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
APRIL 21, 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, April 21, 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. Jack Burgin Jr. – SR System Administrator, Ms. Pamela Melser – Director of Development Services, Ms. Jennifer Rose – Planner I, Ms. Akela Wright – Planning Manager, Ms. Kimberly Barlett – Senior Planner, Mr. Josh Moody – Building Official, Ms. Lauren Shuman – Engineering Project Coordinator, Ms. Danielle Craver – Procurement and Contracts Manager, Mr. Tre Wilkins – Capital Project Manager, Mr. Johnathan Hulme – County Engineer, Mr. Ted Goudeau – Facilities Maintenance Director, and Mr. Mark Lastinger – Public Information Coordinator.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Cheryl Goldwire, Franklin Goldwire, Dustin Hutto, Joel Juvado, David Cannon, Duane Gilchrist, Stephanie Santos, Eva Williams, Earl Williams**,** Melissa Stone, Lisa Clark, and James Carlson

I- CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rahn called the meeting to order at 5:05pm

II- ROLL CALL

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

III – INVOCATION

Mr. Eli Usher, a ninth-grade student at Effingham College and Career Academy and active member of the Effingham County 4-H leadership team offered the invocation.

IV– PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

The pledge was led by Eli Usher.

V – AGENDA APPROVAL

County Clerk Johnson announced Unfinished Business item #1 will be postponed to the May 5, 2026 meeting.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the agenda with the noted change. Vice Chair Kieffer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

VI – MINUTES

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE APRIL 7, 2026 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES (1):

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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 – PRESENTATION – 5:05pm

1. **Presentation from the 4-H Office**

Madison Schroeder, a 10th-grade student at Effingham County High School, appeared before the Board to offer thanks for the County's continued support of 4-H youth programs. Gratitude was also extended to Ms. Johnson for facilitating 4-H student involvement in Board meetings. The presentation highlighted the Board's role in creating educational and leadership opportunities for the youth of Effingham County.

X – CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the following Consent Agenda items: **(2026-164)** Consideration to approve reappointing Chris Sapp to the Recreation Board as representative for District 2. Commissioner Helmly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XI – UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE SECOND READING TO AMEND APPENDIX C, ARTICLE III, SECTION 3.46 - ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS OF THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES (*1st reading approved, 04/07/2026*) (1):

This item was postponed to the May 5, 2026 meeting at agenda approval.

ANTHONY LESTER – SECOND READING (2): Consideration to approve the Second Reading for an application by Anthony Lester for a variance from Section 3.21.1, located at 987 Springfield Egypt Road to allow for the occupation of an RV/Camper during the renovation of a home in AR-2 Map # 342 Parcel # 38A in the Third District *(Postponed, 04/07/2026)* (2):

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XII – NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL 2026 AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH (1):

County Clerk Johnson presented a request from the Exchange Club to proclaim April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Members of the Exchange Club were in attendance for the reading and receipt of the proclamation.

Commissioner Burdette made a motion to approve the Proclamation as presented. Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE AN APPLICATION BY KERN & CO., LLC- CHAD ZITTROUER AS AGENT FOR R.B BAKER PROPERTIES, LLC FOR A SITE PLAN FOR "OLD AUGUSTA-BAKER TRACT" LOCATED ON OLD AUGUSTA ROAD SOUTH MAP# 476 PARCEL# 4A, 4A01, 4A02, & 4A03 IN THE FIFTH DISTRICT (2):

Senior Planner Barlett explained that the applicant proposes to develop a warehouse distribution park on 114.79 acres located on Old Augusta Road South. The plan includes four buildings, one of which is designated for JIT warehousing and logistics, with a 150-foot vegetative buffer surrounding the property. A site plan has been submitted in compliance with the Effingham County Site Plan Ordinance, and the proposed development aligns with the intent of the Light Industrial Zoning District.

Vice Chair Kieffer made a motion to approve the Site Plan for "Old Augusta-Baker Tract". Commissioner Deloach seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS 6 DUMP TRUCK FOR THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, AS SOLICITED UNDER REQUEST NO. 25-REQ-105 (3):

Procurement and Contracts Manager Carver explained the Public Works Department requests approval to purchase a 2027 Ford F750 dump truck with a 10-foot dump

body to support daily operations, including road maintenance, material hauling, and infrastructure projects. A bid process was conducted and recommends awarding the contract to Central Truck Center, which met all required specifications despite not being the lowest bidder.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2027 Ford F-750 dump truck as recommended. Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE A LIGHTING AGREEMENT WITH MUSCO LIGHTING FOR PINEORA RECREATION COMPLEX (4):

Engineering Project Coordinator Shuman noted a correction: the proposal incorrectly listed Pineora; the sports lighting system at the Highway 119 complex will be provided by Musco Lighting at a total cost of $765,000.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the Sports Lighting agreement. Commissioner Helmly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE TASK ORDER #007 UNDER THE ON-CALL RIGHT-OF-WAY PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT FOR THE BLUE JAY ROAD WIDENING PROJECT FROM EFFINGHAM PARKWAY TO EAST OF BLANDFORD ROAD (5):

County Engineer Hulme explained that the contract with JMT involves the immediate acquisition for the Blue Jay Road winding project, a two-lane road with a divided median and a roundabout at the Blue Jay and McCall intersection. The completion date depends on the negotiation process and whether condemnation proceedings become necessary.

Commissioner Burdette made a motion to approve Task Order #007 for right-of-way services. Vice Chair Kieffer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE A PROPOSAL FROM LEGACY WATER GROUP LLC FOR PHASE 1 OF THE EFFINGHAM REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY FACILITIES PROJECT (6):

Capital Projects Manager Wilkins explained Legacy Water Group has been awarded the contract for pre-construction services. This is noted as a positive experience for the first CMAR project, as costs are significantly below the original budget due to reductions over the past 18 months. Following the first meeting on 30% plans with the engineer, GMC, and the CMAR, there is potential to expand the project scope, increase the plant size, and extend water lines.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve Legacy's GMP Proposal.
Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XIII – REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

County Manager Callanan

- ACCG conference beginning Friday
- Pancakes and Politics tomorrow morning
- Groundbreaking for the expansion of the Georgia Transformer plant tomorrow at 11am
- Budget discussion

County Clerk Johnson

- 3 on 3 budget meeting

Commissioner Floyd

- Lowground Road notification

Commissioner Burdette

- Home businesses requirements

Commissioner Deloach

- Expressed gratitude to Chief Hodges and his team during the fire on Shawnee-Egypt Road

Commissioner Kieffer

- Abercorn Landing Update

Chairman Rahn

- District 2 townhall meeting recap
- Expressed gratitude to the Development Service Staff

XIV – EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:18pm, Commissioner Deloach made a motion to go into an executive session for discussion of personnel, property, and pending litigation. Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

At 8:07pm, Commissioner Deloach made a motion to reconvene. Commissioner Helmly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XV – EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the April 7, 2026 executive session minutes. Commissioner Helmly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XVI – PLANNING BOARD – 6:00 pm

ROBBIE BRANNEN – PUBLIC HEARING (01): Consideration to approve an application by Robbie Brannen for a variance from Section 3.15A(e) located at 203 Eagle Court to allow for a nonconforming AR-2 lot to have a residential business Map # 369A Parcel # 46 in the Fourth District

Senior Planner Barlett explained that the request seeks approval to operate a

residential business on a non-conforming lot. Staff have determined that the request aligns with the intent of the variance criteria as a hardship and that the proposed use is not expected to negatively affect public safety or welfare.

Speaking for: Robbie Brannen explained that the physical storefront would simply be an extension of their current online and delivery-based model, allowing for one-on-one consultations and on-site product displays without significantly increasing traffic.

Speaking in objection: Joe Norman expressed concerns with noise.

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding commercial business in a residential area.

Commissioner Helmly made a motion to deny. Commissioner Deloach seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ROBBIE BRANNEN – SECOND READING (02): Consideration to approve the Second Reading for an application by Robbie Brannen for a variance from Section 3.15A(e) located at 203 Eagle Court to allow for a nonconforming AR-2 lot to have a residential business Map # 369A Parcel # 46 in the Fourth District

This item was denied due to previous action.

ROBBIE BRANNEN – PUBLIC HEARING (03): Consideration to approve an application by Robbie Brannen for a conditional use to allow for a Residential Business in AR-2 located at 203 Eagle Court Map # 369A Parcel # 46 in the Fourth District

This item was denied due to previous action.

ROBBIE BRANNEN – SECOND READING (04): Consideration to approve the Second Reading for an application by Robbie Brannen for a conditional use to allow for a Residential Business in AR-2 located at 203 Eagle Court Map # 369A Parcel # 46 in the Fourth District

This item was denied due to previous action.

JAMES CARLSON – PUBLIC HEARING (05): Consideration to approve an application by James Carlson for a conditional use located at 1501 Old Tusculum Road to allow for an Elementary school, Agritourism, Event Venue, and Adult Education Services in AR-1 Map # 471A Parcel # 32 in the Third District

Senior Planner Barlett explained the applicant proposes to establish a Christian education and community outreach campus, comprising a schoolhouse facility, a residential mobile home for a groundskeeper, agricultural and outdoor education areas, event and community gathering spaces, and a planned outdoor pavilion. The educational component, Faithful Roots Schoolhouse, will accommodate up to 15

students with one teacher, one paraprofessional, and one administrative staff member, emphasizing an agricultural-focused curriculum. This project integrates diverse complementary uses, an elementary school, an event venue, agritourism activities, and adult education services within a 25.25-acre property, aligning with the comprehensive plans and agricultural residential designation.

Speaking for: James Carlson explained a 35-acre landlocked parcel is being developed as a community-focused 501(c)(3) project. The property aims to provide an affordable, safe, gated gathering space for seniors and children, including life skills education and public-school use. The initiative, underway for a year and a half, includes plans for a community garden, small school system starting with kindergarten, and partnerships with 4-H and local churches. The school will emphasize life skills, with strict controls on events to prioritize safety and community needs. No alcohol will be allowed during school hours or events involving children. The project is not intended as a wedding venue but as a meeting place with a focus on education, community events, and small businesses. Guidelines will address traffic, safety, and event timing to minimize neighbor impact.

Speaking in objection: Melissa Stone, Lisa Clark, and William D. Cannon expressed concerns with the event venue, traffic, registered sex offender nearby and noise.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to postpone to 05/05/2026. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

JAMES CARLSON – SECOND READING (06): Consideration to approve the Second Reading for an application by James Carlson for a conditional use located at 1501 Old Tusculum Road to allow for an Elementary school, Agritourism, Event Venue, and Adult Education Services in AR-1 Map # 471A Parcel # 32 in the Third District.

This item was postponed to 05/05/2026 due to previous action.

SHAWN SIKES – PUBLIC HEARING (07): Consideration to approve an application by Shawn Sikes for a variance from Section 5.1, located at 180 Clayton's Bluff to allow for a decrease in required building setbacks in AR-1 Map # 471A Parcel # 32 in the Fourth District

Senior Planner Barlett explained that the applicant is seeking a 10-foot variance to the required 25-foot side setbacks within the AR-1 zoning district. The proposal involves constructing a residence located 15 feet from each side property line. Staff noted that the request is consistent with the Future Land Use Map and aligns with the intent of the zoning district.

Speaking for: Shawn Sikes is requesting a setback variance to place a new manufactured home on a property that previously held a mobile home.

Commissioner Helmly made a motion to approve the variance. Commissioner Deloach seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

SHAWN SIKES – SECOND READING (08): Consideration to approve the Second Reading for an application by Shawn Sikes for a variance from Section 5.1, located at 180 Clayton's Bluff to allow for a decrease in required building setbacks in AR-1 Map # 471A Parcel # 32 in the Fourth District

Commissioner Helmly made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading. Vice Chair Kieffer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

GLORIA DURRANCE – PUBLIC HEARING (09): Consideration to approve an application by Gloria Durrance for a variance from Section 5.1, located on Floyd Ave to allow for a decrease in required building setbacks in AR-1 Map # 296 Parcel # 51 in the Third District.

Senior Planner Barlett explained that the applicant requests a modification to the required building setbacks to facilitate construction of a home on the property. This request meets the hardship criteria outlined in Article 9 and is not expected to have an adverse impact on neighboring properties.

Speaking for: Gloria Durrance stated that the proposed construction is intended for a small-scale dwelling for her and her husband.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the variance. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

GLORIA DURRANCE – SECOND READING (10): Consideration to approve the Second Reading for an application by Gloria Durrance for a variance from Section 5.1, located on Floyd Ave to allow for a decrease in required building setbacks in AR-1 Map # 296 Parcel # 51 in the Third District.

Commissioner Deloach made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading. Commissioner Helmly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

DUANE GILCHRIST – PUBLIC HEARING (11): Consideration to approve an application by Duane Gilchrist for a variance from section 3.21.1 located at 143 Laurel Circle to allow for an RV/Camper to be occupied during the renovation of a home in AR-2 Map # 302 Parcel # 84A in the First District

Senior Planner Barlett explained the applicant is seeking a variance to allow for the temporary occupancy of a camper for a maximum of 12 months during the renovation of the existing mobile home, with the requirement that it be vacated and disconnected from the well and septic system upon completion of the work.

Speaking for: Duane Gilchrist explained a new mobile home was installed in 2024 that developed a leak under the kitchen, followed by a pipe break that went undetected, leading to a mold issue over time. The matter is being addressed with the insurance company.

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

1. The RV/camper may be occupied for up to twelve (12) months during the home renovation. Should an extension be needed, the applicant shall come before the Board of Commissioners for approval.
2. Upon completion of the renovation, the camper shall be vacated and disconnected from the well and septic.

Vice Chair Kieffer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

DUANE GILCHRIST – SECOND READING (12): Consideration to approve the Second Reading for an application by Duane Gilchrist for a variance from Section 3.21.1 located at 143 Laurel Circle to allow for a RV/Camper to be occupied during the renovation of a home in AR-2 Map # 302 Parcel # 84A in the First District

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading. Commissioner Burdette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XVII – ADJOURNMENT

At 8:07pm, 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
MAY 05, 2026