

May 6, 2025

The Walton County Board of Commissioners held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Historic Walton County Courthouse. Those participating in the meeting included Chairman David Thompson, Commissioners Bo Warren, Pete Myers, Timmy Shelnett, Lee Bradford, Jeremy Adams and Kirklyn Dixon, County Clerk Rhonda Hawk, County Manager John Ward, Planning Director Charna Parker, Finance Director Jennifer Wall 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 Grail Hall and Bobby Galicia on their retirement from the Sheriff's Office.

EMS Director Ronnie Almand recognized Cody Eberhart for being awarded Paramedic of the Year and Kevin Rickman for Advanced EMT of the Year.

MEETING OPENING

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:09 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. All voted in favor.*

DISCUSSION

County Manager's Report/Update

County Manager John Ward gave an update and report on county matters to the Board and recognized H. R. Director Melissia Rusk and Commissioner Bo Warren for achieving their Certified County Official Certificates from ACCG. He also commended the following for graduating from the Management Development Program: Kim Banks, Daniel Michael, Brittany Smith, Beth Green, Kristi Parr, Ben Hammond, Shannon Massey and Craig League.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Planning Director Charna Parker presented the Planning Commission recommendations.

CU25-0095 - Conditional Use for outside storage - Applicant: John B. Crouch/Owner: EDK Realty Holdings, LLC - Property located at 2424 Lance Ct./Map/Parcel C0070005F00 - District 2

Planning Commission recommended approval as submitted.

Chairman Thompson opened a public hearing on the matter. Applicant Brad Crouch spoke in favor of the conditional use. There was no one present to speak in opposition. Chairman Thompson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: Commissioner Myers made a motion to approve the conditional use per the Planning Commission recommendation. Commissioner Warren seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Z25-0082 - Rezone 4.30 acres from A2 to OI for a residential care facility - Applicant: Anna White/Owners: Timothy & Anna White - Property located at 1370 Snows Mill Rd. & Hwy. 83/Map/Parcel C1650003A00 - District 6

Planning Commission recommended approval as submitted.

Chairman Thompson opened a public hearing on the matter. Anna White and Ashley Ramsey spoke in favor. The purpose of the rezone is to provide a home for girls who have been abused and neglected. The home is 5 bedrooms and 4 baths and will house up to 9 girls for a personal and professional development program. There was no opposition present. Chairman Thompson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: Commissioner Dixon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the rezone request. All voted in favor.

Z25-0108 - Rezone 4.85 acres from A1 to R1 to create 4 buildable lots - Applicant: Alicia Zinner/Owners: Nathan & Alicia Zinner - Property located at 1730 Lee Peters Rd./Map/Parcel C0610082 - District 1

Planning Commission recommended approval as submitted.

Chairman Thompson opened a public hearing on the matter. Dorin Cret spoke in favor on behalf of the applicants. There was no one present to speak in opposition. Chairman Thompson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: Commissioner Warren made a motion to approve the rezone request. Commissioner Shelnett seconded the motion; voted and carried unanimously.

Z25-0109 - Rezone 2.58 acres from R1 to A for beekeeping & selling bees & honey - Applicant: Billy Farmer/Owner: Janis Farmer - Property located at 4878 Jersey Walnut Grove Rd. & Old Hwy. 81/Map/Parcel C0540267 - District 3

Planning Commission recommended approval as submitted.

Chairman Thompson opened a public hearing on the matter. Applicant Billy Farmer spoke in favor of the rezone request. He is a beekeeper and would like to sell bees and honey. Michelle Alderman also spoke in favor. There was no one present to speak in opposition. Chairman Thompson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: Commissioner Shelnutt made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Myers to approve the rezone request. All voted in favor.

At 6:43 p.m., Chairman Thompson stated that he was going to recuse himself from the next item on the agenda and turned the meeting over to Vice Chairman Timmy Shelnutt. Chairman Thompson exited the Boardroom.

Z25-0110 - Rezone 81.00 acres from A1 to R1OSC for a residential subdivision - Applicant: Carter Engineering Consultants Inc/Owner: Grady Thompson Enterprises, LLLP - Property located on Nicholasville Rd./Map/Parcel C0850083 - District 5

Planning Commission recommendations - 1) Prior to approval of the final plat, the developer shall at his own expense address and resolve any issues of fence encroachments with adjoining property owners; 2) A statement shall be placed on the Final Plat and each individual purchase agreement to notify future homeowners of adjacent residential/agricultural properties that could exhibit noises and smells that are typical of a rural/agricultural area. as per the Georgia Realtors Disclosure Statement as follows: It is the policy of this state and this community to conserve, protect, and encourage the development and improvement of farm and forest land for the production of food, fiber, and other products, and also for its natural and environmental value. This notice is to inform prospective property owners or other persons or entities leasing or acquiring an interest in real property that property in which they are about to acquire an interest lies within, partially within, or adjacent to an area zoned, used, or identified for farm and forest activities and that farm and forest activities occur in the area. Such farm and forest activities may include intensive operations that cause discomfort and inconveniences that involve, but are not limited to, noises, odors, fumes, dust, smoke, insects, operations of machinery during any 24-hour period, storage and disposal of manure, and the application by spraying or otherwise of chemical fertilizers, soil amendments, herbicides, and pesticides. One or more of these inconveniences may occur as the result of farm or forest activities which are in conformance with existing laws and regulations and accepted customs and standards; 3) A decorative fence with a blend of trees and shrubs in front of the fence shall be installed along the right of way. Provided the trees on the westerly frontage are not removed, only a fence will be required in that area and no additional trees; 4) Install an entrance sign for the neighborhood.

Vice Chairman Timmy Shelnutt opened the public hearing on the matter. Joshua Scoggins, Attorney and Logan Moss of My Home Communities spoke in favor of the rezone. They stated that the plan is to build 62 houses on 81 acres. Billy Mitchell spoke in favor stating that the land was once farmland and now they have a constitutional right to sell for the highest and best use. Josh Parker stated he is pro real estate and growth and is not against the development. He would however, like to express his concerns over traffic at Hwy. 11. He encouraged the Commissioners to read the book "Suburban Nation" and stated that he'd like to see common sense growth. Joseph Brooks spoke in opposition stating there was no decel lane and no amenities and voiced his concern over destruction of the road by construction equipment. Luke Curtis spoke on behalf of the Marlow family whose property adjoins the development. There are two ponds on the Marlow property, and they have liability concerns. They would like the developer to place an 8 ft. high, chain link fence around the boundaries of the property due to the liability surrounding the ponds. Michelle Forthlofer voiced her concerns about traffic mediation at Hwy. 11 and would like to have

a traffic study done on Bold Springs Road. In rebuttal, Attorney Scoggins stated that the fence being requested is obsessive. He further stated that engineering will require accel/decel lanes but no turning lane as the road is not wide enough. The homes will range from 2000 sq. ft. to 2400 sq. ft.

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve with the recommendations of the Planning Commission and adding the following conditions: the homes shall have a garage, 2000 sq. ft. for ranch style homes and 2400 sq. ft. two-story, with same conditions as subdivision approved on Hwy. 138. The developer is to address buffer screening with the adjoining land owner and Planning & Development and to meet engineering requirements for an accel/decel lane with the amenities of a pond and walking trail. Commissioner Myers seconded the motion. Commissioners Warren, Myers, Shelnett, Adams and Dixon voted in favor with Commissioner Bradford opposing the motion. The motion carried 5-1.*

At 7:27 p.m., Chairman Thompson rejoined the meeting.

OA25-0126 - Amendment to Ordinance - Stormwater Management

Planning Commission recommended approval.

County Manager John Ward explained the ordinance amendment. The ordinance will allow a special tax district for subdivisions with no HOA for the maintenance of detention ponds. Chairman Thompson opened a public hearing on the matter. Josh Parker spoke stating that we have a great canvas in Walton Co. and the irony of development is that typically taxes go up with development. Chairman Thompson said that was not true for counties that have a freeze on property values. There was no one else to speak. Chairman Thompson closed the public hearing on the matter.

Motion: *Commissioner Dixon made a motion to approve the ordinance amendment. Commissioner Bradford seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of April 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes, April 10th and April 15th Work Session Minutes
2. Contracts & Budgeted Purchases of \$25000 or Greater
3. Declaration of Surplus
4. Corpcare Assignment Agreement with CuraLinc, LLC
5. Change Proposals - Walnut Grove Park (For the Record) - #13 Lighting Permit Revisions and #38 Alternate Batting Cage Design
6. Purchase and Sale Agreement - DAB Properties, LLC - ROW at Sardis Church Road and H. D. Atha Road
7. IGA - City of Loganville - Use of West Walton Park

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

FINANCE

Finance Director Jennifer Wall presented finance matters to the Board.

Request to amend FY25 Budget - 25 Additional Detention Officers - Sheriff's Office

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the request to amend the FY25 Budget for 25 Detention Officer positions along with uniforms and equipment. Commissioner Myers seconded the motion. Chairman Thompson, Commissioners Warren, Myers, Shelnutt and Adams voted in favor. Commissioners Bradford and Dixon opposed the motion. The motion carried 5-2.*

Request to amend FY25 Budget - Vehicles - Sheriff's Office

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bradford to approve the request to amend the FY25 Budget for 2 additional vehicles by transferring \$77,000 in the equipment account to the vehicles account. All voted in favor.*

RESOLUTIONS

Adoption of FY26 Budget

Motion: *Chairman Thompson made a motion to adopt the FY26 Budget. The Chairman stated that the increase will require a millage rate increase of 1.865350197 since it is against the County's Fiscal Policy to fund continuing salaries out of Fund Balance in the next budget year. Commissioner Shelnutt seconded the motion. Chairman Thompson, Commissioners Myers, Shelnutt and Adams voted in favor. Commissioner Warren, Bradford and Dixon opposed the motion. The motion carried 4-3.*

HUMAN RESOURCES

2025 Benefits Renewal - MSI Benefits

Motion: *Chairman Thompson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the 2025 Benefits Renewal with MSI Benefits. This includes a reduction in costs of -\$3,586.00 for health, dental and vision. All voted in favor.*

ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS/PROPOSALS

Maintenance - Walton County Public Safety Complex

Motion: *Commissioner Shelnutt made a motion to approve the proposal from TKC Management Services in the amount of \$762,533.00. Chairman Thompson seconded the motion; voted and carried unanimously.*

CONTRACTS

GDOT - Contract Agreement and Resolution, Water Facilities - Hwy. 138 and Hwy. 81 Roundabout

Motion: *Commissioner Shelnutt made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Warren to approve the contract. All voted in favor.*

APPOINTMENTS

Northeast Georgia Region 10 EMS Advisory Council

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion to reappoint Dr. Steven Durocher to the Northeast Georgia Region 10 EMS Advisory Council. Commissioner Dixon seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Thompson advised the Board that the family of Franklin Thornton had given the County a bronze plaque given to his estate by the Sheriff's Association. The plaque will be placed in the foyer of the new Franklin Thornton - Joe Chapman Law Enforcement Center. He also advised that the pilot payments from Meta and Rivian are starting to come in. The County has received \$795,881.25 from Meta and \$75,608.72 from Rivian for a total of \$871,489.97. The Walton County School Board and County together have received \$2,053,125.00.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:07 p.m., Commissioner Adams made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate matters and consult with the Development Authority. No votes were taken.

At 8:46 p.m., Commissioner Bradford made a motion to return to regular session. Commissioner Shelnutt seconded the motion; voted and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: *Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Dixon, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 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