

August 4, 2026

The Walton County Board of Commissioners held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 4, 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, Asst. Planning Director Ron Smith, Finance Director Jennifer Wall, Sheriff Keith Brooks 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

Walton Co. 4-H, S.A.F.E Shooting Sports Teams were recognized for their 2026 accomplishments. Cooperative Extension Director, Joel Burnsed, recognized Sheriff Brooks for his fund raising event and support of the program. Retirement recognition was given to Herbert Huff, Jr., Fire Rescue, Donna Bohn, Walton Co. Tax Office and Samir Ballouk, Walton EMS. The American Red Cross recognized Walton Fire Rescue for their involvement with the Sound the Alarm Event.

MEETING OPENING

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:18 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 Dixon, to adopt the agenda. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

OLD BUSINESS

Repurposing Administrative Portion of Old Jail for Department Expansions (Previously tabled on 6/2 & 7/7)

County Manager John Ward proposed to table the matter until a work session can be held to further discuss the repurposing project and Parks and Recreation. The Board agreed to hold a work session on Tuesday, August 25th from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. to discuss Parks and Recreation and 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for discussion of repurposing the old jail for department expansions.

DISCUSSION

County Manager's Report/Update

County Manager John Ward gave an update and report on county matters to the Board. He proposed moving the November 2nd meeting to November 10th due to Clerk's training.

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Dixon to move the November 2nd meeting to November 10th. All district commissioners voted in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

Adoption of 2026 Millage Rates for Walton County

Motion: Commissioner Shelnutt made a motion to adopt the 2026 county-wide millage rate of 12.278 and a fire district millage rate of 2.365. Commissioner Warren seconded the motion. Commissioners Warren, Myers, Shelnutt and Adams voted in favor. Commissioners Bradford and Dixon opposed the motion. The motion passed 4-2.

Adoption of 2026 Millage Rate for Walton County Board of Education

Motion: Commissioner Warren made a motion to adopt the 2026 millage rate of 15.367 for Walton County Board of Education. Commissioner Shelnutt seconded the motion and all district commissioners voted in favor.

FY27 Budget Amendments - Sheriff's Office, E911 and Youth Investigations

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion to adopt the FY27 Budget Amendments for the Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Bradford seconded the motion; all district commissioners voted in favor.

FY27 Budget Amendment and Project Length Budget - SPLOST V - Barrington Manor Resurfacing Project

Motion: Commissioner Myers made a motion to adopt the FY27 Budget Amendment and Project Length Budget for Barrington Manor Resurfacing in the amount of \$69,533.50. Commissioner Warren seconded the motion. All district commissioners voted in favor.

Intent Resolution - Walton County Water Bond Reimbursement

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Myers to approve the Intent Resolution for the Walton County Water Bond Reimbursement. All district commissioners voted in favor.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Asst. Planning & Development Director Ron Smith presented the Planning Commission recommendations.

Z26-0158 - Rezone 3.90 acres from R1 to A1 to have personal outside animals - Applicant: Carlos R Barahona/Owners: Anita Panjwani, Arash Punjwani & Cinthia D. Santos Diaz - property located

at 2487 Johnson Road - Map/Parcel C0100016 - District 2

Planning Commission recommended denial.

County Attorney Chip Ferguson opened the public hearing on the matter. Applicant Carlos Barahona along with his interpreter Samiris Ortiz, spoke in favor. He would like to change zoning to agriculture to have chickens and two ponies for the children. Since his previous denial, he has lodged the animals at his neighbor's property next door which is zoned agriculture. He has 4 acres and the property is not in a subdivision. He does have a chicken coop and the chickens came back over to his property once when he left the coop door open. Lawrence Bowman spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Bowman stated that since his previous denial, the chickens have remained on the property and that bags of chicken feed constantly being blown over into his yard and that this is a residential area. He presented pictures in support of his claims. Ryan Nesbit, who resides across the street, also spoke in opposition stating this has been an ongoing problem and that Code Enforcement had made many visits. In rebuttal, Mr. Barahona stated that he was not aware when he moved there that the property was not agriculture since the neighboring property is agriculture. His neighbors always complain and have issues with him. Attorney Ferguson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: *Commissioner Myers made a motion to deny the request per the Planning Commission recommendation. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. Commissioners Warren, Myers, Shelnutt, Bradford and Adams voted in favor with Commissioner Dixon opposing the motion. The motion passed 5-1.*

Z26-0139 - Rezone 3.11 acres from R1 to A1 to have personal outside animals - Applicant: Dinko Cepic/Owners: Dinko & Maryssa Cepic - property located at 3460 Stock Road - Map/Parcel C0720061 - District 5

Planning Commission recommended approval as submitted.

County Attorney Chip Ferguson opened the public hearing on the matter. Applicant Dink Cepic spoke in favor. He stated there would be no chickens, just personal animals outside. There was no opposition present. Attorney Ferguson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Warren to approve per the Planning Commission recommendation. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

Z26-0156 – Rezone 7.486 acres from A2 to B2 for a convenience store with fuel pumps and office warehouse/contractor storage buildings – Applicant/Owner: 81 Investment Company, LLC – property located at 5187 Highway 81 & Bay Creek Church Road – Map/Parcel C0390008 – District 1

Planning Commission recommended approval with the following conditions: 1) 10' landscape buffer shall be planted with appropriate evergreen buffer trees per Walton County Tree Ordinance; 2) Frontage of convenience store shall be enhanced with deciduous trees and shrubs; 3) Architectural treatments shall be in keeping with applicant's submitted renderings; 4) Transportation upgrades as recommended by traffic study shall be installed with GDOT and

Walton County Transportation coordination; 5) Outdoor storage shall be prohibited in the storage area.

County Attorney Chip Ferguson opened the public hearing on the matter. Attorney Andrea Gray spoke in favor on behalf of the applicant 81 Investment Company and presented the site plan along with traffic engineering studies. After speaking with neighbors, they had made changes to address their concerns. They are willing to comply with the conditions set forth by the Planning Commission. There was no opposition present.

Motion: *Commissioner Warren made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Myers to approve the rezone per the Planning Commission recommended conditions. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

CONTRACTS

Agreement - Loganville Christian Academy - Sheriff's Office

Motion: *Commissioner Myers made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the agreement subject to County Attorney review. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

Agreement Amendment - MedTrust, LLC - Inmate Per Day Rate Increase

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the agreement subject to County Attorney review. Commissioner Bradford seconded the motion. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

Agreement Amendment - Summit Food Services - Pathways Inmate Educational Training Program

Motion: *Commissioner Dixon made a motion approving the agreement to be paid from Inmate funds subject to County Attorney review. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

Contract Change Order - Wilson Construction Management, LLC - Dry Pond Road Culvert Replacement - \$73,002.08

Motion: *Commissioner Dixon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Warren to approve the contract change order with Wilson Construction Management, LLC in the amount of \$73,002.08. All district commissioners voted in favor.*

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of July 7, 2026 Meeting Minutes
2. Contracts & Budgeted Purchases of \$25,000 or Greater
3. Declaration of Surplus
4. Ratification of Actions taken by WCWSA on July 9, 2026
5. Acceptance of Right of Way - Alcovy Overlook Subdivision (50')

6. Agreement Renewal – Victory Baptist School

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

APPOINTMENTS

Walton Industrial Building Authority and Reactivation

Motion: Commissioner Shelnett made a motion to appoint Melinda Dally and Morris Jordan to the Walton Industrial Building Authority. Commissioner Dixon seconded the motion. All district commissioners voted in favor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: At 7:10 p.m., Commissioner Adams made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate. Commissioner Shelnett seconded the motion and all district commissioners voted in favor.

Motion: At 7:25 p.m., Commissioner Dixon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shelnett to return to regular session. All district commissioners voted in favor. There were no votes taken in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shelnett, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 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