

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for its Regular Business Meeting on Monday, August 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., in the Commissioners Meeting Room, located at the Brooks County Administration Building, located at 610 South Highland Road, Quitman, GA. Mr. Patrick Folsom, Chairman, was not present. Commissioners present were Mr. James Maxwell, Vice Chairman; Mrs. Myra Exum; Mr. Willie Cody; and Mr. Lee Larko. Others present were Mr. Buddy Johnson, County Administrator; Ms. Patricia Williams, County Clerk; Ms. Kim Daniels, Human Resources; Ms. Janice Jarvis, Finance Director; Mr. Jason Kemp, County Attorney, and various residents.

I. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Special Exception – Charnissa Brown – Family Cemetery – The request was presented by Alex Arzayus, Southern Georgia Regional Commission, Planner II. Ms. Brown is requesting a special exception to establish a family cemetery on approximately two acres of property located at 6581 Dry Lake Road, more specifically described as Tax Map 049 and Parcel 0013 of Brooks County. Staff reviewed and discussed the petition that the minimum requirements need to be two acres and in compliance with the Standards of Exercise of Zoning Powers and the Standards of Special Exception Review of Sections 14-2.8 E and F. of the Brooks County Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the petition by Ms. Charnissa Brown to establish a family cemetery. The requirement for family cemeteries includes:

1) Shall be located on a parcel of land no smaller than two acres in size, and shall not be located any closer than 150 feet from:

1. Property line (not including a public right-of-way), or
2. Any underground tanks, pipelines or drain fields, or
3. Power or utility easement or transmission line, or
4. A residential dwelling, or
5. A drinking water well.

2) Family cemeteries shall not be located in a wetland, floodplain, floodway, or flood hazard area.

3) Burial plots shall not be located closer than 50' from the centerline of a public right-of-way.

Staff recommend approval of the petition by Charnissa Brown on behalf of Michael Spencer, Sr. for a Special Exception to allow the establishment of a family cemetery on a two-acre parcel of property located at 6581 Dry Lake Road, Quitman, GA.; with conditions that the family install some sort of barrier and markers to make cemetery plots noticeable, shrubbery or fencing materials would be suitable.

No one signed in to speak for or against the petition. The Board questioned if it was in the ordinance that the burial be done by a professional burial facility. Ms. Arzayus responded it is not in the ordinance.

B. Rezoning – Jeffrey & Myrtle Williams – Crossroads Country Store, LLC - The request by Jeffrey & Myrtle Williams for a map amendment to rezone 0.851 acres from A-G (Agricultural Use) to B-R (Business Retail) located at 5497 Grooverville Road was presented by Alex Arzayus, Southern Georgia

Regional Commission, Planner II. Applicants filed a rezoning application to change 0.851 acres from A-G to B-R. The intention of the rezoning is to re-establish a rural grocery store. The proposed use falls under the category of "Food "Store", which triggers a rezoning to a Business Retail zoning district in Brooks County. Staff has reviewed the petition and determined that it is in compliance with the Standards for Exercise of Zoning Powers and the Standards for Special Exception Review of Sections 14-2.8 E of the Brooks County Zoning Ordinance. Staff recommend approval of the petition to amend the zoning map of 0.851 acres, located at 5497 Grooverville Road, from A-G (Agricultural Use) to B-R (Business Retail). The Planning Commission approved with conditions: Conditions recommended that the store have a fully concrete handicapped parking pad with access to the store, the rest of the parking lot can be a pervious surface. No one signed in to speak for or against the petition. Vice Chairman Maxwell closed the public hearing to go into the regular meeting.

II. CALL TO ORDER

A. Prayer & Pledge – Pastor Nick Hampton, Brooks County Ministerial Association, led all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

III. COMMISSIONER BUSINESS PRESENTATION – (5 MINUTES)

A. Gary Christian – Fishing Rights – Mr. Christian requested to appear to discuss fishing rights for citizens. There is nowhere for citizens to fish anymore. He mentioned two potential sites that would be good for fishing. He stated he is willing to assist with funding and will get with the City.

B. Geoff Abraham – Tree Blocking Water Easement – Mr. Abraham appeared to discuss a neighbor tree that is blocking a water easement from his pond. The pond waterway is obstructed by the neighbor's tree from Hurricane Idalia. He stated his pond is not flowing, it is flooding his yard. Administrator Johnson had spoken with Mr. Abraham; and the county removed the tree. Brooks County has done all we can do on the right-of-way; we cannot go on private property. Administrator Johnson further stated he will get it looked at to see if the easement is on Brooks County side.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA – One Motion for Approval on all Items – (Johnson)

A. Approval of prior meeting minutes

On the motion by Mrs. Exum, seconded by Mr. Cody, the Board unanimously approved the following minutes for July 2025 with a correction:

- 1) CA027-2025 – Regular Business Meeting – July 7, 2025
- 2) CA028-2025 - Special Called/Work Session – July 28, 2025

V. FORMAL ACTION REQUESTS–Commissioners Discussion with Action (Johnson)

A. Approve/Disapprove/Other Official Actions

1) FA044-2025 – Facilities Agreement Update – Farmers Market (Tabled Item) - Human Resources Director, Ms. Kim Daniels, presented an updated copy of the Brooks County Farmers Market Vendor Agreement & Application for the Board review. The Application and Agreement have been reviewed by County Attorney Jason Kemp. Mr. Larko made the motion to approve the Farmers Market Vendor Agreement & Application as is, the Board can make minor changes, Mr. Cody seconded. Discussion began as to a specific time when the vendor will leave. The time allotted is from 9:00 am to

12:00 pm on the first Friday and Saturday of the month. The Board agreed the vendor breakdown time will be from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. The vote was unanimous.

2) FA045-2025 – Special Exception – Charnissa Brown – Family Cemetery – Mr. Larko made a motion to approve the special exception request to establish a family cemetery on two acres of property located on 6581 Dry Lake Road with conditions to use licensed funeral home with State guidelines; and install some sort of barrier and markers to make cemetery plots noticeable, shrubbery or fencing materials would be suitable; Mr. Cody seconded the motion.

3) FA046-2025 – Rezoning – Jeffrey & Myrtle Williams – Crossroads Country Store, LLC – The motion was made by Mr. Cody to approve the request to rezone 0.851 acres from Agriculture Use (AG) to Business Retail (BR) located at 5497 Grooverville Road to re-establish a rural grocery store with the condition that the store have a fully concrete handicapped parking pad with access to the store, the rest of the parking lot can be a previous surface, seconded by Mrs. Exum.

4) FA047-2025 – ACCG Voting Delegate – 2025 Legislative Leadership Conference – Administration received the 2025 Legislative Leadership Conference Voting Delegate Memo and Form. Each year ACCG requests the Board to submit one voting delegate to cast the county's vote on matters coming before the business session. On the motion by Mrs. Exum, seconded by Mr. Cody, the board unanimously appointed Mr. Larko as the voting delegate at the 2025 Legislative Leadership Conference to be held in October at Jekyll Island, GA.

5) FA048-2025 – Resolution – Authorize Tax Commissioner to Sell Property for Less than Amount of Taxes Owed – Mrs. Exum motioned to approve Resolution 25-R-7 to Authorize the Brooks County Tax Commissioner to Sell Property for Less than Amount of Taxes Owed, Mr. Larko seconded.

6) FA049-2025 - Brooks County DFCS – Requesting Appointment of Third Applicant – Ms. Barbara Wilson - There were two vacancies on the Board in District 3 and District 5. A third application was received from Ms. Barbara Wilson who lives in District 2. Brooks County DFCS requested the Board appoint the third applicant, Ms. Barbara Wilson, to the DFCS Board stating that in the past they have had a hard time meeting quorum each month with only five members. The DFCS Board is allowed up to seven members. Mr. Cody made a motion to approve the appointment of Ms. Barbara Wilson to the DFCS Board, the motion was seconded by Mrs. Exum.

7) FA050-2025 - September Meeting Date Change – Due to the Labor Day Holiday – the Board discussed changing the meeting date for the regular meeting in September due to Labor Day being on the first Monday. After discussion, the Board changed the meeting date from September 1, 2025, to the following Monday, September 8, 2025, on a motion by Mrs. Exum and seconded by Mr. Cody.

8) FA051-2025 – EMS Flooring Renovation (3 Options) – Chief Weeks Will Present Options
Chief Weeks presented options for EMS flooring renovation from Bennetts Home Improvement, LLC:

1. \$4,400.00 – Repair damaged floor in approximately four areas throughout the station.
2. \$13,300.00 – Remove existing VCT tile in living quarters and dispose.
3. \$16,345.00 - Remove existing VCT tile in living quarters and dispose, install flooring with a 8 mil wear thickness glue down plank.

Mr. Larko made a motion to waive the three-bid process; accept the estimate in the amount of \$13,300.00; the project meets requirement for a capital project so the funds will come from SPLOST account, Mr. Cody seconded.

9) FA052-2025 – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – National Settlement with Purdue (Opioid) – The Acknowledgement and Agreement to be Bound by Memorandum of Understanding was received concerning National Settlement with Purdue Pharma, L.P. and other related entities as defined in the Purdue Opioid Settlement for signature. This reserves Brooks County’s spot of any funds owed to us. The Acknowledgement and Agreement to be Bound by Memorandum of Understanding was approved/accepted on a motion by Mr. Larko, with a second by Mrs. Exum. Vote was unanimous.

10) FA053-2025 – Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) – Thomas County – Regional Equalization Board – The IGA has been returned with changes to Brooks County for approval. The changes are regarding the Board of Equalization pay. Brooks County agrees to pay non-resident Regional Board of Equalizers members \$100.00 per day for each lawful meeting of the Board in Brooks County plus \$.70 cents for each mile traveled from Thomas County to attend meetings and hearings if they travel to and from the meeting in their personal vehicle. Thomas County will visit the IGA on August 5th. On a motion by Mr. Cody, the Board approved/accepted the IGA between Thomas County and Brooks County Relative to the Establishment of a Regional Board of Equalization in Accord with O.C.G.A. 48-5-311(a)(4) unanimously, seconded by Mr. Larko.

11) FA054-2025 – Proposed Millage Rate – The proposed millage rate was provided by the Tax Commissioner. The 2024 Millage Rate was 14.2872, the 2025 proposed millage rate is 14.079. The Board unanimously approved the proposed millage rate for 2025 (14.079) on a motion by Mr. Larko, seconded by Mr. Cody.

VI. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES & DEPARTMENTS – (5 MINUTES)

A. Tax Commissioner – Discuss Tax Digest/Adoption of Millage Rate – Millage Rate Calendar – Formal Action(s) may be Required After Presentation – Tax Commissioner was not present, but provided copies of the Five-Year Property Tax Digest, Computation of Millage Rate Rollback and Percentage Increase in Property Taxes for Board review. There will not be a need for three meetings with the rollback.

B. Brooks County Building Permits & Inspections – Administrator Johnson informed the Board that the Building Permits & Inspections Office is doing a good job and wanted to hear from the Board because of complaints coming in. The Board agreed to keep doing what they are doing and follow the guidelines and the ordinance. If they do not follow through with permit process, there will be consequences.

C. Brooks County Zoning & Code Enforcement - Administrator Johnson informed the Board that the Zoning & Code Enforcement Office is doing a good job and wanted to hear from the Board because of complaints coming in. The Board agreed to keep doing what they are doing and follow the guidelines and the ordinance. The Board suggested advertising something in the newspaper and website informing citizens and vendors.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Special Called Meeting August 15, 2025 @ 2:00 pm – The Board has scheduled a special called meeting with the Development Authority.

B. Development Authority Appointments – Requested to hold by Mrs. Exum.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS – (JOHNSON)

- 1) **NB007-2025 – Approval to Seek a Used Dump Truck for Road Department** – The request for approval to seek quotes for a used Dump Truck for Road Department was approved on the motion by Mr. Larko, Mr. Cody seconded. Administrator Johnson stated that if we can buy for lot less than to rent one, why not, it will be cheaper.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS – (2 MINUTES) – (Requests must be prior to the work session)

A. Jason Rex – Discussion of the Possibility of Road Closures that Run Through Tamathli Plantation (Petway) - Mr. Rex requested to appear to request consideration of road closures for Stanley Road to Blair Road, Thagard Road and Empress Road. Mr. Rex will get with County Attorney to provide information on the process to move forward.

X. ADMINISTRATION/ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATES

A. Administration Updates

- **Announcement of Listing in the National Register of Historic Places – Cross Roads School, 40 Hodges Road, Dixie, Brooks County** – the Department of Community Affairs sent notification if the listing in the National Register of Historic Places for Cross Roads School in Dixie, GA. on July 3, 2025.

B. Commissioners Notes/Comments

- **Lee Larko (District 1)** – No comment.
- **Patrick Folsom, Chairman (District 2)** – Not present.
- **Willie Cody (District 3)** – No comment.
- **Myra Exum (District 4)** – Reminded everyone that school is back in, to watch out for buses and children on the road.
- **James Maxwell, Vice (District 5)** – Appreciate everyone in attendance for coming.

The Board closed the regular meeting to go into executive session on a motion by Mrs. Exum, seconded by Mr. Larko.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Real Estate

B. Litigation

No action was taken when the Board returned to the regular meeting.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Larko motioned to adjourn the regular business meeting at 6:34 pm, Mr. Cody seconded.

Mr. James (Buddy) Johnson, County Administrator

Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk