Effingham County Georgia
Board of Commissioners

Damon M. Rahn, Chairman at Large
Forrest F. Floyd, District 1
Roger Burdette, District 2
Jamie Deloach, District 3
Elizabeth Helmly, District 4
Phil Kieffer, District 5

REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 20, 2026

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Damon Rahn, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Roger Burdette, Mr. Jamie Deloach, Ms. Elizabeth Helmly, and Mr. Phil Kieffer met in regular session at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, October 20, 2026 in the Commissioners Meeting Chambers at the Effingham County Administrative Complex located at 804 South Laurel Street Springfield, Georgia 31329.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tim Callanan – County Manager, Mr. Edward Newberry – County Attorney, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Ms. Tasheena Shiggs – Deputy Clerk, Mr. Clint Hodges – Fire Chief & EMA Director, Ms. Marie Todd – Executive Assistant, Mr. Michael King – Assistant County Manager, Mr. Nicholas Stark – IT Specialist, Ms. Sarah Mausolf – Director of Human Resources, Mr. Mark Barnes – Finance Director, Ms. Pamela Melser – Director of Development Services, Ms. Akela Wright – Planning Manager, Ms. Kimberly Barlett – Senior Planner, Ms. Lauren Shuman – Engineer Project Coordinator, Mr. Tre Wilkins – Project Manager, Mr. Ted Goudeau – Facilities Maintenance Director, and Mr. Mark Lastinger – Public Information Coordinator.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Boltin Teeter, Karen McDonald, Will Hart, Raymond Carver, Michelle Johns, Deana Capps, Elizabeth Fisher, Manjusha Sheobaran, Karla Lows, Lyndsey Smith, Judy Oakley, Jill Anderson, Robert McCorkle, Andrew Smith, Amie Dickerson, and Margaret Kelly.

I- CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rahn called the meeting to order at 4:57pm

II- ROLL CALL

Damon Rahn, Chairman
Forrest Floyd
Roger Burdette
Jamie Deloach
Beth Helmly
Phil Kieffer, Vice Chairman

III – INVOCATION

Karla Lows, a student at Effingham County Middle School and member of Effingham County 4-H, offered the invocation.

IV– PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

The pledge was led by Chairman Rahn.

V – AGENDA APPROVAL

County Clerk Johnson announced removal of Unfinished Business item #1 and postponement of Planning Board item #2 to 11/3/2026.

Commissioner Burdette made a motion to approve the agenda with the noted changes. Commissioner Helmly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

VI – MINUTES

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 6, 2026 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES (1):

County Clerk Johnson reported three corrections: The acreage for the William Cox item was corrected to one acre (previously 1.24). The Boltin Teeter zoning was corrected from I-1 to LI, as noted on the application. The wording order of a comment by Commissioner Burdette under administrative reports was changed.

Commissioner Helmly made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with the noted changes. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. Commissioner Floyd abstained. The motion carried 4 to 0.

VII – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Rahn stated comments shall pertain to the agenda items only. Should you wish to make remarks, clearly state your full name into the microphone before commencing to speak.

VIII – CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Rahn stated documents from this meeting are located in the Clerk's office and on the Board of Commissioner's website.

IX – CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Rahn recused himself from this section of the agenda.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the following Consent Agenda items: **(2026-482)** Consideration to approve the Utility Relocation Agreement with Georgia Power Company for the McCall Road at Rahn Station Roundabout, PI L13335 **(2026-483)** Consideration to approve the Utility Relocation Agreement with Georgia Power Company for the Sand Hill Road at Blue Jay Road Roundabout, PI L13303 **(2026-484)** Consideration to approve the Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) Area Agency on Aging Contract# 2027-08 for fiscal year 2027 **(2026-485)** Consideration to ratify and affirm the corrected signature pages for the FY 2026

Local Road Assistance (LRA) Supplemental funding application (*previously approved by the Board of Commissioners on June 2, 2026*) Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

X – UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE A QUOTE FOR THE PURCHASE OF ONE KUBOTA M6 TRACTOR WITH ROTARY CUTTER FROM SHEA TRACTOR & EQUIPMENT COMPANY FOR THE IN-HOUSE MOWING PROGRAM (*Postponed by the commission, 10/06/2026*) (1):

This item was removed at agenda approval at staff's request.

XI – NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE A PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING NOVEMBER 1, 2026 AS RETIRED EDUCATORS' DAY (1):

County Clerk Johnson stated that the request came from Ms. Deborah Snooks and that the Governor had proclaimed November 1, 2026 as Retired Educators Day. She noted the Georgia Retired Educators Association was founded in 1958.

Commissioner Helmly made a motion to approve a Proclamation celebrating November 1, 2026 as Retired Educators Day. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY CHARLES ABBOTT ASSOCIATES, INC. (CAA) TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW, BUILDING AND STRUCTURAL PLAN REVIEW, CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION, FIRE PLAN REVIEW, CIVIL/SITE REVIEW, PROJECT ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED REGULATORY OVERSIGHT SERVICES (2):

County Manager Callanan explained that staff had sought an outside firm with deep experience in large industrial and data center projects. CAA works only for governments, which avoids conflicts of interest, and it previously handled the Hyundai site for Bryan County. CAA would provide a full-time on-site presence for enforcement, serve as the point of contact for communications, and review site, building and fire plans. Payment would come from permit fees on the project, which go into the restricted development services fund and cannot be transferred to the general fund. Mr. Callanan described the split as 80% to CAA (75% for general services and 5% for engineering and plan review, with hourly billing if the 5% is exceeded) and 20% retained by the county.

Will Hart and Jeremy Head of CAA described the firm's work with more than 100 communities, about 40 of them in Georgia, and about two dozen data centers nationwide.

The Board discussed the contractual fee split and revenue-sharing terms with CAA for plan review and inspection services, along with performance feedback regarding the vendor.

Commissioner Burdette made a motion to approve the Proposal for Phase 1 of Project Camellia Development Review and Construction Oversight Services. Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(Sheobaran Manjusha provided a 3- page written letter regarding her concerns about this item. The document is part of the Clerk Office record and was emailed to the Board of Commissioners.)

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF A $35,430.40 GRANT AWARD FROM THE GEORGIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY (GOHS) STATE AND COMMUNITY HIGHWAY SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM FOR TEN - SOUTHEAST AREA, GRANT NUMBER TEN-2027-EFFINGHAMSO-036 (3):

Chairman Rahn returned.

Finance Director Barnes stated that the Sheriff's Office had applied for and previously received this grant, and that it supports ongoing highway safety programs, training and outreach.

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to approve acceptance of the $35,430.40 GOHS TEN - Southeast Area grant award. Commissioner Deloach seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO ACCEPT A $289,692.00 GRANT AWARD FROM THE GEORGIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY (GOHS) FOR THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE H.E.A.T. PROJECT, GRANT NUMBER GA-2027+EFFINGHAMSO-076 (4):

Finance Director Barnes explained this was a significantly larger award than the Sheriff's Office's prior H.E.A.T. awards, which were roughly $20,000 to $30,000. It would fund two vehicles and their outfitting and the majority of the salary costs for two full-time deputies.

Commissioner Burdette made a motion to approve acceptance of the $289,692.00 GOHS H.E.A.T. grant award. Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE CHANGE ORDER# 17 WITH PAUL AKINS COMPANY FOR REVISIONS AT THE HISTORIC CENTRAL RENOVATION PROJECT (5):

Capital Projects Manager Wilkins explained that gravity sewer and storm drainage issues arose during construction that could not have been anticipated in the initial design, and that the change order addressed them.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve Change Order 17. Vice Chair Kieffer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE SUBMISSION AN APPLICATION FOR THE GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY (GEFA) WATERFIRST PROGRAM ON BEHALF OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY (6):

Capital Projects Manager Wilkins explained that WaterFirst is a highly sought-after designation that would give the county a 1% reduction on future GEFA loans. The county already meets nearly all requirements and expects a review of roughly two months.

County Manager Callanan noted that the county's extensive wastewater effluent reuse system would score strongly, and Mr. Wilkins added that the county's stormwater policies exceed those of neighboring jurisdictions.

Vice Chair Kieffer made a motion to approve submission of the GEFA WaterFirst application. Commissioner Deloach seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XII – REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

County Clerk Johnson

- Recreation Dinner: Wednesday, October 21 at Stillwell Pines (Social Hour at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 7:00 p.m.)
- Chamber Friendsgiving Event: Thursday, November 12 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Location TBD)
- BOC Staff Luncheon: Friday, December 11 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

County Manager Callanan

- Clyo Community Park & Community Center: Grand reopening scheduled for Saturday, October 31.
- $55M Wastewater Treatment Plant: Construction wrapping up at the end of October, with operational readiness expected in Q4 2027; site tours are available upon request.
- Effingham Parkway Project: GDOT anticipates opening the Goshen Road to Blue Jay Road section on November 1. Full project completion is estimated for approximately May 2027, subject to approval of a bridge change order requiring an estimated nine months of additional work.
- Abercorn Landing Project: Permitting for the ADA-accessible paddle boat dock, fishing pier, restrooms, and expanded parking is nearing completion, after which it will proceed to bid with an estimated eight-month construction timeline.

Vice Chair Kieffer

- Inquired about the status and timeline for Abercorn Landing.

Commissioner Helmly

- Requested that staff address a temporary moratorium on data center developments in an upcoming meeting while staff draft applicable regulatory ordinances.

Commissioner Deloach

- Expressed enthusiasm for the Clyo Park grand opening.

Commissioner Burdette

- Reminded attendees of the Back the Badge rally on Sunday at 7:00 p.m. at Freedom Park.

Commissioner Floyd

- Requested that the county study reducing the speed limit on Old River Road in both directions from I-16, from 50 mph to 35 mph, citing speeding and growth in the area. Mr. Callanan noted that the approaches to I-16 are under GDOT jurisdiction and that any change would need to be coordinated with GDOT.

XIII – EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:32 p.m., Commissioner Deloach made a motion to go into an executive session for discussion of personnel, property, and pending litigation. Vice Chair Kieffer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

At 8:20 p.m., Commissioner Deloach made a motion to reconvene. Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XIV – EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the October 6, 2026 executive session meeting minutes. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XV – PLANNING BOARD UNFINISHED BUSINESS – 6:00 pm

BOLTIN TEETER as agent for **MARK COOPER – PUBLIC HEARING (01):** Planning Board recommends approving an application submitted by Boltin Teeter as agent for Mark Cooper to rezone +/- 99 acres located at 1180 Old River Road from AR 1 to LI to allow for permitted uses in LI Map # 304 Parcel # 10 in the First District (*Postponed by the commission, 10/06/2026*)

Senior Planner Barlett stated that the applicant sought to rezone the property to allow an approximately 1 million square foot warehouse and distribution building. The remaining acreage would stay AR-1 and be donated to the county. The Planning Board recommended approval on September 8 with a stipulation for added buffers and berms, after citizens raised concerns about traffic and buffering. The applicant's revised plan included a 10-foot landscaped berm. The southern 150-foot buffer would be retained with an added berm, and the eastern buffer would be reduced from 300 feet to 240 feet with a 10-foot berm. Staff found the request consistent with the future land use map (transitional and conservation designations).

Speaking for: Attorney Robert McCorkle appeared with engineer Michael Roach of Thomas & Hutton. He stated that the applicant chose LI as the least intense industrial district and that data centers are a conditional use there, requiring a separate application and hearings. The project would have no wetland impacts, with about 20% impervious surface, and a Corps jurisdictional determination was in hand. Public water would be extended to the site, and the building would use septic. A traffic impact analysis and a DRI were completed. A separate buffer variance would come before the Board at a later meeting.

The southern neighbors agreed in writing to the berm plan. Mr. Roach stated that the main entrance would align with Bay Road, with a left-turn lane into the site and a right-

turn lane at the northern driveway. He later corrected the trip estimate: the traffic study projected 268 daily truck trips. He explained that aligning the intersections was a safety measure, and that restricting ingress and egress would limit the building's usability. Mr. McCorkle agreed to a condition prohibiting data centers and said the applicant would work with staff on signage to discourage truck traffic on Bay Road.

Speaking in objection: Manjusha Sheobaran, Bruce Wiles, Rose Stokes, Raymond Carver, Bill Hartsock, William Horn, Deana Capps, Robert Maller, Elizabeth Fisher, and Thomas Tucker raised concerns regarding data center permitting & land use, traffic, speed limits & infrastructure, and public notice & board inquiries.

The Board engaged in discussion regarding evaluating a Light Industrial (LI) rezoning request for warehouse development, focusing on land use compliance, traffic mitigation, environmental buffering, and restrictions against data centers.

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. Additional buffer and berms to protect the adjacent landowners.
2. The property may never be used as a data center
3. The applicant works with staff on engineering controls to eliminate truck traffic through Meldrum

Commissioner Deloach seconded the motion. Commissioner Helmly opposed. The motion carried 4 to 1.

BOLTIN TEETER as agent for **MARK COOPER – SECOND READING (02):** Consideration to approve the Second Reading of an application submitted by Boltin Teeter as agent for Mark Cooper to rezone +/- 99 acres located at 1180 Old River Road from AR-1 to LI to allow for permitted uses in LI. Map # 304 Parcel # 10 in the First District (*Postponed by the commission, 10/06/2026*).

This item was postponed to the November 3, 2026 meeting due to added stipulation.

XVI – PLANNING BOARD – 6:00 pm

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE FIRST READING OF THE ADOPTION OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA, AND THE ADOPTION OF THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY (1):

County Manager Callanan explained that the official zoning map would be updated to reflect all zoning changes approved through mid-September. The ordinance adoption was largely cleaned up to remove language that conflicted with the September 2024 change to the planning board's scope. One substantive change was made at the Board's request: conditional use applications in commercial and industrial districts (B-1 through B-3, LI, HI and I-1) would again go to the Planning Board for a public hearing before reaching the Board of Commissioners.

Speaking in objection: Lyndsey Smith, Raymond Carver, John Smith, Manjusha Sheobaran expressed concerns regarding data center land-use regulations, public notice and transparency, and due process for document review.

County Manager Callanan clarified that data centers were originally permitted in light and heavy industrial but were later made conditional in light industrial. A hypothetical question about making data centers conditional was answered by County Attorney Newberry.

The Board engaged in discussion regarding procedural integrity of the zoning update, supporting a moratorium and conditional-use requirement for data centers, and setting the timeline and public input process for the second reading.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve of the text amendment to Appendix C, Zoning Ordinance, as shown in the attached redline. Vice Chair Kieffer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE SECOND READING OF THE ADOPTION OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA, AND THE ADOPTION OF THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY (2):

This item was postponed to November 3, 2026 at agenda approval.

XVII – ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20pm, there being no further business, Commissioner Deloach made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Damon Rahn, Chairman

Stephanie D. Johnson, County Clerk

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 3, 2026