DAWSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
VOTING SESSION MINUTES – THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026
DAWSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER ASSEMBLY ROOM
25 JUSTICE WAY, DAWSONVILLE, GEORGIA 30534
FOLLOWING THE 5:00 PM WORK SESSION BUT BEGINNING
NO EARLIER THAN 6:00 PM

ROLL CALL: Those present were Chairman Billy Thurmond; Commissioner Seth Stowers, District 1; Commissioner Chris Gaines, District 2; Commissioner Alexa Bruce, District 3; County Manager Joey Leverette; County Attorney Angela Davis; County Clerk Kristen Cloud; and interested citizens of Dawson County. District 4 Commissioner Chad Turkett was not present.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Thurmond

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Motion passed 3-0 to approve the Minutes of the Work Session held on July 2, 2026. Stowers/Gaines

Motion passed 3-0 to approve the Minutes of the Voting Session held on July 2, 2026. Bruce/Gaines

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
Motion passed 3-0 to approve the agenda with the following change:

- Additon of Nos. 2 and 3 under New Business:
    - FY 2027 Intergovernmental Agreement Between the Board of Education and Dawson County Concerning School Resource Officers
    - Property Tax Relief Local Option Sales Tax (PTRLOST, or FLOST) Resolution and Call for Election

Stowers/Bruce

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Raymond Richards, Dawsonville, Georgia, shared questions regarding Property Tax Relief Local Option Sales Tax, commonly known as FLOST, though most of his concerns seemingly would need to be directed to the Board of Education.

Kathy Veitch, Dawsonville, Georgia, expressed concerns regarding data centers. She urged commissioners to conduct a data center site visit to places like Newton County, Georgia. In tandem with her data center concerns, Veitch noted worries about the state's lack of natural water and the discharge of synthetic "forever chemicals," or PFAs, in the water system.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Amendment of Chapter 30 (Occupational Tax Certificate/Business Licensing) and Readoption of the Amended Community Development Fee Schedule (3rd of 3 hearings; 1st hearing for an Amended Community Development Fee Schedule was held on May 21, 2026, and 2nd hearing was held on June 4, 2026, at which time that item was tabled until July 16, 2026, for another public hearing after readvertising to include a proposed Chapter 30 amendment)

Community Development Director Richard Osborne reviewed an Amendment of Chapter 30 and an Amended Community Development Fee Schedule.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to be heard on an Amendment of Chapter 30 (Occupational Tax Certificate/Business Licensing) and Readoption of the Amended Community Development Fee Schedule and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Motion passed 3-0 to approve an Amendment of Chapter 30 (Occupational Tax Certificate/Business Licensing) and Readoption of the Amended Community Development Fee Schedule – $100 flat fee for a home and seasonal based business, $200 flat fee for commercial based companies with 1-9 employees, and $200 flat fee plus $15 per full-time employee for commercial based companies with 10 or more employees. Gaines/Stowers

Amendments to the Dawson County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 109 (Environmental – Trees, Landscaping, Buffers, Erosion Control, Watershed Management, Stormwater) (2nd of 2 hearings; 1st hearing was held on July 2, 2026)

Community Development Director Richard Osborne reviewed Amendments to the Dawson County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 109 (Environmental – Trees, Landscaping, Buffers, Erosion Control, Watershed Management, Stormwater).

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to be heard on Amendments to the Dawson County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 109 (Environmental – Trees, Landscaping, Buffers, Erosion Control, Watershed Management, Stormwater).

The following spoke on Amendments to the Dawson County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 109 (Environmental – Trees, Landscaping, Buffers, Erosion Control, Watershed Management, Stormwater):

- Michael Turner, Dawsonville, Georgia, spoke in "opposition to the landscaping and tree portion of this." He said, "I have no problem with the watershed, erosion control component of that, but as a developer/builder it costs me money to take those trees out so I don't want to take any trees out that I don't have to." Additionally, he said, "Forcing me on the front end to put a tree in that my customer doesn't want, again, adds undue burden and costs; it's just wasted effort."

Chairman Thurmond asked if there was anyone else present who wished to speak on Amendments to the Dawson County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 109 (Environmental – Trees, Landscaping, Buffers, Erosion Control, Watershed Management, Stormwater) and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Motion passed 3-0 to approve Amendments to the Dawson County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 109 (Environmental – Trees, Landscaping, Buffers, Erosion Control, Watershed Management, Stormwater). Stowers/Bruce

Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Transmittal of a Draft Capital Improvements Element Annual Update to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for Regional and State Review (2nd of 2 hearings; 1st hearing was held on July 2, 2026)
Community Development Director Richard Osborne reviewed the item.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to be heard on the Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Transmittal of a Draft Capital Improvements Element Annual Update to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for Regional and State Review and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Motion passed 3-0 to approve the Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Transmittal of a Draft Capital Improvements Element Annual Update to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for Regional and State Review. Bruce/Stowers

ZONINGS:
Chairman Thurmond announced that if anyone contributed more than $250 to the commissioners or chairman in the past two years and wished to speak, they would have to fill out a disclosure form, which would be made available to them. Under the normal program, 10 minutes is given to those who wish to speak in favor of or opposition to with some redirect, time permitting.

ZA 26-14 - Sean Courtney has submitted a request to the proper authorities on behalf of Bold Wealth Management for a Land Use Amendment to rezone approximately 20.89 surveyed acres from RA (Residential Agriculture) to CHI (Commercial Highway Intensive) to allow for a proposed office, flex and warehouse development. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Georgia 400 Mixed Use Future Land Use/Character Area Map. The subject property is located at Whitmire Drive, Dawsonville, GA 30534 (Parcel Nos. 107-078, 107-078-004, 107-078-005 and 107-077). (Tabled from May 21, 2026, at which time a hearing was held, and tabled again from June 18, 2026; the application was readvertised for an additional hearing to be held on July 16, 2026)
Community Development Director Richard Osborne said the Planning Commission recommend approval of the application with conditions, which have been incorporated into a revised concept site plan.

Attorney Sean Courtney of Lipscomb Johnson of Cumming, Georgia, representing Bold Wealth Management, said the project aimed to be a maximum 25 percent retail, 23 percent flex space, and 52 percent non-retail professional/office space.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to speak either for or against the application and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Motion passed 3-0 to approve ZA 26-14 with the following stipulations:
1. Max 25 percent retail (general);

2. Max 23 percent flex office/storage;
3. Minimum 52 percent commercial limited to professional and medical offices, banks and financial institutions, hospitals, hotels, and restaurants;
4. Fifteen feet additional right of way required to be dedicated to the county;
5. Twenty-foot-wide landscape strip required per county code along Whitmire Drive shall be followed;
6. Median to be added to the west entrance, making it a right-in and right-out access;
7. Public Works, prior to approval of civil plans, shall evaluate the needed throat depth from the east access into the development to potentially be deeper;
8. Development shall be managed by a Property Owners Association (POA), with covenants enforceable by the POA that will ensure the quality, cleanliness, and appearance of the development as to landscaping, common areas, open space, trash collection, and building maintenance;
9. The following uses shall not be permitted on the subject property:
    a. Adult entertainment and adult materials establishments;
    b. Automobile service establishments, major and minor (except for low-density uses, including but not limited to detailing and window tinting);
    c. Escort services;
    d. Palm reading and fortune telling;
    e. Crematories;
    f. Open storage yards;
    g. Recycling and recovery facilities;
    h. Solid waste transfer stations;
    i. Tire retreading and recapping facilities;
    j. Convenience stores, with or without gasoline pumps;
    k. Gas stations;
    l. Bars, lounges, or nightclubs provided this shall not preclude a restaurant from having a bar;
    m. Theaters;
    n. Dry cleaning plants;
    o. Fuel oil distributors;
    p. Fuel uses associated with production, management, and harvesting of timber;
    q. Lumber yards, planning, and sawmills;
    r. Open air business and open storage yards;
    s. Service stations;
    t. Truck terminals;
    u. Junk yards, wrecked motor vehicle compounds, and wrecker services;
    v. Salvage yards;
    w. Massage parlors;
    x. Electronic message board signs; and
    y. The manufacturing, distributing, licensing, and/or selling of drug paraphernalia on the subject property is prohibited. For purposes of condition, drug paraphernalia shall mean instruments designed to facilitate the smoking, consumption, preparation, or ingestion of tobacco, drugs, or nicotine in any form. The terms shall include, but is not limited to, items such as bongs, hookah pipes, grinders,

drug/tobacco sales, faux jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, and Ether devices or objects commonly associated with tobacco, vaping, or drug preparation or use.;

10. There shall be no portion of the subject property utilized for outside storage of junk vehicles, boats, or recreational vehicles. Vehicle sales and vehicle service are prohibited. The storage of trash, junk, or refuse on the property is prohibited;
11. Lighting located in the parking area shall be LED full cutoff fixtures and shall not exceed 30 feet in height. Any decorative lighting shall be such fixtures that complement the architectural system of the buildings;
12. Building-mounted lighting shall be gooseneck-style decorative and shall highlight architectural features and not illuminate the entire building façade;
13. Burglar bars, fiberglass awning, and steel rolldown curtains are prohibited;
14. During anytime a unit is vacant after its initial opening (a "vacant building") for a period of at least 30 days ("vacancy period"), the owner of the building or POA shall:
    a. Clean and maintain the unit, including its exterior facing and window treatments;
    b. Maintain all on-site parking areas and landscaping in the same condition as they had been maintained prior to vacancy;
    c. Operate all lighting in the parking lot and other external areas, exclusive of identification signs, in the same manner as they had been prior to the vacancy period;
    d. To minimize possible criminal activity associated with a vacant building, the developer or POA shall ensure that no outdoor signage or like materials visible to the general public that emphasize the building is a vacant building be erected or posted;
    e. Keep the building free of graffiti; and
    f. Repair all other acts of vandalism in a timely manner.; and
15. The owner of the building or POA, regardless of the building's occupancy status, shall be responsible for:
    a. Maintaining cleanliness of the entire site by removing any trash, rubbish, or other debris from the premises;
    b. Maintaining landscaping and replacing dead or damaged plants; and
    c. Repairing or replacing building elements that are damaged, dilapidated or in disrepair (such as, but not limited to, broken windows).

Gaines/Stowers

ZA 26-16 - Tyler Hester has submitted a request to the proper authorities for a Land Use Amendment to rezone approximately 5.13 surveyed acres from RSR (Residential Sub-Rural) to RA (Rural Agriculture) to allow for an accessory building to be built before the principal building. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Rural Living Future Land Use/Character Area Map. The subject property is located at 1693 Cowart Road, Dawsonville, GA 30534 (Parcel No. 038-014).

Community Development Director Richard Osborne said, "[This is an] unusual but very basic request just because this property is large. Normally, somebody can do an accessory building first on a vacant lot before the house. It's just an unusual standard because RSR is normally smaller-lot zoning. And because it's a larger property in a more rural area, it absolutely makes sense. It is

more in line with the surrounding area to rezone to RA, and it accomplishes the applicant's goal of being able to put a building up before the house."

The applicant was not present.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to speak either for or against the application and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Motion passed 3-0 to approve ZA 26-16. Stowers/Gaines

ZA 26-17 - Amy Butler has submitted a request to the proper authorities for a Land Use Amendment to rezone approximately 5 surveyed acres from RA (Rural Agriculture) to RRE (Residential Rural Estate) to allow for adjustment of property acreage to 3 surveyed acres. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Rural Living Future Land Use/Character Area Map. The subject property is located at 1337 Amicalola Church Road, Dawsonville, GA 30534 (Parcel No. 035-017-002).

Community Development Director Richard Osborne said, "In order to move a property line and reduce acreage, the rezoning is necessary, but RA and RRE are both large-lot rural zonings." He said the Planning Commission recommended approval of the application.

Applicant Amy Butler said she received the 5-acre property from in her in-laws. She said her in-laws' property adjoins hers and they wish to sell part of their property. "I'm just trying to give them 2 acres back that I don't need in order for them to be able to sell a larger piece of property," Butler said.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to speak either for or against the application and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Motion passed 3-0 to approve ZA 26-17. Stowers/Gaines

ZA 26-18 - Davis Engineering & Surveying has submitted a request to the proper authorities to amend the Future Land Use/Character Area designation from Dawson to Crossroads Commercial, followed by a rezoning from RSRMM (Residential Sub-Rural Manufactured/Moved) to CCB (Commercial Community Business). In addition, a Special Use Permit will be required to allow parking (outdoor storage) of operable vehicles, including cars, trucks, RVs, campers, boats, and similar uses. The subject property consists of approximately 6.689 surveyed acres. The property is located at the corner of Valley Road and Highway 53 East, Dawsonville, GA 30534 (Parcel No. 094-094).

Community Development Director Richard Osborne said the application is an "unusual" request and is not consistent with the future land use map of the county's comprehensive plan. "The applicant has provided a good, full concept site plan, and the applicant has been made aware that the intersection of Highway 53 and Valley would need to be upgraded…," Osborne said, adding that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the application.

Phillip Anthony King, on behalf of his father and applicant Phillip James King, said, "What we see it as is just boat and RV storage; nothing nefarious, no equipment."

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to speak either for or against the application and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

Motion passed 3-0 to deny ZA 26-18. Gaines/Bruce

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration of Request to Appoint a 5- or 7-Member Citizen Advisory Committee to Study a Community Health/Property Maintenance Ordinance

Motion passed 3-0 to approve the formation of a 5-Member Citizen Advisory Committee to Study a Community Health/Property Maintenance Ordinance; from received applications, each commissioner will submit to staff a name for appointment within two weeks. Gaines/Stowers

Consideration of FY 2027 Intergovernmental Agreement Between the Board of Education and Dawson County Concerning School Resource Officers

Motion passed 3-0 to approve a FY 2027 Intergovernmental Agreement Between the Board of Education and Dawson County Concerning School Resource Officers. Gaines/Bruce

Consideration of Property Tax Relief Local Option Sales Tax (PTRLOST, or FLOST) Resolution and Call for Election

Motion passed 3-0 to approve a resolution of the Board of Commissioners to authorize and call for an election on November 3, 2026, to consider whether a 1 percent "PTRLOST" sales and use tax should be implemented for a period of five years and for the proceeds to be used exclusively for the reduction of ad valorem property taxes within Dawson County. Stowers/Bruce

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion passed 3-0 to enter into Executive Session to discuss litigation and real estate. Stowers/Gaines

Motion passed 3-0 to come out of Executive Session. Gaines/Stowers

ADJOURNMENT:

APPROVE: ATTEST:

Billy Thurmond, Chairman Kristen Cloud, County Clerk