

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for a FY2026-2027 Proposed Budget Public Hearing/Special Called Meeting/Work Session/Executive Session on Tuesday, May 26 , 2026, at 4:15 p.m., at the Brooks County Administration Building, Commissioners Chambers, located at 610 South Highland Road, Quitman, GA. Commissioners present were: Mrs. Myra Exum, Chairman; Mr. James Maxwell, Vice Chairman; Mr. Patrick Folsom; 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; and Mr. Jason Kemp, County Attorney; and various residents.

I. PUBLIC HEARING

A. FY2026-2027 Proposed Budget – Sign-in sheet provided; no one in attendance signed in. County Administrator provided a budget overview and budget status. The proposed FY budget is \$17,686,244, up from last year’s \$16,344,992. The main increase is due to the loss of the fire fee funding that now needs to be covered by other sources. \$2million will be used from the fund balance to provide a balanced budget, but the intent is not to spend it, it is used for balancing only. The current projected general fund deficit is #1,053,525, excluding fire fee funds.

Millage Rate Discussion: To cover the deficit, a 1.69 mill increase may be required, based on last year’s digest. An additional 1.5 mills are needed to replace the previous fire fee, not an extra charge. The total possible increase is 3 mills, but actual need may be less if the tax digest improves.

Fire Fee Transition: Community education is needed to clarify that proposed millage replaces, not adds to, the previous fire fee.

Administrator Johnson placed emphasis on running a lean budget next year until new revenue sources can be utilized in the future.

Victim Witness Program is budgeted at \$154,275 for full year; \$99,000 of that is the county contribution. Board discussed possibly removing county funding and rely solely on grant funding. The Victim Witness Program will be kept fully funded in the proposed budget for now; but is open to later adjustment.

The Board will revisit and potentially adjust before final budget adoption. There is ongoing need to trim the budget if revenues come in lower than anticipated. The proposed budget is not final; further revisions and public feedback expected before adoption. There were key questions: Should the county remove its portion of funding for the Victim Witness Program and rely on grants? How will the transition from fire fee to fire millage be communicated to the public? What further cuts might be necessary if the tax digest does not improve?

Board Action Plan is to wait on updated tax digest to finalize needed millage rate, prepare a community messaging regarding the fire millage; and make funding decision for Victim Witness prior to final budget adoption.

II. CALL TO ORDER

A. Prayer/Pledge – Mr. Folsom led all in attendance in prayer and pledge of allegiance.

III. TOPICS FOR MOTION/DISCUSSION

1. LMIG – LRA Supplement – Project List – Due June 15th (Discuss Maybe Formal Action) – Mr. Folsom made the motion to approve the 2026 LRA supplement funds to be used to complete the Barwick Road project, and submit the application to GDOT, Mr. Larko seconded, motion carried unanimously.

b) 2027 LMIG – Mr. Folsom made a motion to approve the project from Old Dixie Road to Hickory Head Road as the 2027 LMIG road project using whatever funding received from the LMIG program, Mr. Cody seconded. The vote was unanimous. The cost estimate will be obtained for the grant application.

2. Applications – Planning Commission Board Appointment – Four applications were submitted for the vacancy on the Planning Commission Board: Jeff Cummings, Peggy Howard, Kimberlee Jones, and Terrance Vinson.

3. Copier – Finance Department – County Administrator presented quote for a copier lease at the Finance Department from Rumbles Document Solutions for \$233.67 per month for 48 months; stating that it is cheaper for Brooks County to lease a copier, that will result in savings over the lease with Development Authority.

4. MOU – Flock Safety Agreement – Sheriff's Department – An MOU was submitted to Administration for Flock Safety, has been reviewed by the County Attorney; and is budgeted under the Sheriff's Department.

5. Stanley Road Closure – Discussion (Maybe Formal Action June 1st Meeting) The Board discussed a request to close Stanley Road that was submitted by Mr. Jason Rex during the November regular meeting. The county needs to clarify which section is affected before the public hearing. After discussion, the Board agreed to place it on the June 1st agenda for formal action to proceed with the abandonment process for public hearing; and send notices to adjacent property owners.

6. NACO 2026 Annual Conference – Mr. Larko is registered to attend the NACO Annual Conference in New Orleans July 17-20, 2026. The annual business meeting and election will be held

during the conference. Members are required to designate someone from their county to cast their votes.

IV. PRESENTATIONS - NONE

V. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES & DEPARTMENTS

A. Brooks County Finance Department – Janice Jarvis, Finance Director – Was not present.

B. Brooks County 911/EMA – LaToya Hampton, Director – Director Hampton presented activities/projects for April 2026 and May 2026.

- Calls for April were 1882.
- May calls as of today is 1869.
- Participated in Morven's Peach Festival.
- Lines were down in 911 Center for 48 minutes on May 21, 2026. State phone companies as well as Lowndes County were notified and took calls for 911. No calls came in while the lines were down.

Brooks County EMA

- April 20, 2026, received remainder of funds from FEMA for \$265,863.21.
- April 28, 2026, Second Harvest class for disaster preparedness.
- May 14, 2026, attended flood preparedness meeting with Baker and Miller County. Next meeting in October 2026.
- May 18, 2026, received \$47,095.00 for Hazard Mitigation due June 9, 2029.
- May 27, 2026, disaster preparedness/hurricane preparedness meeting at Brooks County EOC from 10:00am – 11:00am with all department heads and stakeholders.
- Department of Education school safety meeting in Savannah June 7-9, 2026.

C. Brooks County Fire Department Report – Chief Weeks – Chief Weeks provided a report for May 2026 for projects/activities.

- Received 98 calls for service from April 28, 2026, through May 26, 2026.
- Three structure fires, one vehicle fire, 15 brush/outside fires, one fire alarms, no controlled burns; there were 31 medical calls, four vehicle accidents, two extrications, 26 cancellations/nothing found; eight trees were down; and three other calls.

Structure Fires

- 604 N. Highland Road – Automatic aid call with Quitman Fire Department at Crown Laundry, the fire was contained to the dryer area and roof at the rear of the structure.
- 609 E. Boundary Street – Automatic aid call with Quitman Fire Department, the front porch of a single-family home was involved.

- 2935 Beaty Road – This was a cabin that was struck by lightning, the fire was mainly in the kitchen area and attic. There was heavy damage in the attic and kitchen area but most of the living area was saved along with the belongings.
- Training: 42 hours of new driver training and 44 hours of facilities training.
- No public activities.
- Update: We have received the 10 sets of gear that we got the grant for. We are still waiting on the helmets.
- Nothing new with Morven
- Employee Update: We had two full-time firefighters request to be moved to part-time. We are currently looking through applications to replace the two full-time positions.

D. Brooks County Public Works Department Report - Kyle Christian - Project Manager – Provided the Road Department report for May 2026:

- During the month of May, the Road Department received 73 work orders and completed 53 work orders. We spent most of the month cleaning ditches and building up roads.
- **District 1**: Graded roads, added material where it was needed to fix washouts, built up roads, cleaned ditches and culverts, repaired potholes; removed trees; busted beaver dams; and installed new road signs. We repaired potholes on Tallokas Road using a total of 68 bags of cold patch.
- **District 2**: Built up roads, graded roads, removed fallen trees, busted beaver dams; cleaned ditches and culverts. We removed 10 loads of tree debris from Old Madison Road.
- **District 3**: Graded roads, cleaned ditches and culverts, installed new road signs, removed fallen trees, busted beaver dams; and repaired potholes. We repaired potholes on Dry Lake using 60 bags of cold patches.
- **District 4**: Built up roads, graded roads, clean ditches and culverts, filled potholes, repaired driveways, installed new road signs, and added materials where needed to fix washouts. We repaired potholes on Hidden Cove Drive using a total of 17 bags of cold patches.
- **District 5**: Graded roads, busted beaver dams, cleaned ditches and culverts, repaired potholes, removed trees; and added materials to roads. We harvested 6 loads of sand from Livingston Road and 12 loads of sand from McKinnon Road. We repaired potholes on Pidcock Road, Hickory Head Road, and Dixie Road using a total of 163 bags of cold patch. We installed a pipe on Grooverville Road.
- We are continuing to clean out ditches and existing pipes as well as installing new pipes where needed and helping water to flow when it rains. We are also harvesting sand and reusing it in areas that need it. We will continue to keep Brooks County beautiful one road at a time.

James Warren & Associates, Contractor, Brooks County Road Department, was commended by Mr. Folsom for improved performance, staying under budget, and effective resource management. All the Commissioners agreed and thanked Mr. Warren for the great job with the Road Department.

VI. FORMAL ACTION REQUESTS – Commissioners Discussion with Action

A. FA043-2026 – Appointment – Planning Commission – Mr. Folsom inquired to the County Attorney if there is a conflict if Terrance Vinson, Buildings Permits & Inspections, was appointed to the Planning Commission? Attorney Kemp clarified that county employees may serve; but must recuse themselves in case of conflict. With that clarification, Mr. Folsom made the motion to appoint Terrance Vinson to the Brooks County Planning Commission; Mr. Cody seconded. Madam Chair called for the vote. Mr. Folsom, Mr. Cody, and Mr. Maxwell voted in favor. Mr. Larko opposed. The vote was 3 to 2.

B. FA044-2026 – MOU – Flock Safety Agreement – Sheriff's Department – On the motion by Mr. Folsom, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board approved the MOU for the Flock Safety Camera System for Sheriff's department to lease safety cameras; and the funds will come from the Sheriff's Department general fund line item.

C. FA045-2026 - LMIG – LRA Supplement – Project List – Due June 15th - Mr. Folsom made the motion to approve the 2026 LRA supplement funds to be used to complete the Barwick Road project, and submit the application to GDOT, Mr. Larko seconded, motion carried unanimously.

b) FA046-2026 - 2027 LMIG – Mr. Folsom made a motion to approve the project from Old Dixie Road to Hickory Head Road as the 2027 LMIG road project using whatever funding received from the LMIG program, Mr. Cody seconded. The vote was unanimous.

D. FA047-2026 – Copier – Finance Department – On the motion by Mr. Folsom, seconded by Mr. Maxwell, the Board approved the copier lease for the Finance Department from Rumbles to replace the current copier lease with Development Authority that will result in a cost saving over the lease with Development Authority.

E. FA048-2026 – NACO 2026 Annual Conference – Voting Delegate Appointment – Mr. Folsom made the motion appointing Mr. Larko as the voting delegate at the 2026 NACO Annual Conference in New Orleans July 17-20, 2026.

VII. WORK SESSION & NEW BUSINESS

- Regular Meeting Agenda Review – June 1, 2026 – The Board reviewed/discussed the agenda for the upcoming meeting.
- Stanley Road Closure will be added to the agenda for June 1st. (Formal Action)
- Finalize Victim Witness program funding decision.
- Add engagement letter for Conn Law Firm
- Proposed budget adoption
- Ordinance update for codification

Administrator Johnson - Updates (Community and Commissioners)

- o Praised the Board and department heads for collaborative, transparent budget planning.

- o Encouraged the public to review the proposed budget.

Commissioners Matters

- o District 1
- o District 2
- o District 3
- o District 4
- o District 5

Madam Chair reminded everyone of the upcoming July 4th event at the Courthouse with entertainment, food, and a laser light show.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Litigation

The Board adjourned the meeting to go into executive session at 5:30pm on the motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Folsom.

Upon returning to the meeting from executive session (5:50pm), no action was taken.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the meeting on the motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Folsom.

Mrs. Myra Exum, Chair

Mr. James (Buddy) Johnson, County Administrator

Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk