



BALDWIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

September 2, 2025

1601 N Columbia St, Suite 220

6:00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT

Andrew Strickland, Chair
Kendrick Butts, Vice Chair
Sammy Hall
Emily Davis
Scott Little

OTHERS

Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Brandon Palmer
Bo Danuser

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strickland called the September 2, 2025 commission meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION

Pastor Mac Enfinger from First Methodist Church said the prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Scott Little led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MILLAGE RATE PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Strickland called the public hearing to order stating this public hearing was to consider setting the millage rate.

Assistant County Manager and Finance Director Dawn Hudson gave a power point presentation on the millage explaining:

- the definition of millage rate and how the tax digest is calculated,
- the county must set a millage rate that provided sufficient revenue to support maintenance and operations,
- property assessments were based on 40% of fair market value,
- the digest was review by the Department of Revenue,
- the appeals process,
- calculating the rollback millage rate and if the rollback rate was not taken, a tax increase must be advertised,
- the 2024 millage rate was 10.02, the rollback millage was 9.76 and the proposed 2025 millage rate was 10.02,
- how the ad valorem tax was calculated based on a \$190,000 house, with samples at the rollback rate and the proposed rate,

- revenue sources from general property tax, LOST, other taxes, fines and forfeitures, and charges for service and their comparative percentage,
- mandated services that were required by state law which included providing a court system, jail, health services, public assistance to families, emergency disaster management, property tax appraisal, elections and registration, tax commissioner and sheriff,
- required services of road and bridge maintenance and construction, fire protection, and water and sewer,
- Discretionary services including animal control, the Cooperative Extension, libraries, airports, public transportation, building inspections, economic development, parks and recreation, and GIS/information technology,
- The cost of providing mandated and required services was 85% of the budget with discretionary spending being 15% of the budget, and
- Budget expenditures by function with public safety being about 40% of the total county budget.

There were no comments or question from the commissioners.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Divittorio addressed the commission likening a property tax increase to taxation without representation and the Boston Tea Party. She asked about using SPLOST funds, that the commissioners live within their means, and that they stop pet projects. She how to apply for the tax exemption and asked for a school exemption.

There was a discussion about the procedure for getting tax exemptions and about the school tax, county tax and city tax.

Desiree Liggins addressed the commissioners asking if changing the solid waste service provider would save money. She discussed increasing fees for the pickleball courts, golf course and airplane hangars. She asked if the commissioner paid taxes. She asked the commissioners to “slow their roll” instead of taxing people and she asked the commissioners to adopt the rollback.

Maurice Liggins addressed the commissioners discussing the SPLOST taxes and stating there would be enough money with the roll back tax rate to operate the county; college student enrollment doubled and would generate sales taxes; asked how the commissioners could increase taxes when people were hurting, and asked why they couldn’t roll back the millage rate if the school board could.

ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Little made a motion to adjourn the millage rate public hearing. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The public hearing portion of the meeting was adjourned at 6:31 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Hall made a motion to approve the August 19, 2025 commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Butts made a motion to approve the August 25, 2025 11:00 AM millage rate public hearing minutes. Commissioner Little seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Little made a motion to approve the August 25, 2025 6:00 PM millage rate public hearing minutes. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS

Baldwin County Chief Deputy Col. Scott Deason gave the commissioners an update on laws governing recreational vehicles. He stated that golf carts could be operated by those at least 16 years old and older in neighborhoods with speed limits less than 25 miles per hour; they had few calls on these vehicles and the complaint they got were usually for 4 wheelers being on someone's property. The deputies encouraged everyone to be safe and for parents to be cognizant of their children's behavior.

Commissioner Butts asked if the jail would reopen to visitors particularly for the clergy and mentors. Col. Deason responded they had already opened the jail to clergy with the proper credentials. Col. Deason discussed an inmate's increased exposure to illness, that they did have video conferencing and that he and the Sheriff would discuss restarting visitations. Col. Deason discussed the jails becoming mental health facilities.

Commissioner Strickland presented a Recovery Month Proclamation to the Oconee Recovery Coalition.

Chairman Strickland acknowledged Jeff Yeomans from Brighter Days Ministries as being in attendance.

ADMINISTRATIVE/FISCAL MATTERS

OneGeorgia Rural Site Development Grant

Chairman Strickland read the caption of Resolution R-2025-68 to authorize an agreement with the Development Authority of Milledgeville and Baldwin County to accept a OneGeorgia Rural Site Development Grant Award.

County Manager Carlos Tobar stated the county would enter into an agreement with the Development Authority of Milledgeville and Baldwin to manage the 2 million dollar grant for the roadway into Smith-Sibley.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to approve Resolution R-2025-68. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Millage Rate

Mary Divitorrio readdressed the commission stating she was against the tax increase and taxation without representation.

Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson stated the commission had before them a resolution to consider the 2025 rate of 10.02 mills and that all advertising and public hearing requirements had been met. The Board of Education adopted their millage rate and although they did not have to approve the Board of Education levy, they did have to include the total levy for the county. She stated that by adopting the millage rate tonight, the Tax Commissioner would have adequate time to deliver the digest to the Department of Revenue and for bills to be mailed.

There was a discussion about the roll back rate being 9.76, the current rate was 10.02 and the Board of Education rate was 10.07.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to set the millage rate at 10.02. Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion.

Commissioners Hall and Strickland vote aye. Commissioners Butts, Davis, and Little voted no. The motion failed.

Commissioner Butts made a motion the adopt the roll back rate of 9.76. Commissioner Little seconded the motion.

Commissioners Butts, Strickland, Davis, and Little voted aye. Commissioner Hall voted no. The motion carried.

Baldwin County Transit

Chairman Strickland read the caption for Resolution R-2025-71 that authorized an application for the 2027 Transit Grant.

Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson stated the commissioners had before them a resolution to approve an application for the 2027 transit grant; the program had been in operation for about 25 years and the fee was \$2.00 per ride. She stated the budget was \$250,000 with a 50-50 split in the cost with the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the resolution and grant. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion.

There was a discussion about the actual cost per ride was \$10.00, program inefficiency, the program helped the most vulnerable in the community, budgeting this grant would be done in the next budget cycle, and the worthiness of the service.

There was a discussion about funding the grant.

Commissioners Butts, Davis and Little voted yes. Commissioners Strickland and Hall voted no. The motion carried.

Solar Farm Moratorium

Chairman Strickland read the caption for Resolution R-2025-72 that extends the solar farm moratorium.

County Manager Carlos Tobar stated that there had been some interest in solar projects in Baldwin County, until a discussion happened the recommendation is to continue the moratorium for six months.

Commissioner Little made a motion to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

2024 CDBG Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation

Chairman Strickland stated this item was to select Southeast Pipe Survey, Inc. to FY 2024 CDBG Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation.

County Manager Tobar stated there 4 bids, the recommendation was to select the low bidder, Southeast Pipe Survey, Inc.; the engineer had done his due diligence. The bid was for cured in place sewer pile replacement east of Vinson Highway. He stated this would be that last project east of Vinson Highway and they would move to Oconee Heights next year.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to accept the bid from Southeast Pipe Survey, Inc. Commissioner Little seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Recreation Department Policy

Chairman Strickland stated this item was for updating the recreation department policy.

County Manager Tobar stated there had been a lot of discussion about the recreation policy and holes that were in the policy. Commissioners had input in the policy and this the document that they came up with.

Commissioner Butts made a motion to table the recreation department policy until further discussion could be had. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

Chairman Strickland stated he wanted the this to move forward. Commissioner Butts stated he had concerns with section c items 3 and 4 of the policy and a discussion followed

Chairman Strickland called for the vote.

Commissioners Butts, Hall, Davis and Little voted yes. Commissioner Strickland voted no. the motion passed and the recreation policy was tabled for further discussion.

Fall Line Development Authority Appointment

Chairman Strickland stated this item was to appoint Sharon Seymour to the Fall Line Development Authority.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to appoint Sharon Seymour to the Fall Line Development Authority. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Davis asked for an update on a report for alternate locations for a transfer station. Mr. Tobar stated that he had not been give direction from the board.

Commissioner Butts asked for an update on Mrs. Mamie Hall's driveway. Mr. Tobar responded they were getting estimates.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Tobar gave a report for September 2, 2025 that included:

- The county received 1.2 million dollars from the 2025 CDBG grant for sewer replacement and housing rehabilitation and would be the first target area in Oconee Heights,
- Listed the streets that had been repaved,
- Full depth reclamation on Nelson Road from 212 to Old Monticello Road,
- Lake Lauren Road patching and paving would start the next day,
- Fishing Creek Trail construction would begin the next week,
- Walter B. Williams Park phase 2 would be complete by Friday in time for the first race on the mountain bike trail,
- Coopers Park update including better fire protection, replacement of galvanized water lines, storm drains rerouted, resurfacing fire station parking lot, place fencing on the railroad tracks, installed railing at the park and resurfaced the basketball court and walking track, pouring the splashpad concrete, and making other safety improvements like right of way clearing, pedestrian crossings and signage on Gordon Highway.

- 2024 CHIP grant continued - the first CHIP Habitat for Humanity house close and the foundation work on the two Ross Avenue houses had begun,
- Creating a project section on the website with updates,

Commissioner Davis asked County Manager Tobar to look at the announcement sign in the lobby.

Commissioner Butts asked for an update on the stripping in Harrisburg. Mr. Tobar responded that the temporary striping had been done and the permanent striping at the same time as the rest were done. Commissioner Butts stated that Irby and Helen looked good.

Commissioner Strickland asked for an update on Sidney Butts Road. Mr. Tobar stated they did not have a set date for completion.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Tina Bene addressed the commission regarding trash pickup and requested an alternate option for trash pickup. She asked that everyone to pay for the convenience centers but contract individually for curbside pickup.

Pam Peacock address the commission asking them to look closed at short term rentals. She stated that there were 10 or more in her neighborhood and discussed the problems the short-term rentals caused for the residents including animals, parking, and parties.

Judy Veal addressed the commission encouraging adopting short term rental regulations. She discussed the problems they were causing on Montego Bay. She stated that vehicle traffic and speeding had increased; 2- and 3-bedroom houses were accommodating 10 or more vehicles. For a neighborhood to be safe residents needed to know the people coming and going. She stated property value decreased with the number of short-term rentals. She suggested fewer permits be given on lake properties and limit the number of people allowed per dwelling.

Amy Ward addressed the commission stating she was in the same neighborhood with 10 short term rentals, her security was decreased because she didn't know the people coming in and out. People from the short-term rental next to her ended up partying on her dock and in her yard; the rights of people who lived in Baldwin County should be more important than those of the short-term renters.

Desiree Liggins thanked the commissioners that voted against the tax increase. Ms. Liggins asked if the contractor would get finished on Sidney Butts Road before time ran out. She discussed trees falling from her neighbor's back yard into hers, asked the commissioners to make the tax payors a priority, and asked the chairman to not take the millage rate personally.

Maurice Liggins discussed the paving of Sidney Butts Road and stated that the contractor was not providing any information; he didn't have a map of the roads being resurfaced. It would all be avoided if the public had a map. He discussed the amount of time the contractor had to complete the resurfacing.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Little made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The commissioners moved into closed session at 7:38 PM.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to close the executive session. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. The commissioners closed the executive session at 8:01 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Little made a motion to return to open session. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

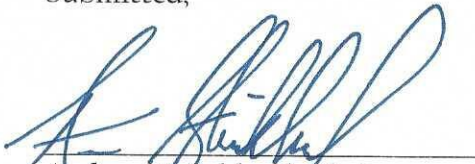
The commissioners returned to open session at 8:01 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Little made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The September 2 2025 commission meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Submitted,



Andrew Strickland, Chair
Baldwin County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Bo Danuser, County Clerk
Baldwin County, Georgia

