



BANKS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Courthouse Annex Boardroom | 150 Hudson Ridge | Homer, GA 30547

Tuesday, August 11, 2026 at 6:30 PM

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Griffith called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Chairman Taylor Griffith
Vice Chairman Danny Maxwell
Commissioner Chris Ausburn
Commissioner Bo Garrison
Commissioner Keith Roberts

STAFF

County Clerk Erin Decker
Deputy County Clerk Julie Wofford
County Attorney Karen Pachuta
Planning/Zoning Director Kerri Fincannon
Fire Chief Steve Nichols
Senior Center Director Tracie Hammond
Parks and Recreation Director Kurt Kirby
Clerk of Superior Court Tim Harper
Probate Judge Cameron Boswell
Public Utilities Director Chad Wilbanks

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Griffith stated the agenda needed to be amended as follows:

Remove:

- 8a. Human Resources: Employee Recognition

Add:

- 8a. Moratorium Discussion

Items below would be re-lettered.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. 07/14/2026 Commissioners Meeting

b. 07/28/2026 Commissioners Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of the above meetings.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

4. PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG:

Vice Chairman Maxwell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Griffith focused his report on the County's water supply. He announced the completion of a new well on Fort Lamar Rd with initial test production of approximately 158,000 gallons per day. He emphasized that the capacity was intended only for existing customers and not to support new development. He noted additional steps remained, which included approvals from the EPD, plumbing, and treatment configuration. He stated this was a major step toward stabilizing the County's Water System.

6. DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS REPORT

No new items to report.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- a. Planning Commission: TABLED: CU-26-13 An application has been submitted by Donald Hannant for a Conditional Use on the property identified as B67F 006, a 1.77-acre parcel located at 134 Walkers Way to operate a home occupation in an R1 zone. The proposed business is IT services and website design.**

Motion to un-table application CU-26-13.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Motion to open the Public Hearing.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, seconded by Commissioner Roberts.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

County Attorney Karen Pachuta outlined the public hearing process, including staff reports, applicant presentation, and public comments.

Planning Director Kerri Fincannon stated that application CU-26-13 had been submitted by Donald Hannant for a Conditional Use on the property identified as B67F-006, a 1.77-acre parcel located at 134 Walker's Way Commerce, for a home occupation business called Hanna Information Technology Solutions LLC. The proposed business consisted of administrative and computer-based services, including software and website development. According to the submitted letter of intent, all business activities would be conducted indoors and solely by the applicant. No customers, clients, or employees were proposed to visit the residence, and the proposed use involved no signage, exterior

modifications, inventory storage, or hazardous materials. The Planning Commission recommended approval with the condition that the applicant follow the letter of intent. They voted 5-0 to recommend approval.

In favor of the application.

The applicant was not present.

In opposition to the application.

None

Motion to close the Public Hearing.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Motion to deny application CU-26-13.

Motion made by Chairman Griffith, seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

- b. Planning Commission: Z-26-06 An application has been filed by Ryals Brothers Properties, LLC to rezone a 10-acre portion of the property identified as B02-011, a 280.73-acre parcel located on W County Line Rd. from CAD- Consolidated Agriculture District-Intensive to ARR- Agricultural Rural Residential for agricultural use.**

Motion to open the Public Hearing.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting: Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Ms. Fincannon stated Z-26-06 was an application by Ryals Brothers Properties LLC to rezone a 10-acre portion of the property identified as B02-011, a 280.73-acre parcel located on West County Line Road, from CAD to ARR. The subject property was owned by Midwest Poultry Services. The Ryals Brothers Properties LLC proposed to purchase approximately 10 acres of the tract. The applicant requested a rezoning of the property to ARR so it could be divided from the parent tract and remain a stand-alone parcel. The property was not proposed for development and would remain unused or be used solely for timber harvesting until further notice.

In favor of the application

The representative of Ryals Brothers LLC, Justin Smith, stated that the company wanted the 10-acres near their existing shop and needed rezoning to separate it from the larger farm tract.

In opposition to the application.

None

Motion to close the Public Hearing.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Commissioner Roberts.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Motion to approve application Z-26-06.

Motion made by Chairman Griffith, seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

(Copy of Resolution filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-3)

8. CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS:

a. Moratorium Discussion

Subdivisions

Commissioner Ausburn stated the County needed a moratorium on subdivisions. He wanted to focus on R1 residential subdivisions. He explained the County needed time to review and tighten the code for these developments because of the water supply issues the County was experiencing.

County Attorney Pachuta stated that if the board wanted to enact a moratorium immediately, it should only be limited to a short-term emergency moratorium. She said anything longer than 30 days would require public notice and adoption of a formal resolution to meet legal requirements.

Motion to enact a 30- day Emergency Moratorium on R1 subdivisions.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Data Centers

Commissioner Ausburn said the County should plan for the potential future of data centers in Banks County. He stated the County needed time to decide where they would fit in the zoning code and under what standards they would be allowed.

Motion to enact a 30-day Emergency Moratorium on special use applications for data centers.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

9. RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES:

a. Fire/EMS: National Emergency Management Awareness Month

Fire Chief Steve Nichols requested the board to dedicate the entire month of August as National Emergency Management Awareness Month. The purpose of the proclamation was to recognize and support Emergency Management (EMA) departments across Georgia and to formally acknowledge the work of Banks County's FIRE/EMS services.

Motion to approve the National Emergency Management Awareness Month County Proclamation and allow the Chairman to sign.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

(Copy of Proclamation filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-3)

b. Public Transportation: GDOT 5311 FY2028 RFP Resolution

Senior Center/Transit Director Tracie Hammond stated the GDOT 5311 grant funded Banks County's Public Transit program. She presented the package and explained that to continue receiving the 5311 Transit funds, the county must submit the RFP along with an authorizing resolution signed by the Chairman. The resolution formally authorized the submission of the grant application and committed the County to the terms and conditions required by GDOT to operate the 5311 Public Transportation Service.

Motion to approve the GDOT 5311 FY 2028 RFP and Resolution and authorize the Chairman to sign.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

(Copy of Resolution filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-3)

10. MISCELLANEOUS:

a. Parks & Recreation: HVAC RFP

Recreation Department Director Kurt Kirby requested approval to award a contract to replace the HVAC system serving the Blue Gym at the Recreation Center. He explained that the existing unit was the original system and it was no longer operating at full capacity. The system was also causing high energy bills and ongoing maintenance issues. The County issued an RFP and received three bids from qualified vendors, all based on the same Trane equipment and identical scope of work. The lowest responsible bid was submitted by LA Heating and Air LLC in the amount of \$57,332.

Motion to approve the \$57,332 bid from LA Heating and Air LLC from 2022 SPLOST funds to replace the Blue Gym HVAC unit.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

b. Clerk of Superior Court: Scanning Project

Clerk of Court Tim Harper requested \$35,000 from capital funds to continue a long-term document scanning and digitization project. He explained that similar allocations had been approved previously and all prior amounts had been repaid to the County from Clerk's Authority funds. This phase would scan and index deed records back to about 1940 and roughly 3,500 plats, making them accessible online through the GSCCA system and also the Clerk's website. The Clerk noted that online access had already increased revenue. About \$1,000–\$1,500 per month were generated from copy fees and improved public access to records.

Motion to approve \$35,000 from Capital Funds for the Clerk of Superior Court scanning project, to be repaid from Clerk's Authority funds.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

c. Probate Court: Court Software Discussion

Probate Judge Cameron Boswell reported serious ongoing problems with the current Icon case management software. The problem included incorrect financial calculations, fee updates not being applied correctly, and poor vendor support.

Chairman Griffith recommended that he and Judge Boswell meet with Finance Director Randy Failyer to review all vendor quotes and the impact of potential technology fee changes, then bring back a refined recommendation at the next meeting.

No Action Taken.

d. Public Utilities: Policy for Extending Water/Sewer Lines

Chairman Griffith stated the County needed a formal written policy for extending water/sewer lines to properties without existing service. Public Utilities Director Chad Wilbanks presented a draft policy modeled on the current water meter application process. The policy was intended to standardize how extension requests were evaluated and defined when the County would pay, the applicant would pay or costs were shared. The County Attorney noted that because the draft involved new fees and standards, some or all of it may need to be adopted by ordinance and tied into the fee schedule. Chairman Griffith stressed that staff should be able to approve small, routine extensions, while larger or more expensive projects should come to the Board.

No Action Taken.

e. Public Utilities: Water Distribution: F550 Truck Replacement

Mr. Wilbanks requested replacing the Public Utilities F-550 truck used by Water Distribution to haul equipment and respond to water emergencies. Mr. Wilbanks explained that this was the only truck capable of pulling the equipment trailers and had become unreliable and could not longer be maintained. Mr. Wilbanks obtained three quotes for an F-450 4x4 with an 11-foot service body which were all similarly equipped. The lowest bid was Ed Murdock Ford at \$89,480.

Motion to approve the purchase of an F-450 4x4 with a service body from Ed Murdock Ford for \$89,480, from the 2022 SPLOST.

Motion made by Chairman Griffith, seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

f. Roads and Bridges: GDOT Salt Usage

Chairman Griffith stated that the County engineers and Road Superintendent Wesley Hill, had coordinated with GDOT so Banks County could utilize the GDOT's salt contract with Morton Salt. This allowed the County to buy salt at the GDOT contract price without entering into its own contract. Staff recommended purchasing \$10,000 worth of salt to have on hand for winter weather.

Motion to approve a purchase of \$10,000 for de-icing salt from Morton using GDOT's contract pricing, to be paid from T-SPLOST.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

11. BOARDS & AUTHORITIES:

a. Board of Elections: Resignation - Janet Lynn Telford

Motion to accept the resignation of Janet Lynn Telford from the Board of Elections.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, seconded by Commissioner Roberts.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

b. Board of Elections: Member Replacement

Removed from Agenda

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

a. Shane Adams: Sweetwater Way

Shane Adams, 797 Sweetwater Way in Lula, addressed the Board about the poor condition of Sweetwater Way, a one-way-in/one-way-out dirt road serving about 29 residences. He described two very steep hills near the end of the road where he and his family lived and said vehicles frequently get stuck on these hills, with residents having to pull people out of ditches. Mr Adams reported that the County had not scraped the road since last year, and that his nearly 70-year-old father had been using his tractor and scrape blade to maintain the hills. He expressed strong concern that EMS might not be able to reach his stepmother, who was recently diagnosed with early dementia, if the road condition did not improve. Mr. Adams provided photos of the trouble spots for the Board.

Chairman Griffith responded that he and the Road Superintendent would visit Sweetwater Way and inspect the road.

Ethan Atkinson, real estate agent, discussed two mobile home parcels at 1018 and 1020 Neil Road in Franklin County, noting that a Banks County water line and hydrant run along the property, even though staff had previously told him no water was available there. Because lenders would not allow shared wells for separate homes, he sought permission to obtain a Banks County water tap instead of drilling another well, which would be more expensive. The Board and staff confirmed the parcels were

fully in Franklin County and explained that Banks County was already turning down some in-county water applications due to high capacity and legally Banks County cannot serve parcels in another county without an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) and service-delivery arrangements with Franklin County. Given these legal and capacity constraints, the Board concluded it could not approve a tap for those Franklin County parcels at this time.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion to enter into executive session at 8:23

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Motion to exit from executive session at 8:58 pm.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

No Action Taken.

(Copy of Affidavit filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-3)

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 PM.

Motion made by Chairman Griffith, seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Roberts.

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Chairman

Deputy County Clerk