

The Brooks County Board of Commissioners met for Special Called Meeting/Work Session on Monday, August 31, 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, Chair; Mr. James Maxwell, Vice Chairman; Mr. Willie Cody; and Mr. Lee Larko. Mr. Patrick Folsom was not present. Others present were Mr. Buddy Johnson, County Administrator (via telephone); 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 – Madam Chair opened the Public Hearing. A sign-in sheet was provided for those wishing to speak for or against the requests. No one present signed in to speak.

A. Case# ZOA-2026-02 – Amend Use Table of Brooks County Zoning Ordinance to Permit by Special Exception Carnival, Athletic Event, Community Fair or Other Event of Interest to the Public Zoning Administrator, Jared Lanier, presented the proposed text amendment to regulate temporary public events and gatherings, including concerts, carnivals, and other events open to the public. The proposal would change these events from an automatic permitted use to a Special Exception, requiring review by the Planning Commission and approval by the Board of Commissioners. Private, invitation-only events such as weddings would generally not fall under this provision. Applicants may also need approvals or permits from the health department, engineering/road authorities, and the County business licensing process. The existing land-use classification titled “Conference Center and Retreat Center” would be revised to “Event, Conference, Community, and Retreat Centers or Similar Gathering Venues. Staff have recommended approval of the Zoning Ordinance amendment.

B. Case# REZ-2026-01 – Rezone Request – Holly McAllister – From BR (Business Retail) to RR (Rural Residential) – Zoning Administrator, Jared Lanier, presented the request from Holly McAllister to consider a zone change from BR (Business Retail) to RR (Rural Residential) on land lot 215 located on Troupeville Road. The property was originally developed and used for residential purposes. On May 7, 2012, the property was rezoned to Business Retail to allow the existing long cabin-style structure, which had previously been used as a residence, to be converted and operated as a small country store. The owner requested rezoning back to Rural Residential so the property can be used as a single-family residence for personal purposes. Staff recommended approval of the rezoning with no conditions; however, Staff would like to make the applicant aware that a change of use in a structure may trigger building code requirements. Madam Chair closed the public hearing to go into the special called and work session.

II. CALL TO ORDER

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

III. TOPICS FOR MOTION/DISCUSSION

1. Board of Elections – Board Appointments – Discussion (6 Applications) – The County has received six applications for appointments to the Board of Elections. Applications will be reviewed during the September work session and selections will be placed on the October monthly meeting agenda. applications may continue to be submitted until the selection process.

2. Proposal – Brooks County Fire Department – Burn Building Relocation & Renovation – Chief Weeks – Chief Weeks requested funding to relocate the fire department’s burn building from property associated with the owner, Doyle Weltzbaker; where it was inadvertently placed on private property. The

current site has erosion and foundation problems; the property is now being used by the owner's heirs. The preferred location is the original site behind the EMS station, which has been leveled by the Road Department. Chief Weeks presented the project in three phases:

Phase 1 – September 2026 – Total Cost \$11,900 – Pour a proper concrete foundation, move the building, and set it up correctly.

Phase 2 – January 2027 - Total Cost \$16,700 – Add two Conex boxes and metal fabrication to bring the structure to approximately 32 feet, allowing additional ladder and multi-story training and improving ISO credit.

Phase 3 – January 2028 - Total Cost \$ 2,500 – Add a lean-to structure for shaded training and forcible entry exercises.

Total Project Cost \$31,100

The facility could also support joint training with departments participating in automatic aid. The request will be placed on the September 8th meeting agenda for consideration. County Administrator recommended waiting until tax revenues begin coming in before committing additional funds, if possible.

3. Proposal – Volunteer Firefighter Compensation – Chief Weeks – Chief Weeks proposed changing the volunteer compensation structure using funds already allocated in the current budget. Training pay would increase from \$25.00 to \$40.00 per training session, supporting the required minimum of 24 training hours annually. Volunteers responding to structure fires would receive \$50.00 per incident; and volunteers responding to brush fires or vehicle accidents involving entrapment would receive \$25.00 per incident. This proposal is intended as recognition of volunteer's time, risk, and service rather than full compensation. The proposal will be placed on the September 8th agenda for consideration.

4. Road Closure – From Livingston Road to Ramsey Road – Commissioner Maxwell - Discussion Four Oaks Land Company requested abandonment of approximately 4.07 miles of Livingston Road forming a loop between Ramsey Road and the surrounding plantation property. The company owns most of the land along both sides of the segment; small portions are owned by other adjacent property owners. The request is based on limited public utility and recurring trespassing concerns. The Board clarified that this must be handled as a road abandonment, not an informal road closure. The county cannot simply place closure signs without following the required process. The applicant will provide contact information and a written request; county staff and the county attorney will explain the abandonment procedure, which includes public notice/hearing and Board consideration.

5. Position Request – Executive Assistant to Administrative Staff (Purchasing Office, Payroll Clerk, Fleet Contact, Special Event Coordinator (Formal Action after Discussion)) – Administrator Johnson requested approval to create a full-time administrative position supporting finance, human resources, purchasing, and the clerk's office. The primary responsibility would be to centralize purchasing, establish consistent vendors and supplies, and allow bulk purchases that could reduce costs. The proposed salary range is approximately \$18.00 to \$25.00 per hour, depending on qualifications and experience. Funding will be transferred from the contingency line, with the expectation that purchasing savings and grant support could substantially offset the cost.

6. Mural Request for Ag Annex Grant – Emily Rados (Formal Action after Discussion) – Emily Rados, thirteen-year-old artist, presented a mural proposal for the county's Ag Annex building. The project will be

submitted for a Georgia Council for the Arts Vibrant Communities Grant, which requires a 50% local match. The initial target is approximately \$1,000, requiring a \$500 match. The proposed mural will be scaled to the available funding and wall size, with a possible location near the 4-H concession area where it will remain visible during events. The Board requested that the silo design include “Brooks County, Georgia” and “Established 1858”, using the former county silo as a reference. The grant will be submitted by midnight August 31, 2026.

7. Letter of Resignation – DFCS Board Member – Molly Radford – A letter was received from Georgia Department of Human Services advising of the resignation of Board Member Molly Radford from the Brooks County DFCS Board effective immediately. The letter stated they are reaching out to the Board of Commissioners to inquire if they have a recommendation to fill the position. The law requires a successor to be appointed within 90 days after a vacancy occurs. The position will be published, and applications will be accepted, with a recommendation expected for the October meeting.

8. FYE 2026 June 30, 2026 – Final Fund Transfers – Janice Jarvis – Finance Director, Janice Jarvis, provided the Board a copy of the FYE 2026 June 30, 2026, and reported that the General Fund closed the prior budget year positively. Final transfers are being prepared to bring departmental line items into compliance with the county’s departmental-level legal budget controls. Prior year expenditures are still being accrued during the 90-day closeout period, which runs through September 30th.

IV. COMMISSIONERS BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS – (5 MINUTES)

A. Legacy Behavioral Health – Update – Ashlie Prain - Ashlie Prain, Legacy Behavioral Health, presented an update to the Board. Mr. Prain reported that 183 individuals have been served in Brooks County during the most recent quarter, with services valued at nearly \$1 million. The population served included 111 males, 72 females, and 35 children or adolescents. Legacy is expanding its mobile clinic service. A second mobile unit will allow one unit to serve the northern area and another to serve the southern area, increasing the number of service days in Brooks County. They provide prevention programming that addresses vaping, alcohol, and marijuana use. The county schools received receptacles for safe disposal of confiscated vape devices containing lithium batteries. There are school based mental health services available through the APEX program at Brooks High School, Brooks Early Learning Center, and Delta Innovative School. Additional youth programs included life skills cooking classes, wellness classes, and summer programming.

V. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES & DEPARTMENTS

A. Brooks County Finance Department – Janice Jarvis, Finance Director – Reported that the Finance Department is completing the second month of the 2027 Fiscal Year. Normal percentage for this portion of the fiscal year for expenditures and revenues is 16.66%. Most prior year expenditures and revenues have been received and booked into the prior year. They will continue to book any prior year activities through September 30, 2026. The audit onset is scheduled to begin after October 1, 2026, with completion date of no later than December 31, 2026. The County began to experience lack of available funds beginning in August. This is a historical occurrence for this time of year (prior to collection of tax revenues). The budgeted revenue funds from TSPLOST to General Fund to help offset road maintenance costs were transferred during the month of August. At this time, Payroll and Accounts Payable costs on average total approximately \$800,000 per month; fluctuating from month to month.

To look at available funding for Payroll and Accounts Payable costs through November, Administrator Johnson, Chair Exum, and Finance Director, met with AMB Wealth on August 25th. The County has funds that can be accessed without being penalized. Finance Director will review funding needs on a weekly basis. Upon Administrative approval, funds will be pulled weekly from the money market accounts to fund payroll and accounts payable until tax revenues are available. It was also determined that funds should be repaid to the money market account when funds are available. The use of the funds is in line with the use of reserves line-item in the current operating budget.

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

- Calls for service for July were 2472.
- August 31, 2026, calls of service 2172.
- Continuing to interview for full time and PRN: got a large number of applications but criminal background checks and driver's history checks will not clear for hire.

Brooks County EMA

- August severe heat advisory for most of the month and severe weather days for scattered thunderstorms. Code Red will automatically GIS different locations in the county that are under threat of severe weather.
- Severe weather and severe thunderstorms are expected until September 14, 2026; will continue to be scattered.
- Completed GEMA closeout for Hurricane Idalia. Ms. Patricia and Ms. Janice assisted with completion of final five questions. Later, we will have our final meeting and sign final documents.
- August 25, 2026: meeting BCFC for long term recovery group.
- August 29, 2026: Quitman Church of God hosted a preparedness give away of hurricane supplies, books, food, water and tarps; included Morven Baptist Church, Brooks County School System, and Brooks County EMA.
- September begins National Preparedness Month for any disaster or event. Check Brooks County EMA Page for weekly updates for tips for preparedness.
- Will meet
- Wednesday with Second Harvest, Red Cross, United Way for long term in case of an event. We need to understand where we stand, who we have available, and what we have if an event occurs.

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

- Received 99 calls for service from July 27, 2026, through August 31, 2026.
- No structure fires, no vehicle fire, five brush/outside fires, three fire alarms, no controlled burns; there were 42 medical calls, four vehicle accidents, one fire investigation, one extrication, 29 cancellations/nothing found; and 14 trees were down; and one other call.

Structure Fires - None

Training: Search, Rescue and HazMat refresher

Update: We have completed our hose testing, hydrant testing and painting for this year.

Morven: Nothing new

Employee Update: We have hired two full-time firefighters and a Captain for A-shift. We currently have one firefighter position open.

D. Brooks County Public Works Department Report - Kyle Christian - Project Manager – Was not present due to an emergency.

VI. FORMAL ACTION REQUESTS – Commissioners Discussion with Action

1. **FA078-2026 – Case# ZOA-2026-02** – Amend Use Table of Brooks County Zoning Ordinance to Permit by Special Exception – Mr. Larko made the motion to accept/approve the proposed text amendment to the use table of the Brooks County Zoning Ordinance to regulate temporary public events and gatherings, including concerts, carnivals, and other events open to the public; Mr. Cody seconded. The proposed text amendment will lay at the Courthouse for 30 days for public view; and the Board will ratify during the October 5th meeting.
2. **FA079-2026 – Case# REZ-2026-01**- Rezone Request – Holly McAllister – From BR (Business Retail) to RR (Rural Residential) - Motioned by Mr. Cody and seconded by Mr. Maxwell to accept/approve the request to rezone property from Business Retail to Rural Residential so the property can be used as a single-family residence for personal purposes.
3. **FA080-2026 – Set/Approve Millage Rate – Board of Education – Combined Millage Rate – Development Authority – Briggs Fire District** – The Board approved, as presented, the Resolution for the Combined Millage Rate of Brooks County Board of Commissioners 14.079 mills and Brooks County Board of Education 12.862; the combined millage rate for Brooks County, Georgia is set to 27.241 mills for the unincorporated and incorporated areas of Brooks County, approved the millage rate for Briggs Fire District at 0.00 mills and Development Authority millage rate at 3.00 mills, on the motion by Mr. Maxwell and seconded by Mr. Cody. Mr. Larko opposed. The vote was 3 to 1. Madam Chair opened for discussion, Mr. Larko stated that he opposed because he felt the rollback should have been taken to help the citizens of Brooks County, that was his only reason for opposing.
4. **FA081-2026 – Set/Approve Fees – Solid Waste – Adopt/Approve – Resolution to Set Solid Waste Fees** – On the motion made by Mr. Maxwell, the Board approved the Resolution to Set Solid Waste Fees for FY2026-2027 at \$19.00 per can; \$228.00 annually, Mr. Larko seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.
5. **FA082-2026 – Position Request - Executive Assistant to Administrative Staff (Purchasing Office, Payroll Clerk, Fleet Contact, Special Event Coordinator)** – Mr. Maxwell made the motion, Mr. Cody seconded, the Board unanimously approved the creation of the position request for Executive Assistant to Administrator, salary range is \$18.00 to \$25.00 per hour, will be advertised; and budgeted out of contingency funds.
6. **FA083-2026** – Mural Request for Ag Annex Grant – Emily Rados – the motion was made by Mr. Maxwell to approve the request to pursue the grant and mural project presented by Emily Rados to place a mural at the Ag Annex building, Mr. Larko seconded.

VII. WORK SESSION & NEW BUSINESS

- Regular Meeting Agenda Review – September 8, 2026 – The Board reviewed/discussed the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Formal actions to be added to the agenda:
 - Gerry Folsom – Board of Health – Report & Resignation
 - Chamber of Commerce – Presentation – Application for Ground Use
 - GDOT – Authorizing Resolution – 5311 Rural Public Transit Application - SGRC
 - 2026 Legislative Leadership Conference – Voting Delegate

Administrator Johnson - Updates (Community and Commissioners)

➤ **Commissioners Matters**

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

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the meeting on the motion by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Folsom at 6:17pm.

Mrs. Myra Exum, Chair

Mr. James (Buddy) Johnson, County Administrator

Ms. Patricia A. Williams, County Clerk