, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Ms. Tasheena Shiggs – Deputy County Clerk, Ms. Marie Todd – Executive Assistant, Mr. Mark Barnes – Finance Director, Mr. Jonathan Hulme – County Engineer, Mr. Michael King – Assistant County Manager, Mr. Noel Webb, IT Director, Mr. Tre Wilkins – Project Manager, and Mr. Jake Zeigler – Communications Manager.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Mickey Daniel, Georgia Power

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rahn called the meeting to order at 2:11pm

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION



SPLOST and TSPLOST

The Board initiated discussing the upcoming Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) cycle and is set to begin discussions on project lists. SPLOST and TSPLOST were confirmed as the County's two largest funding sources. Staff noted that the ability to bond out large sums upfront allows the County to front-load major capital projects.



FLOST

County Manager Callanan explained the concept of implementing a Floating Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST) that was introduced as a mechanism to provide property tax relief. This sales tax, potentially up to one percent, would require the consent of city councils representing at least 50% of the incorporated population. It was noted that this funding base is like SPLOST and offers a more favorable tax structure for residents because the substantial taxes paid by power generation plants would shift



the burden away from individual property owners. The law requires equitable sharing of revenue with the cities, and the earliest this could be enacted is for tax year 2025 or 2026.



Impact Fees

The discussion emphasized the need to re-institute impact fees to help fund growth. Historically, impact fees have been limited to seven categories and cannot be used for school funding. Staff announced plans to engage a consultant to re-establish fee structures for parks and recreation, streets and roads, and public safety. The first action will be to determine if the County can utilize the previous fee structure that was zeroed out; otherwise, a full study will be required.



Audit and Financial Management

Finance Director Barnes gave an overview of changes to financial management processes. For Fiscal Year 2026, the County has locked down the budget functionality within the ADG software and is implementing the OpenGov software. These changes are designed to improve internal budget control, prevent small overage, and allow department heads to visually track their budgets in real-time, reducing reliance on the Finance Department. It was noted that \$8 million of the recent \$11 million increase in the general fund was attributed to a one-off event, with the remaining increase coming from strong sales tax performance and LGIP investment income.



Indigent Medical Care

The Board reviewed the dedicated millage assessed for medical indigent debt. The current rate (approximately 1.43 mills) generates \$5.4 million, of which \$3.6 million is provided to the hospital for services, with the remainder used to pay down accumulated EMS bad debt. This debt, estimated at \$13.4 million, is projected to be paid off in five (5) years if payments are not accelerated or slowed. County Manager Callanan confirmed that the language on the tax bill will be changed to clearly read "Hospital and Indigent Care" for greater transparency. Staff also offered the possibility of using the new Public Facilities Authority to issue interest-free debt to restructure the current obligation.

ADJOURNMENT

The session adjourned at 4:55 pm.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2025

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Damon Rahn, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Roger Burdette, Mr. Jamie Deloach, Ms. Beth Helmly and Mr. Phil Kieffer met in a retreat session at 9:00 am Saturday, October 4, 2025 in the Butler Room at The King & Prince Hotel located 201 Arnold Road St. Simons Island, GA 31522.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tim Callanan – County Administrator, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Ms. Tasheena Shiggs – Deputy County Clerk, Ms. Marie Todd – Executive Assistant, Mr. Mark Barnes – Finance Director, Mr. Jonathan Hulme – County Engineer, Mr. Michael King – Assistant County Manager, Mr. Noel Webb, IT Director, Mr. Tre Wilkins – Project Manager, and Mr. Jake Zeigler – Communications Manager.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Mickey Daniel, Georgia Power representative

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rahn called the meeting to order at 9:06 am

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION



Water and Sewer

County Engineer Hulme (*via conference*) presented a comprehensive update on the Surface Water Treatment Plant (SWTP) and system expansion, confirming the intake pipeline and transmission line are under contract. The SWTP itself is scheduled for purchase approval and is designed for 12 MGD, expandable to 24 MGD. Due to favorable market conditions and efficient redesigns, the project is tracking approximately \$60 million under budget, accelerating the pipeline completion timeline to late 2028. The new plant will incorporate advanced treatment technologies, including granular activated carbon (GAC) and ozone, specifically targeting low levels of PFAS. The County is actively pursuing a regional strategy, projecting a \$5.8 million annual operating surplus by selling water to neighboring jurisdictions. Discussions were also held regarding restructuring the engineering department and forming a separate Water and Sewer Authority to manage the expanding utility system.



Capital Projects

The Board reviewed the status and management of large capital projects. Staff confirmed that SPLOST and TSPLOST remain the County's two largest funding sources, enabling the strategic use of bond financing to front-load construction projects. For public transparency, the Community Engagement Services department is developing new project pages for the public website, which will feature interactive maps and graphics to clearly communicate project progress and spending to the public. Project management is being streamlined by proposing a departmental reorganization, establishing a dedicated County Engineer supported by specialized teams to enhance oversight and potentially reduce external consulting costs.



Georgia Power Presentation

During the session, staff participated in a working lunch briefing featuring a presentation by Mickey Daniel from Georgia Power, which focused on analyzing the potential strategic and economic impacts of data center development in Effingham County.



Parks and Facilities

Project Manager Wilkins(*via teleconference*) focused on recreation and utility infrastructure. Progress continues with the Rutland Trail expansion, with staff finalizing an agreement with GDOT and planning to seek grant funding from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Separately, the new SWTP administration building is being planned as a South End County public service facility, which will consolidate water and sewer administration alongside a secure equipment yard and pipe storage onto a single campus. The discussion also noted that the County needs to complete property acquisitions for a planned park project by September of next year.



Roads and Transit

County Engineer Hulme continued discussions centered on managing the road improvement project portfolio, particularly those funded by TSPLOST. Projects are experiencing delays due to complex right-of-way acquisition challenges on roads like Low Ground Road, and utility conflicts, such as the 36-inch water main extension delaying the Blue Jay roundabout. Due to budget constraints, staff presented a revised list of roundabout projects, eliminating lower-priority locations to focus available funding on critical intersections. The need for aggressive stormwater maintenance and drainage improvement was highlighted, particularly addressing failing infrastructure in residential areas. Staff are actively negotiating with GDOT on several projects, including the State Route 21 corridor, to ensure adherence to county standards.



Zoning Classifications and Ordinances

The Board reviewed several proposed changes to the zoning code designed to enhance aesthetic standards and guide new development. Key additions include a new Open Space Ordinance requiring a 50-foot undisturbed vegetative buffer on street frontages for new subdivisions, with provisions for vegetated berms where land is already cleared. Architectural requirements will be significantly enhanced for new residential units, mandating specific material mixes and decorative elements. To accommodate demand, staff proposed permitting duplexes (multi-family light) in certain districts. Developers of multi-family complexes will be subject to a rigorous three-stage architectural review process. Finally, a new Tree Ordinance was introduced to protect trees in the county right-of-way and establish a Tree Fund through a 10% open space requirement for new divisions.

ADJOURNMENT

The session adjourned at 5:15 pm.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2025

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Damon Rahn, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Roger Burdette, Mr. Jamie Deloach, Ms. Beth Helmly and Mr. Phil Kieffer met in a retreat session at 9:00 am Sunday, October 5, 2025 in the Butler Room at The King & Prince Hotel located 201 Arnold Road St. Simons Island, GA 31522.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tim Callanan – County Administrator, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Ms. Tasheena Shiggs – Deputy County Clerk, Ms. Marie Todd – Executive Assistant, Mr. Mark Barnes – Finance Director, Mr. Michael King – Assistant County Manager, Mr. Noel Webb, IT Director and Mr. Jake Zeigler – Communications Manager.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rahn called the meeting to order at 9:02 am

INVOCATION

Commissioner Burdette kindly extended devotional encouragement and the invocation.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION



Budget Book

Finance Director Barnes reported that the Finance team is approximately halfway through the implementation of the OpenGov budget module, which will modernize the entire budget creation and monitoring process. This new visual system will replace reliance on old ADG reports and spreadsheets. Department managers will now use customizable dashboards to see their budgets, monitor capital outlay, and visually track spending in real-time. Managers will also submit all budget and personnel change requests directly through the system, supporting options like base zero budgeting and linking requests to the strategic plan. Once the annual budget is approved by the Board, a static version will be available to the public on the website. Staff are on track to complete the implementation of the OpenGov financials module by February.



Communications

Communications Manager Zeigler reported immense success and progress on the strategic communications plan over the past year. The most visible effort was the extensive overhaul of the County website using CivicPlus, implementing a new modular system for consistent branding, readability, and accessibility (e.g., e-reader compatibility). New organizational structures, such as the prominent "How Do I" section, were created to improve citizen navigation. Significant new content includes the Knowledge Center (with master plans and TSPLOST maps) and a detailed County History section. Mr. Zeigler also focused heavily on accountability and compliance, implementing an Open Records Archive for all social media activities (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) referred to as a "cover our assets" service and combining all social media



properties under one business umbrella. Metrics showed remarkable growth in public engagement, with views on the Commissioners' Facebook page up by 196% and YouTube subscribers up by 22%. Looking ahead, the department is preparing a comprehensive SOP book, a metrics dashboard, and procuring equipment to launch a podcast studio.



Information Technology

County Manager Callanan began with a critical discussion about the future of the County's emergency radio system. The current Motorola Land Mobile Radio (LMR) system is approaching its end-of-support, necessitating a major investment decision. The proposed alternative is migrating to the FirstNet/AT&T network, which utilizes expanded cellular LTE technology for public safety.

Separately, the County is exploring the potential for a fiber optic network partnership with Planters, which could leverage Genetec technology to support advanced traffic control systems across the county.



Session Wrap up

The session wrap up covered several administrative and security items. The County is preparing to improve security and citizen service flow, which includes redesigning some specific areas within the administration building. Furthermore, the County is looking forward to the rollout of the CivicPlus unified profile, which promises to combine multiple communication service lines such as, meeting notifications and general alerts into a single citizen database and login, which could eventually lead to the consolidation of other systems like OpenGov for community development and permitting. The successful rollout of the Engage Effingham app was also noted, with good turnaround times in certain categories.

ADJOURNMENT

The session adjourned at 12:11 pm.

Damon Rahn, Chairman

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OCTOBER 21, 2025

Stephanie D. Johnson, County Clerk