

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Lee Hearn, Chairman  
Edward Gibbons, Vice Chairman  
Eric K. Maxwell  
Charles D. Rousseau  
Charles W. Oddo

Consent #8



## FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Steve Rapson, County Administrator  
Dennis A. Davenport, County Attorney  
Tameca P. Smith, County Clerk  
Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk

600 W. Lanier Avenue, Suite 205  
Fayetteville, GA 30214

## RETREAT MINUTES

May 13, 2026  
8:00 a.m.

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Welcome to the meeting of your Fayette County Board of Commissioners. Your participation in County government is appreciated. All regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

### **OFFICIAL SESSION:**

#### **Call to Order**

Chairman Lee Hearn called the May 13, 2026 Board Retreat to order at 8:00 a.m.

#### **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Charles Oddo**

Chairman Hearn gave the Invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **Acceptance of Agenda**

Vice Chairman Edward Gibbons moved to accept the agenda. Commissioner Charles Oddo seconded. The motion passed 4-0. Commissioner Maxwell was absent.

**FY2025 FINANCIAL REVIEW:** Chief Financial Officer Sheryl Weinmann presented to the Board the following:

**FY2025 General Fund Review-** Chief Financial Officer Ms. Sheryl Weinmann began the financial review with the FY2025 General Fund. She stated that the County had \$30.8 million in fund balance, but not all was available for spending because it was divided into different categories. She explained that approximately \$270,000 was non-spendable for items such as inventories, 25% of the expense budget was set aside for stabilization in case of a catastrophe, another \$2 million was set aside for an additional catastrophe reserve, and \$8.3 million was set aside for the five-year CIP and capital projects. She stated that the unassigned fund balance was approximately \$602,000.

**FY2026 General Fund Revenue and Expenditure Outlook-** Ms. Weinmann then reviewed FY2026 projections and stated that property taxes were projected to come in about \$1.9 million below budget because of House Bill 581, which had made projections difficult due to the CPI and floating exemptions. She said LOST revenues were projected to come in at \$2 million under budget, with the County projecting about \$20 million against a \$22 million budget. TAVT was also projected lower, with revenues projected around \$7.5 million against a \$7.8 million budget, and she noted that those revenues were consumer-driven. Licenses and permits were projected to be about \$200,000 under budget, and she also referenced LMIG and LRA road grants.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the combined revenue impact was projected to be negative by about \$4.4 million. She explained that some expenditure savings were helping offset the revenue shortfall, with areas such as general government, judicial, public works, culture, and recreation projected to be under budget. Public safety was projected to be over budget, but staff hoped to reduce that impact through less spending during the rest of the year. She stated that net operations were projected to have a

positive impact of approximately \$791,000, but after transfers, including capital projects, the overall projected impact was a decrease of about \$500,000 in fund balance.

**Revenue Trends, TAVT, and SPLOST-** Ms. Weinmann reviewed revenue trends and stated that the real property digest was projected to increase by about \$400 million. She noted that motor vehicle collections were nearly gone because TAVT had largely replaced those revenues. TAVT revenues were projected at approximately \$7.36 million to \$7.5 million and were fairly flat compared with the prior year.

Ms. Weinmann then reviewed 2023 SPLOST revenue collections. She stated that Fayette County collected \$17.3 million in 2024 and about \$18.5 million to \$18.6 million in 2025. At the time of the presentation, the County had collected \$13.7 million for the current year. She said collections exceeded forecast by \$2.8 million in 2024 and by \$3.5 million in 2025, and that the County had collected nearly \$48 million over almost three years of the SPLOST.

**911 Fund-** Ms. Weinmann reviewed the 911 Special Revenue Fund and stated that it had approximately \$11 million in fund balance at the end of the prior year. She explained that most of the fund balance was restricted because it was part of a Special Revenue Fund, though much of it was still usable. She projected 9-1-1 revenues of about \$5.6 million, which was approximately \$250,000 under budget, but expenditure savings created a positive impact of about \$283,000. The projected fund balance was expected to increase from about \$11.2 million to nearly \$11.5 million.

**Fire Services and EMS-** Ms. Weinmann stated that Fire Services had a prior-year fund balance of \$16.7 million, with \$4.4 million set aside for stabilization and a smaller amount set aside for CIP. For the current year, property taxes were again projected lower than anticipated, but revenues were projected at \$19.4 million and expenditures at approximately \$16.8 million. After transfers for vehicles, Fire Services was projected to have a positive impact of about \$1.8 million.

Commissioner Gibbons asked about House Bill 581 and whether the County was able to use either CPI or 3%, whichever was lower, for projections. Ms. Weinmann stated that the Department of Revenue had provided a CPI figure of 2.7%, which was included in FY2027 projections.

Mr. Rapson explained that wherever possible, the County used SPLOST, ARPA, or grant funds first before using operating funds. He said this was why special revenue fund balances, especially Fire, EMS, and 9-1-1, were increasing. He also stated that property tax collections and local option sales tax collections had flattened, and that legislative uncertainty from House Bill 581 and Senate Bill 33 had affected the budget process.

Ms. Weinmann stated that many Fire and EMS vehicles and projects had been funded by ARPA, SPLOST, or other external sources, which helped delay immediate pressure on the vehicle equipment replacement fund. She also reviewed EMS, noting that the Fire millage rate had been reduced by 0.25 while the EMS millage rate had been increased by 0.5, effectively doubling the EMS rate. EMS was projected to have revenues of about \$10 million, expenditures of about \$5.7 million, and a positive impact of about \$4 million after capital and vehicle transfers.

**Water System and QTS Discussion-** Ms. Weinmann reviewed the Water System and stated that water sales were projected to be about \$1.8 million below budget. She said some of the shortfall related to the timing of AMI meters, Coweta coming online, and other projects that had not yet been fully implemented. After accounting for expenses, debt payments, CIP restrictions, depreciation, and interest income, the Water System was projected to have a change in net position of about \$4.6 million, increasing from \$106 million to \$110 million. She also stated that the Water System would make its last debt payment in October, freeing about \$3.8 million.

Mr. Rapson stated that the Water System was essentially becoming debt-free, which he described as unusual in Georgia. He discussed the AMI meter replacement project and said the County had replaced every meter in the County with state-of-the-art technology. He explained that the new system allowed staff to identify issues before customers reported complaints, which had required a major shift in customer service.

Mr. Rapson then addressed QTS water concerns. He stated that there had been misinformation on social media and explained that a May 2025 letter described volumes that had been billed. Some of those volumes represented 9, 10, or 14 months of usage

rather than one month. He stated that QTS had 13 meter connections on a loop system and that two meters had not been properly reported through the BEACON system. When the County replaced them with AMI meters, the large volumes were identified, QTS was billed, and QTS paid the bill immediately.

Mr. Rapson stated that the bill was \$147,000 and that QTS paid it at the higher construction rate, which was twice the retail rate. He said the County treated QTS the same way it would treat any other customer by issuing a bill and applying penalties only if the bill was not paid. He said the perception that QTS had secretly connected meters or hidden anything was not accurate.

Mr. Rapson explained that QTS was using about 5.2 million gallons of water per month during construction. He stated that the County produced about 14.7 million gallons per day, or about 519 million gallons per month, meaning QTS usage was less than 1% of current production and even less compared with permitted capacity. He said the water use fell into three main categories: filling and flushing closed-loop building systems, ongoing dust control and irrigation, and construction-related activity including two concrete plants and wash-down of trucks.

Mr. Rapson stated that the County had received QTS's construction plan for the remaining buildings and that all 13 meters were now on the AMI system. He said the County's Public Information Officer was coordinating with QTS's public information staff so that both parties could review communications and help provide accurate information to the public.

Commissioner Oddo stated that if a fulfillment center were being built instead of a data center, the construction-related water usage might be similar but likely would not attract the same attention. He emphasized that QTS represented about 1% of capacity and said that, in other communities, he had seen single employers use as much as 20% of water capacity. Commissioner Gibbons stated that some public concern appeared to be related to how the development looked on Highway 54 and noted that construction water use would decline after construction ended. Mr. Rapson confirmed that once construction ended, water use would be much lower because the site would primarily use water for irrigation and for approximately 200 to 300 building occupants instead of about 8,000 construction workers.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that two things could be true at the same time: QTS used a large amount of water during construction, and the County had charged and collected the bill. He said the public communication needed to emphasize that QTS had paid a higher construction rate, and that the use was related to construction.

Mr. Rapson stated that four buildings had been built, two were fully operational, the third and fourth were coming online, and 13 total buildings were planned. He said the County had QTS's construction schedule for the next two and a half years and would issue a synopsis through the Public Information Office.

**Solid Waste and Recycling**- Ms. Weinmann then reviewed Solid Waste and stated that the transfer station was in its second year under the current management firm. She said the fund had a negative impact of about \$10,000 before the General Fund transfer, which was much better than normal. With a \$65,000 transfer from the General Fund, the fund was projected to have a positive impact of about \$102,000.

Mr. Rapson credited Mr. Steve Hoffman for helping improve the fund and stated that the lease recently approved by the Board would allow the \$65,000 General Fund subsidy to go away. He said the operation would become self-supporting for the first time in a decade.

Commissioner Rousseau asked about recycling and whether it would be restored.

Mr. Hoffman stated that staff was trying to bring recycling back without funding it at the County level, working through AMWASTE partners and a lease arrangement with another company. He stated that full recycling was still not profitable and would have to be funded by someone if restored fully. Public Works Director Mr. Phil Mallon clarified that glass recycling was already working well, and that metal, aluminum, and copper had available recycling outlets. Staff discussed possible cardboard recycling and potential reuse of plastics, though plastics remained the most difficult area.

**Accountability Court, Jail Surcharge, Victim's Assistance, Drug Court, and Other Operating Funds-** Ms. Weinmann reviewed Accountability Court and projected a positive impact of about \$89,000. She stated that the Accountability Court coordinator salary had been moved to the General Fund at the beginning of FY2026, with additional revenues moved to help cover the cost.

Mr. Rapson explained that grant funding for the program gradually decreased over time, such as 80% one year and 50% later, until the County was expected to fund the position itself. Ms. Weinmann also stated that Accountability Court had taken over the former Women Infant and Children (WIC) trailer after WIC moved into the health building, and the trailer was being used for counseling and similar functions, with related utilities paid from the fund.

Ms. Weinmann reviewed the County Jail Surcharge Fund and stated that the County had transferred \$390,000 into the fund during the year, resulting in a positive impact of about \$5,000. She said the County had worked with the Sheriff's Office and other entities, including Tyrone, Peachtree City, Fayetteville, and Senoia, on increasing the daily inmate rate by 25.2%, from \$57.60 per inmate per day to \$72.12. She stated that the first day of confinement would now be billed, while the last day would still be excluded. Mr. Rapson stated that even with the changes, the subsidy would still be about \$315,000.

Ms. Weinmann stated that Victim's Assistance had been discussed at the previous retreat and that staff had decided to pay out only the money collected, creating a zero impact going forward. She said Drug Court had seen negative impacts since 2019 and that its fund balance had decreased by about 51%. Staff was discussing whether opioid funds could be used for any Drug Court programs. Streetlights was projected to have a positive impact and an ending fund balance of about \$75,000. Ms. Weinmann also stated that the Animal Sterilization Fund would be closed by the end of the fiscal year and moved into Animal Control in the General Fund.

Mr. Rapson stated that animal control expenses would show significant increases in the next budget, with one area growing from \$20,000 to about \$100,000 and medical costs reaching about \$85,000. He stated that the County would eventually have two animal control buildings and that staff would discuss Phase 2 of Animal Control later in the day.

#### Internal Service Funds and Healthcare

Ms. Weinmann reviewed Workers' Compensation and stated that there had been no settlements so far during the year. She said the projected change in position was only about a \$22,000 decrease, which she considered positive. She reviewed Dental and Vision and stated that the fund largely maintained itself, with a projected decrease from about \$5,500 to \$5,600 and a remaining fund balance of about \$52,000.

Ms. Weinmann then reviewed Major Medical. She explained that stabilization funds were held separately in the fund balance in case the County needed to walk away from its plan. The stabilization amount was being reduced from \$1.5 million to \$1.3 million based on recent conversations with Cigna. She stated that the County expected to receive at least \$2.5 million back through stop-loss reimbursement, typically in July, and that the money would be applied to claims and overdue items in the fund.

Mr. Rapson clarified that the expected \$2.5 million was not new money but reimbursement for claims previously paid above the stop-loss threshold. He stated that the County had seriously considered moving to another provider but reached a last-minute agreement with Cigna to keep the existing relationship in place. He said Cigna had been with the County for 13 years and had stepped up at the last moment. He also stated that healthcare was broken and that the County had studied reference-based pricing, including discussions with Piedmont Hospital, but hoped to keep the current plan for at least one more year.

**Tax Digest, Millage Rates, and QTS Revenue-** Ms. Weinmann moved into tax digest and millage rate projections and stated that the next year's digest was projected around \$10.9 billion using the 2.7% CPI figure. She clarified that this projection did not include possible major QTS personal property taxes, though it included a small amount from real property.

Mr. Rapson explained that QTS had two buildings under a \$2.6 billion tax abatement through the Development Authority and that the County was only beginning to see some real property digest growth. He stated that the major infusion would come from personal property tax, but staff had not included those numbers in the normalized budget presentation because of uncertainty at

the state level. He said staff would recommend treating future QTS revenue as one-time revenue and using it for capital projects until the legislature's direction became clearer.

Mr. Rapson discussed Senate Bill 33 and stated that it allowed revenue to be placed on the ballot through a local act, but that doing so would require going back through the legislative process. He said the most recent legislative session had focused heavily on eliminating income tax or rolling back property tax through homestead exemptions. He expressed concern that the state could pass legislation redirecting data center revenue to the state and then redistribute it through grants, which might not benefit Fayette County because of the County's demographics and financial profile. He said staff would present recommendations for handling future QTS revenue at the next meeting.

Ms. Weinmann continued reviewing the tax digest and noted that auto revenues had steadily decreased over many years while personal property was growing slightly. She then reviewed population, staffing, and millage rates. She showed how the EMS millage rate and Fire millage rate had changed and stated that, compared with approximately 19 similar counties, Fayette County ranked around 15th out of 19 in millage rates. She reminded the Board that some counties had one large millage rate, while Fayette County had separate rates for M&O, Fire, EMS, and 9-1-1, so comparisons had to account for the combined rate.

Ms. Weinmann also reviewed the distribution of the tax pie and stated that the Board of Education received almost 72%, Fire received about 10.3%, 9-1-1 received less than 1%, and the County received about 13% to 14%. She stated that if the County had kept the 2014 millage rate, it would have collected about \$122 million more, or alternatively, saved citizens about \$121.9 million over those years.

**Completed SPLOST Projects and Health Building**- Ms. Weinmann reviewed completed SPLOST projects and stated that the County had closed nearly \$17.3 million in CIP projects. She said the largest project was the health building, which accounted for \$15.7 million of that amount.

Mr. Rapson stated that the health building deserved more credit because it had allowed services to be co-located and helped contain costs. He said the health department was not asking for additional funding beyond what was state-mandated, approximately \$50,000, because the building allowed the operation to become more self-supporting.

Commissioner Gibbons stated that he had attended a public health meeting the previous night and that, for the first time since he had been in office, the public health system was fully staffed and fully funded for the next year. He said the building continued to look brand new and praised staff, project managers, and public health officials for their work.

Ms. Weinmann stated that it was beneficial that the County had reused an existing building.

Ms. Weinmann also reviewed completed Water System projects, stating that four projects had been completed for approximately \$743,000. She then reviewed completed SPLOST projects totaling about \$5.1 million, including a 2023 SPLOST project for the Sheriff's Watch Office.

After finishing the financial presentation, Mr. Rapson called for a five-minute break so the next presenter could set up.

The meeting recessed at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:19 a.m.

### **Transportation SPLOST Overview**

Public Works Director Mr. Phil Mallon opened the transportation SPLOST presentation by stating that the County's largest transportation challenge remained delivering projects on schedule. He said staff continued trying to move projects forward, but the pace had not been as fast as either staff or the Board wanted. He explained that the County had been using an engineer of record, but staff planned to work with Purchasing to obtain two or three engineers of record beginning that summer because one consultant could become overloaded once assigned multiple projects.

Mr. Mallon stated that the purpose of the presentation was to review projects, acknowledge delivery challenges, and listen for Board feedback on whether staff was focusing on the right priorities. He encouraged commissioners to comment if they believed transportation staff should shift direction or focus on different projects.

## **2004 Transportation SPLOST**

Transportation Engineer Ms. Paola Kimbell reviewed the 2004 Transportation SPLOST through the County's interactive StoryMaps software. She stated that the 2004 Transportation 320 SPLOST included 19 total projects, with 17 completed and 2 evaluated with no further action.

Mr. Mallon explained that many of the 17 completed projects dated back to when Chairman Hearn served in Mr. Mallon's position. He stated that one major project included resurfacing more than 60 miles of roadway, and the program also included 16 intersection projects. The two projects evaluated with no further action were Old Ford Road at State Route 279 and Newton Road at State Route 92. He said those intersections had been studied in 2010, and at that time no further action was recommended. He added that if those locations were studied again today, staff might reach a different conclusion, but the money in that account had already been used.

Ms. Kimbell then reviewed the SPLOST projects and stated that it included 67 total projects. Of those, 36 had been completed, 1 was in construction, 3 were in right-of-way, 6 were in design, 6 had been evaluated with no further action, and 15 had no action taken. Mr. Mallon clarified that the 15 no-action projects were tied to the City of Fayetteville, Peachtree City, or GDOT and were not County projects. He also stated that the projects evaluated with no further action were generally widening or new road construction projects that were not feasible.

## **Active 2004 Transportation Projects**

Ms. Kimbell reviewed a Gantt chart and map of active projects. She first discussed the GDOT Coastline Road bridge replacement, which had been completed.

Mr. Mallon explained that the project replaced the Old Timber Bridge over the railroad, which had been historic but uncomfortable to use. He also said staff had worked with a property owner who had concerns, but the issue was between the property owner and GDOT, and staff had provided the complaint process information.

Ms. Kimbell then discussed the Veterans Parkway and Eastin Road roundabout, also referred to as the Signaling roundabout. Design had been completed, and the project was in the right-of-way phase.

The East Fayetteville Bypass was also reviewed as a new road construction project of about three miles, running from County Line Road, intersecting McDonough Road, and tying into Corinth Road.

Mr. Mallon stated that the project had been delayed because of bridge-related issues, but a major milestone had occurred when GDOT agreed to the requested conditions and submitted paperwork to the Army Corps of Engineers asking for covenants to be modified. Staff was waiting for the Corps to respond before beginning field investigations for bridge design.

Mr. Mallon added that staff might be able to build a subsection of the East Fayetteville Bypass from County Line Road to McDonough Road because that section could have independent utility, especially with increasing traffic volumes and the proposed County-owned park south of McDonough Road. He said staff would develop a cost estimate, discuss funding with Mr. Rapson, and then return to the Board if that approach appeared feasible.

Ms. Kimbell and Mr. Mallon also reviewed the Highway 85 Connector at State Route 85 project. Mr. Mallon stated that the project involved adding a traffic signal and had previously been put out to bid, but staff was reassessing it to include a parking lot to support the Starr's Mill Educational Complex. The next step was issuing a notice to proceed to the engineer for preliminary design before bidding again.

The Goza Road at Bernhard Road project was identified as a project to be evaluated under the new transportation engineer of record. The Kenwood Road path project had received a preliminary engineering grant, and staff was working through the RFO

process to select a design consultant. The path was planned from Ashley Drive to Longview, and Mr. Mallon said the project might connect to the Fayette Forward path system or a future linear park concept.

The Sandy Creek Road at Eastin Road project had also received a preliminary engineering grant, and a consultant had already been selected for design. Staff was working through traffic counts and would return to the Board for concept selection. Mr. Mallon stated that the project would be a roundabout, and staff needed to determine whether a bypass lane was needed. He also said the consultant originally used traffic volumes affected by QTS construction, which made a double-lane roundabout appear necessary, but after removing temporary construction traffic, staff believed a single-lane roundabout was more appropriate.

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether the afternoon Fayette Forward presentation would discuss Eastin Road or only Sandy Creek. Staff confirmed that Eastin Road would be part of the concept discussion. Commissioner Rousseau also asked about connections involving Eastin Road and Graves Road.

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the Highway 92 and Hampton Road project. The design had been finalized for a single-lane roundabout, a bypass lane, and a signalized R-Cut.

Mr. Mallon stated that staff needed GDOT approval of the signal from the Atlanta office, but the critical path was right-of-way acquisition. Appraisals were being updated, and the negotiation team was ready.

Ms. Kimbell also reviewed the South Jeff Davis, County Line, and Inman Road roundabout. The project had received construction funds, design had been finalized, and staff was working through the NEPA environmental process. Mr. Mallon stated that right-of-way was about 75% complete and that staff was still negotiating with some Clayton County property owners.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked about the timing of a GDOT project, and Mr. Mallon said he would follow up with the Board by email because he did not want to rely on memory.

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether all 2004 SPLOST money had been spent, and Mr. Mallon clarified that all 2004 money had been allocated to projects but had not yet been fully spent.

### **2017 Transportation SPLOST**

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the 2017 SPLOST transportation projects and stated that there were 37 total projects. Of those, 23 had been completed, 2 were in construction, 1 was in right-of-way, 5 were in design, 3 were ongoing, and 3 were future projects.

Mr. Mallon explained that about 25% of the completed projects were paving and resurfacing projects, 20% were intersections, and 35% were studies or evaluations. He acknowledged that studies were not always exciting to the public, but he said those early studies helped the County obtain grant funding.

Ms. Kimbell showed the Gantt chart for the 2017 projects and identified three ongoing projects. Mr. Mallon referred to those as "bucket list" funds, meaning money set aside for bike paths, intersection needs, or road maintenance based on annual priorities. He stated that those buckets had become low because much of the money had already been used.

### **Starr's Mill School Tunnel, QTS Signal, and Whitewater Creek Nature Area**

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the Starr's Mill school tunnel project at Redwine Road and Robinson Road. She showed a video of the tunnel and retaining wall installation and stated that the ribbon-cutting was scheduled for 4:00 p.m. the next day. She also stated that the project had received a Project of the Year award from the Georgia chapter of APWA.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked whether the mayor and City Council had been invited so they could speak positively about the County, and Ms. Kimbell confirmed they had been notified and invited.

Ms. Kimbell then reviewed the QTS traffic signal and guardrail project on Tyrone Road at the QTS entrance. She stated that the project had been completed.

She also discussed the Whitewater Creek Nature Area at Veterans Parkway and Eastin Road. The ribbon-cutting was scheduled for May 28. Mr. Mallon clarified that the Whitewater Creek Nature Area was not really a SPLOST project and did not use SPLOST dollars, but it had taken significant Public Works staff time over the previous six months, so it was included in the update.

### **Banks Road and Ellis Road**

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the Banks Road and Ellis Road project, which was a minor stop-control intersection with free traffic flow on Banks Road. Staff was looking at installing an interim traffic signal, and the construction bid was with Purchasing. The goal was to complete the project during the year.

Mr. Mallon stated that during the transportation plan public meeting, several residents questioned why a traffic signal was being proposed instead of a roundabout. He explained that staff hoped the location would eventually become a roundabout or be replaced by a new alignment, possibly funded and constructed by a developer. The signal was intended as a low-cost interim safety measure and would not include the pedestrian features the County normally added. Chairman Hearn stated that the improvement was much needed.

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the State Route 279 and Corinth Road project, which was a federal-aid project intended to correct the curve on Corinth Road and improve operations around Corinth Road, State Route 85, and State Route 279. The design had been finalized, and staff was working through right-of-way.

Mr. Mallon stated that right-of-way was the critical path. Staff had held an informational meeting with property owners about a month earlier, and appraisals were being developed and reviewed before negotiations began.

### **Sandy Creek and Ellison / Sandy Creek Path**

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the Sandy Creek Road and Ellison Road project, another minor stop-control intersection that had received construction grant funding. Staff had finalized the traffic engineering report and was working through a concept for a single-lane roundabout.

She also reviewed the Sandy Creek path project, which would connect the future roundabout area to the current meeting location. The project had received preliminary engineering funds, and staff was working through the RFQ process to select a design consultant. Mr. Mallon stated that the project was 55% Fayette County and 45% Fayetteville, so staff would work with legal on an intergovernmental agreement, as well as the project framework agreement required with GDOT.

### **Transportation Studies and Future Projects**

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the County's transportation studies. Six studies had been completed, two were in design, including a mineral planning study and the comprehensive transportation plan update, and one pending study involved Lee's Mill, New Hope Road, and King River.

Mr. Mallon said that during a stakeholder meeting for the transportation plan update, a GDOT Office of Planning representative stated that several major state routes were not currently on GDOT's radar for improvements. These included State Route 85 South, State Route 92, and State Route 279. She recommended that the County complete scoping studies, either locally funded or through ARC, to strengthen future requests to GDOT. Mr. Mallon said staff would likely return to the Board within six months to request approval for a State Route 279 study and possibly other locations.

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether the State Route 279 study would target a specific area or the entire corridor from State Route 85 to State Route 138. Mr. Mallon said it would likely need to cover the whole corridor.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked about Veterans Parkway, and Mr. Mallon said Veterans would also be considered, although not through GDOT.

Ms. Kimbell identified future projects, including the Starr's Mill/Camp Creek Trail, which would connect the Starr's Mill Educational Facility to Starr's Mill High School. Mr. Mallon said staff might call it the Starr's Mill Nature Trail and use design elements from the

recently constructed facility for consistency. Future projects also included Ebenezer Church Road at Redwine Road, where staff was evaluating options such as a single-lane roundabout, and Tyrone Road at Dogwood Trail.

### **Transportation Grants**

Ms. Kimbell reported that since 2017, the County had been awarded \$24.7 million in grants, with a \$6.8 million local share and \$31.5 million in total approved costs. Mr. Mallon said the major grant-funded items included the State Route 279 project, resurfacing work, safety action projects, preliminary engineering, and transportation plan studies.

Chairman Hearn asked whether the grants were mostly through ARC and GDOT, and Mr. Mallon confirmed they were, with the safety action grant coming directly from FHWA.

Ms. Kimbell later stated that the County had \$24.4 million in grant applications under review, with a \$6.1 million local share and \$30.5 million in total project costs. Mr. Mallon stated that those requests included substantial improvements to McDonough Road, a joint Coweta County, Peachtree City, and Fayette County study on east-west connectivity, and a Redwine Road path gap-closure study. He said the local match was available and set aside.

Ms. Kimbell also reviewed future anticipated grant applications totaling \$8.4 million in grant funds, with a \$2.1 million local share and \$10.5 million in total project costs. Mr. Mallon said those were likely future phases for projects already in the TIP or with existing GDOT project identification numbers.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked whether Peachtree City was considering a roundabout at Robinson Road and Spear Road. Mr. Rapson and Mr. Mallon said they had not heard that. Vice Chairman Gibbons stated that Spear Road was becoming an alternate route between Peachtree City and Fayetteville and that traffic levels at Robinson Road were increasing. He also raised concerns about turning movements and backup conditions near Redwine Road and related corridors.

Mr. Mallon responded that the Sheriff's Office had asked about adding a right-turn lane at one of those locations to provide some relief, and staff was evaluating whether that was feasible. He also said east-west connectivity had already emerged as a major theme from public and stakeholder input. Mr. Mallon added that the County had asked city governments to provide their project lists for the transportation plan update, but staff had not received much input to date.

Commissioner Oddo said staff should be careful if a right-turn lane was added because vehicles pulling up on the right could block sight lines for drivers turning left. Mr. Mallon agreed that this was one of the concerns being evaluated.

Mr. Rapson and Commissioner Rousseau also raised the Jenkins Road and Ellison Road area. Commissioner Rousseau said the sight line to the right was difficult, especially for younger students and older drivers, and suggested that grading or tree trimming might help. Mr. Mallon said he would inspect the area and that vegetation issues could likely be addressed if the County had right-of-way.

Commissioner Rousseau also asked about anticipated traffic increases and guardrail needs near Lee's Mill because of construction related to the soccer complex. Mr. Mallon stated that staff had a slide on that topic for the afternoon.

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether staff was considering bringing engineering services in-house. Mr. Mallon clarified that the County was not bringing engineering in-house but planned to issue an RFQ and award work to two or three third-party engineering firms. Mr. Rapson explained that multiple engineers of record would provide more capacity because projects could be distributed among several firms rather than assigned to one consultant.

Vice Chairman Gibbons added that a firm could provide multiple engineers with different specialties, allowing the County to access more expertise than one in-house person could provide. Commissioner Rousseau said he was also thinking about internal accountability and suggested that another staff engineer similar to Ms. Kimbell could be beneficial.

The meeting recessed at 9:50 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 10:09 a.m.

**Stormwater SPLOST Update**- Environmental Management Director Mr. Bryan Keller then began the stormwater SPLOST update. He stated that the presentation would follow a format similar to prior retreats. He reviewed Category 1 projects, which involved major stormwater drainage systems where failure could involve improper operation, rehabilitation or replacement needs, or potential loss of human life. He said the two dam projects, Longview and Kozisek, were still in design and would be discussed in detail later that afternoon. Outside of those dam projects, all 16 Category 1 projects had been completed.

Mr. Keller reviewed Category 2, Tier 1 projects, which were systems needing replacement fairly quickly. Four were in design, and one was in right-of-way, Brandon Mill Circle. He said staff planned to group several Brandon Mill-area projects together, with about seven projects in that area expected to move forward soon.

For Category 2, Tier 2 projects, which also needed replacement soon, Mr. Keller stated that 11 were in design, 8 were in right-of-way acquisition, and 3 were in construction. The projects under construction included Cross Creek Trail, Darren Drive, and 140 Brandon Mill. He stated that clearing had started at 140 Brandon Mill and that pipe delivery was expected the following week. Darren Drive involved a large culvert system with triple 9-foot box culverts next to triple 9-by-5 box culverts, and because it was a one-way-in, one-way-out location, the contractor was developing a detour plan involving a temporary road.

Mr. Keller reviewed Category 3 water system projects, which were handled in-house by the Road Department or through an on-call contractor. He stated that the first set of pipes completed under the on-call contract included Butler, Cherokee, and Braswell, and the work went well. He said the County planned to use the Shockley contract more often for stormwater needs when the contractor was not handling Water System emergencies. He also praised the Road Department for replacing four of five culverts in the previous two months.

Category 4 projects included accessibility improvements and paving inverts at catch basins where concrete had not been installed properly in subdivision drainage structures. Mr. Keller said staff planned to work on Foxhall Farms and was also looking at Jeff Davis Plantation and Emerald Lake. Recently completed projects included North Bend Court, Mark Lane, and Butler Road.

### **2023 Transportation SPLOST**

Ms. Kimbell then reviewed the 2023 SPLOST transportation projects. She stated that after the 2024 reallocation, staff was actively working on three main categories: road maintenance, Creek Road new road construction, and intersection safety improvements.

Mr. Mallon clarified that the other projects were still being delivered but had been moved into other SPLOST programs.

Mr. Rapson stated that the slide showed how the Board's reallocation focused on the 2023 SPLOST and noted that the County's priority was to spend the oldest money first.

Ms. Kimbell reviewed the Creek Road new road construction project, which would create a new road from State Route 54 across from Yorktown to First Manassas. The project was near Grady Avenue and the transfer station.

Ms. Kimbell stated that Creek Road was a joint project with Fayetteville. The environmental screening and wetland delineation had been completed. The next step was the traffic engineering report, with traffic counts being collected through the comprehensive transportation plan process. She identified the intersection control at State Route 54 and the new road as the main issue because left-turning traffic would need to cross five lanes.

Mr. Mallon stated that staff wanted a traffic signal at the State Route 54 intersection but did not yet know whether GDOT would find that a signal was warranted. If not, the road might have to open as right-in/right-out only until traffic volumes supported a signal.

Commissioner Oddo asked whether Fayetteville was doing anything on Grady Avenue, and Mr. Mallon said Fayetteville had city center DRI improvements along Grady, but he did not know the specifics.

Chairman Hearn stated that the new road would take significant pressure off the Grady Avenue/State Route 54 intersection and said it would be foolish to open the road without a signal on day one. Mr. Mallon stated that the yellow alignment was on County property, but the project was a 50/50 cost-sharing project with Fayetteville and would require an intergovernmental agreement.

Commissioner Rousseau asked about traffic on Booker Avenue leading to the health center, stating that people were cutting through the neighborhood to reach a County facility. Mr. Rapson said the County had already done some traffic mitigation through signage and that the Sheriff's Office and police had also been involved. He said some of the traffic was now legitimate traffic going to the health facility, and Mr. Mallon added that any traffic calming inside city limits would need to be evaluated by the city.

### **2023 Stormwater SPLOST and Starr's Mill Educational Facility**

Mr. Keller resumed the stormwater update and reviewed the 2023 Stormwater SPLOST Infrastructure Improvement Projects. He stated that 23 projects were in design, 1 was under construction, and 7 had been completed. Some projects were split-funded with the 2017 SPLOST because staff used the oldest money first and supplemented with 2023 funds when needed.

Mr. Keller also discussed the Starr's Mill Educational Facility, which was not a stormwater SPLOST project but was being handled by Environmental Management and other staff. He stated that a bond had been issued, and staff was working to ensure funds were spent or encumbered within the required timeframe. Staff had a bid ready to bring the interior of the building to code, and a structural engineer was scheduled to inspect a small termite issue involving one beam in the center of the structure. Mr. Keller said staff hoped little or no remediation would be needed. He also stated that an engineer would help with design for a restroom, and staff hoped Mr. Hoffman could help grade a parking lot.

### **Justice Center Renovation**

Justice Center Project Manager Mr. David Jaeger then provided an update on the Justice Center renovation. He explained that the third floor had completed required demolition work. New stud walls were listed as 25% complete in the slides but were closer to 50% complete at the time of the meeting. Masonry walls around inmate holding areas and new vault areas were nearly 100% complete, and electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work had progressed beyond the numbers shown in the slide.

Mr. Jaeger stated that the original construction of the building had allowed for a temporary exterior construction elevator, and that elevator was now in place. It allowed workers and materials to access the building from the outside without using normal entrances. Contractors were also using one staff elevator at the back of the building, with the Sheriff's Office monitoring access. A rear security fence had been modified to accommodate the construction elevator and an expansion of the judges' parking lot.

Mr. Jaeger reviewed construction photos showing the elevator, metal stud framing, exposed ceilings, duct work, plumbing runs, sprinkler supply, and block wall construction for a district attorney records vault. He then reviewed how the renovated building would function once complete.

On the third floor, there would be four new Superior Court courtrooms, labeled 3A through 3D. A fifth courtroom on the lower right would serve as a flex courtroom for additional Superior Court needs or temporary use by other courts. That space could also be used as supplemental jury waiting space. The Public Defender's office would be on the lower right, and the District Attorney's office would move from the second floor to the third floor so it could be directly associated with Superior Court.

On the second floor, four courtrooms would remain across the top. State Court would occupy courtrooms 2A and 2B. Courtroom 2C would be a flex courtroom, and courtroom 2D would become Juvenile Court. Juvenile Court administration would also move to the second floor. The existing jury assembly room would remain, and the Solicitor's Office would move to the left side of the floor, gaining more space and a larger vault. The grand jury room would remain on that floor and continue to be overseen by the District Attorney's Office.

On the first floor, the Clerk of Court would remain and expand administrative offices along the back of the building. Courtroom 1A, currently used by Juvenile Court, would be renovated into a flex courtroom for magistrate overflow and probate matters requiring jury trials. Probate Court would expand its administrative offices and add counter space to better serve the public from the main atrium. Court Services would move into the area currently occupied by Juvenile Court offices.

Mr. Rapson stated that although the project was often called a third-floor renovation, the work actually affected every floor of the courthouse. He said the project was disruptive, especially because of construction noise and phased moves, but staff and the

project team were doing a good job keeping the work isolated and coordinated. He thanked Mr. Jaeger for delaying retirement and helping manage the project.

Mr. Jaeger stated that long-standing relationships with building staff had helped. He acknowledged that construction noise, including slab coring and nail guns, had affected workspaces, but staff had generally been tolerant. Monthly meetings had helped keep building staff informed. He said the third floor was targeted for completion in the fall, and the full contract completion date remained April 2027.

### **Multi-Use Recreation Facility**

Project Manager Mr. Tim Symonds then reviewed the multi-use recreation facility under construction near Kiwanis Park. He stated that the facility was a new 48,000-square-foot building with associated parking, located between Patriot Park and the ball fields.

Mr. Symonds described the building layout. The first floor included two large multi-purpose gymnasiums for basketball, pickleball, volleyball, and other activities. Between the gymnasiums were locker rooms, storage, and coaches' facilities. The left side of the building included a new suite of offices for the Parks and Recreation Department, a large community room available for public events, a warming kitchen, a meeting room, four activity classrooms that could be divided or combined, storage areas, and a weight room with gym equipment, treadmills, ellipticals, and similar equipment.

The second floor included a walking and running track around the perimeter of the gymnasiums, providing views down into the gymnasiums. Over the locker rooms, there would be an aerobics or dance area that could also be used for classes and lessons. Mr. Symonds noted that the final color scheme would differ from the architect's early renderings.

Mr. Symonds reviewed the project timeline, stating that public meetings and design work began in 2022 and continued through late 2024. Construction began after the construction manager-at-risk contract was awarded, and the former Parks and Recreation building and an old filled-in swimming pool had been removed. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in June of the prior year.

Construction completion was still scheduled for around the end of September of 2026. Mr. Symonds stated that after construction was complete, the building would still need furniture and equipment, and staff expected a public opening around the beginning of 2027.

He stated that the overall budget was just over \$23.6 million. The slide showed about \$11 million spent, but he said the actual amount spent was already over \$12 million. Additional expenditures would still be brought forward for furniture, equipment, IT, and other building needs. He said the project had experienced some delay due to the pre-engineered metal building and design issues related to attaching the mezzanine walkway, but the contractor was currently investing close to \$2 million per month in work and remained on track.

Mr. Symonds stated that contingency funds had been used for unexpected items, including road conditions leading toward the rest of Kiwanis Park where the sub-base was not adequate. He said the project still had a healthy contingency balance and was expected to finish under budget. He also explained that the building was being treated almost like two sectors: Sector A, with the white roof, was well ahead of schedule, while Sector B, the gymnasium area, was catching up.

### **Senior Services**

Senior Services Director Mr. Dan Gibbs then reviewed SPLOST projects related to the Senior Center and Senior Services. He stated that the major project was the expansion of the café and the restructuring of the Meals on Wheels packing and delivery area. The Board had approved the construction bid, but construction had not yet started because paperwork was still being completed.

Mr. Gibbs described the project as a straightforward café expansion. Two square rooms would be added to the back of the Senior Center, and the existing porch area would be enclosed for year-round use. The café served multiple purposes, including breakfast, fitness classes, lunch, and afternoon activities. The existing porch structure would be removed, and the new enclosed space would connect to the café area.

The Meals on Wheels porch area would be reconfigured to include a walk-in refrigerator and freezer. Because that would displace an existing dry storage area in the kitchen, a new dry storage area would be added to the back of the building. The project also included a new activity room and reconfigured packing areas.

Mr. Gibbs explained that construction would occur in two phases. First, staff would complete the expansion behind the café. Then the Meals on Wheels packing operation would temporarily move into the newly constructed space while the current Meals on Wheels area was reconfigured and the walk-in refrigerator and freezer were installed. After that work was complete, the operation would shift back, and the new expansion would begin functioning as café and activity space. He expected the project to take about one year to one and a half years to fully complete.

Mr. Gibbs also reviewed SPLOST funding for transportation services. He stated that SPLOST provided \$675,000 for vehicle purchases over six or seven years. To date, Senior Services had purchased six vehicles and was a little over halfway through the budgeted amount. Vehicle replacement would continue as vehicles reached the end of their useful life.

### **Meals on Wheels and Senior Services Funding**

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether Senior Services had seen an increase in the need for Meals on Wheels.

Mr. Gibbs stated that the need had absolutely increased. He explained that the number of meals delivered depended on available funding and the needs-assessment score used to determine eligibility. If more funding was available, Senior Services could lower the cutoff score and provide meals to more people with slightly lower levels of need. He stated that the need for Meals on Wheels, nutrition programs, and internal nutrition programs had increased, largely because grocery costs had risen.

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether Mr. Gibbs anticipated continued increases in need.

Mr. Gibbs stated that Fayette County's population continued to age and that there were more seniors in the County each year. He said Senior Services served about 2,000 to 3,000 of the County's estimated 25,000 to 27,000 seniors. He also said the Senior Center had about 10,000 visits per month from approximately 1,500 seniors.

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether the County needed to communicate with federal partners and whether there were concerns about federal support for services such as SNAP.

Mr. Gibbs stated that his forecast for federal funding was not optimistic. He said Senior Services was already losing federal transportation funding, with more than \$100,000 reduced at the local level, which would mean fewer dollars to transport seniors to medical appointments. He said one federal program had almost been eliminated. He also stated that ARPA and COVID-related Meals on Wheels funds were ending and were not being replaced, so he expected funding to become tighter at both the federal and state levels.

Mr. Rapson stated that the budget request included a 9% increase for Senior Services, but even with that increase and \$41,000 in support, there would still be shortfalls in some grants. He said that was why the Senior Center held fundraisers and tried to raise additional funds to cover gaps in state and federal grant funding. He said the County was doing its part but could not fully make up the entire gap.

### **Lunch Break**

The meeting recessed at 10:55 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 11:40 a.m.

### **Legislative Session Review**

Assistant County Administrator Mr. Jason Tinsley resumed the meeting and introduced the legislative session review. He stated that the legislative session had not been simple or fun, although he intended to present it in a clear and manageable way. He noted that an electronic copy of the legislative review had been provided and that the full ACCG review could take many hours to go through.

Mr. Tinsley began with Senate Bill 33, which had passed and had been signed by the Governor. He explained that the bill authorized a 1% local homestead option sales tax, subject to voter referendum. The additional penny tax would allow a rollback of real property taxes, but only for homesteaded property. It would not apply to rental property, commercial property, or other non-homesteaded property on the digest. He stated that this shifted the burden away from homesteaded property and onto other property classes.

Mr. Tinsley also explained that Senate Bill 33 made the House Bill 581 opt-outs null and void, meaning jurisdictions that had opted out were automatically brought back in. He stated that the legislation also changed reassessment deadlines, creating additional administrative challenges.

Mr. Tinsley discussed House Bill 1116, which had not passed but had influenced Senate Bill 33. He stated that House Bill 1116 would have converted LOST into an L-HOST and would have eliminated existing intergovernmental agreements and service delivery strategies with municipal partners. It would have used sales tax revenue for homestead property tax rollback rather than applying broadly as LOST currently did. The bill also included a 3% property tax revenue cap for counties and cities, which would have required a local referendum if a jurisdiction needed to exceed that threshold.

County Administrator Mr. Steve Rapson stated that Senate Bill 33 made sense in principle because it allowed local governments to ask voters whether they wanted to use sales tax revenue for homestead relief. However, he said the process was difficult in practice because local officials would need to go through the local delegation and would be restricted by the legislative calendar and election timing. He said the bill gave legislators a soundbite that they had allowed local officials to eliminate property taxes, but he questioned whether the process would actually be viable.

Mr. Rapson also expressed concern that future state action could redirect data center-related revenue away from Fayette County. He stated that Fayette County was experiencing the local social and political effects of the data center conversation, and any revenue generated from data centers in Fayette County should remain in Fayette County to benefit residents. He stated that decisions about Fayette County property taxes should be made by the County's elected officials rather than by the state legislature.

Mr. Tinsley then discussed failed or proposed legislation that showed the state's interest in local revenue. He reviewed Senate Bill 410, which would have repealed data center sales tax exemptions but kept both state and local sales tax revenue at the state level. That revenue would have been placed into a grant fund and redistributed to other counties to help offset homestead rollbacks. He said this example supported Mr. Rapson's concerns about state-level control over locally generated data center revenue.

Mr. Tinsley also discussed other failed proposals, including a qualifications-based procurement mandate, lifetime health insurance for retired constitutional officers, a three-year data center moratorium, data center contract requirements related to power use, additional homestead and senior exemptions, limits on personal compensation for passport fees, freezes on fair market value at purchase price, statewide base-year homestead exemptions, and a separate data center property classification. He stated that the major themes of the session had been eliminating income tax and eliminating or reducing homesteaded property taxes.

Mr. Rapson and Mr. Tinsley both stated that elected officials may need to be more directly involved in future legislative conversations because legislators appeared to give more attention to elected officials than to county managers or staff.

Mr. Tinsley said staff would likely do a better job in the next session of involving the Board directly in those discussions.

### **Multi-Use Facility Hours and Fees**

Parks and Recreation Director Ms. Anita Godbee reviewed proposed operating hours and fees for the new multi-use recreation facility. She stated that the proposed regular operating hours were 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. She explained that the 10:00 p.m. closing time was recommended because adult sports leagues could have games at 7:00, 8:00, and 9:00 p.m., and an earlier closing time would make programming difficult.

Chairman Hearn stated that the operating hours should be treated as a flexible starting point. He said staff should come back after 60 or 90 days if adjustments were needed.

Ms. Godbee agreed and stated that the hours and fees should be considered a living document because the facility would be new and usage patterns were not yet known.

Ms. Godbee stated that the Recreation Commission recommended allowing extended reservation hours for outside groups. Under the proposal, Sunday reservations could extend to 8:00 p.m., and Monday through Saturday reservations could extend to 11:00 p.m. Additional fees would apply to cover staff time and other costs.

Ms. Godbee then reviewed proposed membership fees. Daily resident rates were proposed at \$3 for adults and teens ages 12 to 54, \$2 for children ages 3 to 11, and \$3 for seniors ages 55 and older. All non-residents, regardless of age, would pay \$10 per day. Monthly resident rates were proposed at \$20 for adults and teens, \$15 for children, and \$10 for seniors. Non-residents would not be eligible for monthly memberships and would pay the daily non-resident rate. A resident family monthly rate was proposed at \$55 for two adults and \$3 for children aged 11 and under, with \$5 for each additional child.

Commissioner Oddo asked about the difference between adult/teen and senior daily fees.

Ms. Godbee clarified that the daily rate was the same for adult residents and senior residents, but the monthly senior rate included a larger discount. She also noted that the proposal did not include discounts for veterans, wounded warriors, or similar groups and was based mainly on age and residency.

Commissioner Rousseau asked how residency would be verified and whether there would be a distinction between unincorporated County residents and residents of municipalities.

Ms. Godbee stated that anyone living within Fayette County would be considered a resident, including residents of the cities. There would not be a separate unincorporated County rate.

Commissioner Rousseau also asked about membership cards.

Ms. Godbee stated that membership cards could be used, but the department also had software that could track memberships and allow customers to check in at the front desk without needing to keep up with a card.

Mr. Rapson stated that the proposed fee structure had been vetted by the Recreation Commission but would likely receive feedback once published. He noted that questions had already come up about County employees who did not live in Fayette County and whether they would have to pay the non-resident rate. He said the County needed to keep the fee structure simple enough for front-desk staff to administer while also being fair and consistent.

Ms. Godbee then reviewed proposed reservation fees. Activity rooms and the meeting room were proposed at \$35 per hour Monday through Thursday and \$100 per hour Friday through Sunday, with a four-hour minimum and a \$300 refundable security deposit. Larger combined activity rooms were proposed at \$70 per hour Monday through Thursday and \$200 per hour Friday through Sunday, also with a four-hour minimum and \$300 refundable security deposit. The large community room was proposed at \$100 per hour Monday through Thursday and \$150 per hour Friday through Sunday, with a four-hour minimum and \$300 refundable deposit. Non-resident reservation rates would be double the resident rate.

Commissioner Oddo asked whether the rates were competitive with private industry and stated that he did not want the government undercutting private businesses. Ms. Godbee said staff compared the proposed rates to surrounding parks and recreation providers, including Peachtree City, Clayton County, Henry County, Riverdale, Fayetteville, Tyrone, Spalding County, and Coweta County. She stated that staff did not want to overcharge before seeing actual usage and that rates could be revisited later.

Commissioner Rousseau asked about potential requests from nonprofits and HOAs for discounts.

Ms. Godbee stated that the proposal did not create nonprofit discounts and used only resident and non-resident categories.

Mr. Rapson stated that staff should evaluate the first 180 days of operations before determining whether the fee structure needed to change. He said the goal was not to create a profit center, but to generate enough revenue to offset staffing and operating costs and possibly set aside some money for future capital needs.

### **Commercial Water Rates**

Water System Director Ms. Vanessa Tigert began a discussion about commercial water rates. She explained that the Water System currently had non-residential rates and residential tiered rates. The residential base rate was \$18.48 and included 2,000 gallons of water. The first tier above the base rate applied up to 20,000 gallons at \$3.23 per 1,000 gallons.

The discussion included the idea of higher commercial usage tiers and construction-related rates. Staff discussed the concept that very high users, such as those exceeding 100,000 gallons, could be charged at a higher rate while still having lower tiers available for lesser usage. The discussion also noted that residential customers generally did not use volumes as high as 100,000 gallons per month.

Vice Chairman Gibbons raised concern that increases in commercial water rates would ultimately be passed along to consumers through the cost of goods or services. He stated that the issue was not simply making businesses pay more, because those costs could contribute to inflation and eventually be paid by residents.

Mr. Rapson responded that construction activity would be charged at the higher construction rate and then would drop to a rate comparable to residential Tier 2 after construction. He stated that staff would move forward with that recommendation.

Commissioner Oddo stated that he appreciated that staff was thinking ahead about future capacity, with goal to stay ready for future demand.

Chairman Hearn expressed his hesitation on doubling the rate.

Ms. Tigert stated that the approach was an economical way to prepare the Water System to produce more water at the plant.

### **Financial Institution Tax**

Chief Financial Officer Ms. Sheryl Weinmann reviewed the County's financial institution tax collections. She stated that the County currently collected from several banks in Fayette County and had collected approximately \$115,000 so far during the year. She stated that financial institution taxes were due by March 1 and that most institutions had already paid, though some may still be outstanding.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the County did not appear to collect from all banks in Fayette County and also was not collecting from some credit unions. She said the ordinance and state law referred to depository financial institutions, and staff believed the ordinance may need to be reviewed and updated to ensure the County could collect from all eligible institutions. She said staff had compared Fayette County's ordinance language with examples from Clayton, Coweta, and Henry counties.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the County projected about \$190,000 in financial institution tax revenue for the year. She said that if the County could collect from additional eligible institutions, the amount could at least double.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked whether the tax was required by state law or optional. Ms. Weinmann stated that the tax was required and that institutions were supposed to submit a statement by March 1 each year.

Mr. Rapson stated that Legal had not yet reviewed the issue and that staff needed direction for Legal to examine whether ordinance revisions were needed. He said the County was not incorporating any additional revenue into the budget yet because staff did not know whether the County could legally collect from all the institutions identified. He stated that if ordinance changes were needed, those changes would come back to the Board for approval.

The meeting recessed at 12:50 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 12:55 a.m.

## **Opioid Remediation Funds**

Ms. Weinmann reviewed opioid remediation funds. She explained that the County collected settlement funds from several opioid-related settlements involving companies such as CVS, Walgreens, Publix, and others. She stated that the County began collecting those funds in early 2023 and that Exhibit E identified the types of allowable uses.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the County originally allocated \$30,000 per year to the inmate medical contract for opioid-related treatment and \$30,000 per year to Fire and EMS to purchase and distribute Narcan kits. To date, the County had received \$535,000 and spent \$172,000 because spending had been limited to \$60,000 per year. Beginning the next year, because of a change in the inmate medical care contract, the allocation for that contract would increase from \$30,000 to \$44,000.

She also stated that the Sheriff's Office was receiving training related to opioid abuse and how to manage citizens struggling with opioid issues. The Sheriff's Office allocation was expected to increase to \$82,000 going forward.

Commissioner Rousseau asked whether funds going to the Sheriff for that service were specifically earmarked.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the opioid money was held in Fund 213 and could only be used for allowable opioid-related expenses.

Mr. Rapson stated that the fund balance would be drawn down over the next four years based on the new allocations. He explained that the County was using the funds to offset eligible operational costs, consistent with how the County used specific funding sources for specific allowable purposes. Ms. Weinmann added that staff was also discussing with Drug Court whether any programs fell under the allowable uses in "Exhibit E".

## **Vision Zero Safety Initiative**

Public Works Director Mr. Phil Mallon introduced the Vision Zero Safety Initiative update. He stated that the County had a commitment to Vision Zero and was required to provide an update to elected officials. He also said staff had good news to share regarding crash reductions and had a financial request for a new grant application.

Transportation Engineer Ms. Paola Kimbell explained that Vision Zero promoted safe road usage, safe roads, and safe designs to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. She stated that the County completed and adopted its Safety Action Plan in June 2025. In December 2025, the County received a \$9.6 million implementation grant. The total project was \$12 million, with a \$2.4 million local match, and included construction of three roundabouts and comprehensive school zone and pedestrian safety improvements.

Mr. Mallon explained that one of the three roundabouts, at Morgan Mill and 85 Connector, was in the Town of Brooks and was officially a Brooks project. He stated that Brooks did not appear to have the local match available and that staff needed a decision soon so the County could determine whether that project would remain in the grant or whether funds could be reallocated.

Ms. Kimbell then discussed a new funding opportunity due May 26. Staff proposed applying for a Veterans Parkway and Lee's Mill safety project focused on roadway departures, which she stated were Fayette County's number one crash type. She noted that there had been two fatalities on Veterans Parkway in 2019 and serious injuries on Lee's Mill.

Mr. Mallon stated that the proposed application would add paved shoulders along Veterans Parkway and use remaining funds to address one or two high-priority roadway departure or crash locations on Lee's Mill. Potential improvements could include guardrails, shoulder regrading, paved shoulders, or other safety measures. The total project budget would be \$3,125,000, and staff requested local match funding of \$325,000 from 2004 SPLOST interest and \$300,000 from 2017 SPLOST interest.

Mr. Rapson stated that the 2004 and 2017 SPLOST funds had sufficient accumulated interest to support the local match, but that the Board needed to authorize staff to submit the grant application because the County did not apply for grants without an identified funding source.

Vice Chairman Gibbons made a motion to approve the application request using interest revenue from the 2004 and 2017 SPLOST funds. Commissioner Rousseau seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Kimbell then reviewed low-cost safety countermeasures implemented with the Road Department, including signs, wider edge lines, pavement markings, striping, reflective pavement markers, all-way stops, and curb improvements. She stated that five locations had seen significant crash reductions, with 114 crashes in the five years before the improvements and a projected reduction to about 45 crashes afterward. Some locations had recorded zero crashes after improvements. She also reviewed roundabouts at New Hope Road/Brogdon Road and Redwine Road/Bernard Road/Peachtree Parkway, where crashes dropped from 25 and 37 crashes before construction to 6 crashes at each location afterward.

Mr. Mallon stated that the County's safety work was guided by both public input and crash data, and that staff was pursuing both expensive improvements such as roundabouts and low-cost countermeasures.

### **Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update**

Mr. Mallon then began the Comprehensive Transportation Plan update. He explained that the transportation plan identified needed County policies and programs, listed future short-term and long-term projects, and helped prioritize projects. He stated that projects needed to be included in a plan, preferably the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, to be eligible for outside funding.

Mr. Mallon stated that the County was updating its 2019 plan rather than starting over. The update was intended to assess major growth within and around Fayette County, including multiple Developments of Regional Impact. He said the plan would help determine whether roads such as Veterans Parkway, Tyrone Road, State Route 279, and other state routes needed capacity, safety, or operational improvements.

Mr. Mallon also discussed the Connect Fayette linear park/path concept. He described it as an effort to take the existing path and sidewalk system, create a higher standard, connect key destinations, and use a shared name with the cities so users would recognize the system. He stated that the idea would need Board support, support from other elected officials, and public buy-in.

During public engagement, staff heard support for paths, but residents also asked whether path projects would reduce vehicle trips or primarily serve recreation. Mr. Mallon said many residents had cautioned against widening roads unless absolutely necessary and preferred a better network of roads, new road construction, or filling gaps rather than automatically widening roads to four lanes.

Mr. Mallon stated that the County had nearly 600 responses to the online survey and more than 250 comments. Staff had also used a webpage, radio appearances, social media, press releases, newspapers, emails, message boards, yard signs, a public meeting, and focus groups. He said about 100 people attended the public meeting.

Public feedback emphasized safety as the top transportation priority, followed by more paths and then congestion relief. Other comments included the need for east-west connectivity, preservation of key corridors and rural character, better connections outside Fayette County, and possible interstate access improvements such as a future concept near Fairburn. Mr. Mallon stated that Fayetteville and other municipalities were involved through the stakeholder process, but staff planned to be more direct in requesting specific project input from cities.

### **Pavement Preservation**

Roads Director Mr. Steve Hoffman presented the pavement preservation update. He thanked Mr. Rapson for allowing the Roads Department to present and stated that staff wanted to show how roadway funds were spent and highlight accomplishments. He noted that a County equipment operator had twice won Georgia Equipment Operator of the Year and had placed sixth nationally one year. He also recognized staff awards, including the Golden Backhoe from Georgia 811 and recognition for administrative and pavement preservation work.

Mr. Hoffman reviewed the County's current pavement rating, which was 75.5 and in the good range. He said another pavement evaluation was expected in the fall and that staff anticipated the rating would increase because of the funds invested in resurfacing and preservation.

Mr. Hoffman then reviewed pavement preservation methods and costs. Crack sealing was the cheapest tool at about \$0.40 per square yard and was used to keep moisture from getting into pavement. Asphalt resurfacing cost about \$22.48 per square yard,

with current projects including Banks Road, New Hope, 85 Connector, Kenwood Business Park, Tyrone Road, and Lester Road. He noted that Tyrone Road work was scheduled to start the next night and would create delays.

The in-house paving crew had recently completed work at the Lake Horton parking lot and also handled patching before contractor overlays, pavement preservation work, and water line repair restoration. Hot-in-place recycling had been used on Goza Road, Chanticleer subdivision, and County Line Court at a cost of about \$5.50 per square yard. Micro resurfacing, which the County used for about eight years, cost about \$6.49 per square yard and helped stretch road dollars.

Mr. Hoffman discussed HA5 high-density mineral bond, used mainly in subdivisions and low-volume roads, at about \$4.47 per square yard. He noted that only one company provided the product, and staff planned to evaluate whether the price point still made sense. Pavement rejuvenation cost about \$1.25 per square yard and had proven effective in a test on County Line Road. A newer treatment being tested cost about \$2.55 per square yard and would be placed on top of hot-in-place asphalt.

Mr. Hoffman also discussed full-depth reclamation, or FDR, which was the most expensive method at about \$42.76 per square yard. The County was using it on Bohannon, Bethea, and Flat Creek Trail where the road had little or no rock base. FlexGuard, a thin-lift asphalt product using a specific mix design with virgin material, cost about \$17.50 per square yard and represented a direction the asphalt industry was moving.

He also discussed a soil stabilization enzyme product tested on Mud Bridge Road and another product that slowed asphalt oxidation. Mr. Hoffman stated that the County shared knowledge with surrounding counties and cities and remained active with GDOT and pavement preservation organizations. He stated that the County planned approximately 45 miles of resurfacing, rebuilding, or pavement preservation work for the year. When asked about LMIG funds, he stated the County received about \$1.2 million and expected a similar amount the following year. The total cost of the 45 miles was estimated around \$4 million to \$5.5 million when hauling and other related costs were included.

### **Fayette Forward / Countywide PATH System**

Mr. Eric Dial with Fayette Forward presented the countywide PATH system update. He stated that a task force involving the cities, towns, and County staff was using data to determine path priorities. The scoring process considered schools, population centers, commercial centers, parks, and similar destinations.

Mr. Dial stated that Fayette County currently had approximately 140 miles of paths, including about 110 miles in Peachtree City. He said the goal was to connect Tyrone, Fayetteville, Peachtree City, and the County. The preferred standard was a 12-foot-wide concrete path because it allowed two golf carts or groups of pedestrians to pass safely and created a higher-quality long-term product.

Mr. Dial described the concept as a linear park with possible art, stop stations, seating, signage, bike repair stations, cart charging stations, and selective lighting. He stated that two-thirds of all trips were five miles or less, meaning many trips could be made by bike, golf cart, or on foot. He also stated that every dollar invested in path construction could generate local business revenue, sales tax, and health benefits, and that trails and paths were a major community amenity that could increase property values.

He said the goal was to help students access schools such as Fayette County High School and Sandy Creek, while also making lakes and parks stronger destinations. He reviewed examples of path designs, including natural areas, roadside paths, main street-style paths, gateway signage, art, furniture, and safety-related signage. He noted that lighting would not be used everywhere because of cost but could be helpful in some areas for safety.

Mr. Dial reviewed a countywide map and explained that existing paths, private-property proposed paths, and paths likely requiring grants, corporate dollars, SPLOST, or public-private partnerships were shown differently. He stated that the map was intended to identify where paths should go to reach important destinations such as schools and parks. He also said that feedback from residents, such as a suggestion for a path near State Route 92 and Ginger Cake Road, would help determine whether additional routes were feasible and how many population centers they would serve.

Mr. Rapson stated that path priorities needed to be coordinated with transportation planning because paths and roads competed for some of the same funding. He said the County needed shelf-ready path projects so that if private partners or other sources offered money, the County could quickly identify engineered projects ready for construction.

Mr. Dial thanked the Development Authority for helping launch the effort after the Bentonville trip in fall 2024.

### **Phillips Lake and Kosiak Dam Projects**

Mr. Mallon updated the Board on the Phillips Lake and Kosiak dam projects. He stated that the two Category 1 dams were located in the central part of the County and that the work was required by state law and regulations. He explained that bringing a dam into compliance could involve upgrading it, breaching it, or removing downstream risk.

Mr. Mallon stated that upgrading the dams had not been financially feasible, so the Board had previously directed staff to study a breach concept. For Kosiak, the upstream dam, the proposed breach would lower the dam height by about nine feet and eliminate the permanent pool. He noted that this was significant because when the County acquired the land, the property owner had been told there would still be a pool. If the County proceeded, staff would need to revisit that issue with the property owner.

The Kosiak plan would include a gradual berm, a trapezoidal channel, a new large box culvert under Neely Road, and needed improvements to Neely Road. The area would function like a large detention pond, filling after rain and then slowly draining.

For Phillips, Mr. Mallon stated that the County could not fully remove it from dam classification because the storage needed to control downstream flooding which would exceed the dam program thresholds. The plan would leave Longview Road largely as it was, with improved shoulders and asphalt, a large box culvert, and a concrete weir wall with trapezoidal shapes to control water flow. The lake would no longer remain full on dry days.

Mr. Mallon stated that the project budget was around \$5 million if the County could maintain the grant funding, though construction costs remained uncertain. Chairman Hearn asked whether Phillips would still be classified as a Category 1 dam, and Mr. Mallon said it would remain a dam and most likely a Category 1 dam, depending on the flood analysis. Mr. Mallon stated that the next step was to meet with the Safe Dams Program and confirm that the approach was acceptable before proceeding with design.

### **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Planning and Zoning Director Ms. Deborah Bell reviewed the five-year Comprehensive Plan update, which will be due in 2027. She stated that the update was required by the Department of Community Affairs but should also be viewed as an opportunity to assess changes in the County, including growth in the cities, the data center, the "software center," Trillith, road extensions, and the East Fayetteville Bypass.

Ms. Bell stated that staff hoped to begin the process in July. Before receiving RFP responses, she had estimated a possible cost of about \$250,000 based on other plans, and ARC staff independently confirmed that estimate. Four staff evaluators reviewed the responses and all selected the same preferred vendor. The recommended vendor was Inspire Placemaking Collective, an Atlanta-area planning firm. The proposal came in slightly under \$250,000.

Ms. Bell stated that the process would include data gathering, meetings, workshops, public hearings, and Department of Community Affairs review before adoption. The anticipated schedule was to begin in July and have a finished product ready for adoption by May of the following year, ahead of the June 30 deadline. She said she would ask the Board for recommendations for steering committee and stakeholder group members, including representatives from residential, business, development, industry, environmental, bike, walk, and path interests.

Mr. Rapson stated that staff was actively discussing a possible joint Comprehensive Plan process with Fayetteville. He said if Fayetteville participated, the cost could be shared, and the County would likely need an intergovernmental agreement with the city. Staff indicated that the issue would return on a future agenda.

## **AMI Project Update**

Water System Business Operations Manager Ms. Carrie Gibby and Water System Director Ms. Vanessa Tigert provided an AMI project update. Ms. Gibby stated that the Board had approved the project and that the Water System was about one year past the end of deployment. At the start of the project, the system had about 1,000 AMI meters, 30,890 drive-by meters, and 113 large meters with no electronic capability that required manual reads. The average meter age was more than 17 years.

After the project, the system had more than 33,000 cellular meters, 52 remaining drive-by meters, and no manual-read large meters. Ms. Tigert stated that the remaining drive-by meters had been reduced from close to 100 and represented the last difficult conversions. The average meter age was now about three years, which significantly improved accuracy.

Ms. Gibby stated that the main priorities of the AMI project were revenue recovery, operational efficiency, customer engagement, transparency, and streamlining the meter-to-cash process. She stated that from 2023 to 2025, water sales increased by 9.3%, which staff attributed in part to meters reading more accurately. She also stated that leak protection program adjustments had decreased because customers could identify leaks earlier.

The Water System sent an average of about 150 leak alerts per month, helping customers address leaks sooner and saving an estimated 3 million gallons of water. Approximately 3,200 accounts, or about 10% of the customer base, were registered in the EyeOnWater portal. Ms. Tigert stated that Badger Meter's national average usage rate was about 20%, and she hoped Fayette County could reach or exceed that level.

Chairman Hearn described receiving a call from the Water System warning him of suspected water use between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. He discovered a toilet or bathroom fixture running and said the alert would likely save him about 10,000 gallons of water that otherwise would not have been noticed until the next bill.

Ms. Gibby stated that the system had 99% communication health. At the time staff ran the report, there were 87 endpoint tamper issues, which could result from something like a vehicle parked over a meter and often resolved on its own.

Mr. Rapson stated that AMI had changed the Water System's customer service model because staff could now notify customers of problems before customers knew they existed.

Commissioner Rousseau left the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

**Animal Shelter Phase 2-** Project Manager Mr. Tim Symonds and Animal Control Director Ms. Tracy Thompson reviewed Animal Shelter Phase 2. Mr. Symonds reminded the Board that Phase 1, the new animal shelter building, had been completed the previous year. Phase 2 was planned behind the existing building and included a new rectangular kennel building, a large-animal barn, outdoor areas, open kennel areas, and a walking trail around the property.

Mr. Symonds stated that the building plan included 24 kennels and a barn area for larger animals. The design was described as fairly simple and straightforward, with the roof extending over the kennel areas to provide cover.

He stated that the architectural and civil design had progressed, and the County received the land disturbance permit from Peachtree City in February. MEJA had been appointed as construction manager at risk in January and had developed the guaranteed maximum price. The proposed project cost was \$3.372 million.

Mr. Symonds stated that the project had about \$1.9 million in available funding, leaving a shortfall of approximately \$1.5 million. Mr. Rapson explained that staff planned to recommend allocating \$1.5 million in one-time revenue to fully fund the project when the budget was transmitted on May 21. The project was expected to come before the Board for approval on May 28.

If approved, staff hoped to begin work around late June, with completion targeted for February 2027.

Mr. Rapson stated that the goal was to fully fund the building and Phase 2 improvements rather than leave the project short and require fundraising.

Ms. Thompson stated that animal advocates were supportive as long as the County kept moving forward.

Mr. Rapson also stated that the M&O budget had been adjusted to better fund medical needs and that the animal sterilization fund had been reduced to zero as part of those changes.

### **Public Safety Radio System**

911 Director Ms. Katye Vogt reviewed the Public Safety Radio System, which was a 2017 SPLOST project. She stated that the initial contract was approved in November 2018. The project added three tower sites, for a total of 10 tower sites. The contract not-to-exceed amount was \$14.9 million, and the contingency fund was \$2.75 million.

Ms. Vogt stated that staff had worked to improve audio quality through an overall system subscriber update. Municipalities brought in their radios for review, and staff checked antennas and other radio issues so they could distinguish between equipment problems and system coverage issues. She said the process also provided training and helped users learn more about their radios.

She stated that staff implemented a feature request to address concerns that dispatch was keying up over field units. The system was adjusted so field units normally had priority, but dispatch could press one button to become priority when urgent information or a call needed to be transmitted.

Ms. Vogt also discussed ES Chat, a push-to-talk product that allowed chiefs and other users outside Fayette County to connect to the radio system through a cellular device. Users could monitor and transmit through the app anywhere they had cellular service. She said it had been popular with administrators and was less expensive than a radio, making it useful as a backup option.

The radio system tested at 87% coverage in 2024, while the contract goal was 95%. At the time of the update, coverage had improved to 94%. Ms. Vogt explained that the county was divided into a grid for testing, and 95% of the grid had to meet the minimum standards set by the contract.

To improve coverage, the County moved Willow Bend equipment in Peachtree City from a site behind the library to the Huddleston Road tower, which was on higher ground. This improved coverage in Peachtree City. Staff also added a tower at Commerce to address issues in the northeast corner of the County, and both sites were online. Microwave realignment had been completed.

Ms. Vogt stated that staff was finalizing antenna upgrades and tower vendor work and would bring updated leases to the Board when ready. The timeline depended on successful antenna changeovers, and staff hoped to complete work toward the end of 2026, though coverage testing requirements could push the timeline into 2027.

She also stated that a subscriber maintenance program would be implemented, possibly with the radio shop coming to the County once a month so agencies could bring radios needing work. Staff also planned to enable and test encryption, complete system acceptance testing, test operational functionality, verify system components, test backup and failure mitigation, and conduct final coverage acceptance testing.

After the radio system update, Mr. Rapson called for a five-minute break.

The meeting recessed at 2:40 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:50 a.m.

### **Tactical Driving Course**

Project Manager Mr. Tim Symonds provided an update on the Tactical Driving Course and stated that the project had been discussed since around 2019, when he, Sheriff Barry Babb, and Mr. Steve Rapson visited Bowling Green, Kentucky, while first considering the concept. Mr. Symonds stated that McElroy completed Phase 1 of the project in the fourth quarter of 2024, and Piedmont Paving completed Phase 2 in July of the following year.

Mr. Symonds explained that Phase 2 included the inner loop, wider PIT boxes, a viewing tower, additional gates, and guardrails to support vehicle training. He stated that the viewing tower had been moved from its originally planned location to provide better

visibility of the course. The total project cost was approximately \$4.9 million, with McElroy's portion costing about \$2.5 million and Piedmont's portion costing a similar amount. About \$700,000 remained in project funding.

Mr. Symonds showed aerial views of the completed work and explained that Phase 2 had been added partly because Phase 1 left too many trees in the way for training maneuvers. He described the completed viewing tower as a stacked-box structure with an internal staircase, windows, heating and air conditioning, storage space, and a nearby fuel tank.

Sheriff Barry Babb stated that the Tactical Driving Course and training academy had been a "total game changer." He said the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council had evaluated the facility when reviewing Fayette County's approval as a regional academy and had commented that no other agency in the state had a similar footprint. Sheriff Babb stated that the academy would help the County recruit, train, and retain qualified officers.

Mr. Rapson noted that the first vehicle had already been totaled at the facility during training by another agency, but Sheriff Babb stated that no one was injured and that the guardrails existed for that reason.

Mr. Symonds stated that the remaining funds could potentially be used for additional improvements, including a mock village, firing range work, and a new roof for the training academy, because the existing roof was more than 30 years old and had only been repaired when the academy building was first prepared in 2019.

County Clerk, Ms. Tameca Smith, noted that the third academy graduation was scheduled for the following day and included Chief Hill from the Fire Department, who would become POST certified.

Mr. Rapson thanked Chief Hill and acknowledged the significance of that certification.

### **Fire and Emergency Services Training Center**

Mr. Tim Symonds then reviewed the Fire and Emergency Services Training Center, located next to the Sheriff's Training Academy. He stated that the facility was intended to provide a strong training location for Fire and Emergency Services recruits and personnel.

Mr. Symonds explained that the training center included several components: a classroom building of just under 10,000 square feet, a five-story steel fire training tower, an underground pump test system for fire engines, a low-pressure gas tank simulator, a vehicle extraction area, and a driver training area with a large concrete surface for apparatus training.

He stated that the classroom building included one large room that could be divided into two classrooms, a smaller room that could also be divided, offices, a break room, and an apparatus bay that could accommodate two pieces of equipment for training. He described the facility as a strong addition to the County's public safety training area.

Mr. Symonds also reviewed the fire training tower and stated that concrete issues in the burn area had been addressed by installing fire bricks to prevent future cracking or spalling. He explained that the project had been split into two major components: McElroy handled grading and concrete work, while MEJA built the training center, erected the burn tower, and completed the remaining work.

The total cost of the Fire and Emergency Services Training Center was approximately \$9.1 million. About \$140,000 remained for possible future improvements. Mr. Symonds stated that one possible improvement was expanding parking, because staff believed the original parking lot was not large enough. Other potential improvements included fencing, additional landscaping, gate repairs, and better security features. He noted that a grant application had already been submitted for perimeter fencing, which would help separate the site from wildlife activity and provide better separation if the East Fayetteville Bypass moved forward nearby.

Mr. Rapson stated that part of the one-time revenue discussion included approximately \$2 million for EMS. He said he had asked staff to prioritize possible improvements at the training center for EMS and Fire so those improvements could be considered.

### **Community Health Building**

Mr. Tim Symonds then reviewed the Community Health Building project at the former East Fayette Elementary School. He stated that the original school building had been constructed in the 1950s and that even the youngest building on the site was at least 25 years old. The site included a gymnasium and several attached or associated outbuildings.

Mr. Symonds stated that the building had not been in strong condition when the County acquired it. It had aging drainage and roofing systems and had primarily been used by the Board of Education as a storage facility. He said the building had been filled with many stored items, which made the project challenging.

Mr. Symonds explained that the County recovered the roof rather than fully replacing it. That work was completed around the summer of 2025. He identified the rear building as the space occupied by McIntosh Trail, the mental health provider, which also operated a daycare-type program and used a large training room at the back of the site. Another small building near the parking lot was used by Emergency Preparedness for storage.

The rest of the building was divided among Public Health, Environmental Health, Emergency Preparedness, WIC, and the Coroner's Office.

Mr. Symonds stated that MEJA had been appointed as construction manager at risk with a guaranteed maximum price of \$10.979 million. MEJA started in December 2023, asbestos remediation was completed, and construction began in January 2024. The County received a certificate of occupancy on December 18, and the Department of Health moved in during January 2025. The roof recovery work was completed in May 2025.

Mr. Symonds stated that he had originally expected the project to use contingency quickly because of the building's poor condition, but the project team performed well and saved money. The project returned just under \$1 million to the budget, even after completing the roof recovery that had not originally been planned.

Mr. Rapson thanked Mr. Symonds and stated that the County had him to thank for the health building, animal control work, and the training facilities.

### **Citizen Workshop Update**

County Clerk Ms. Tameca Smith provided an update on the Citizen Workshop and discussed plans for the next program. She proposed extending the program by adding two additional weeks to allow more time for topics and to improve the experience for participants.

Ms. Smith stated that feedback from the prior program had been positive. Participants enjoyed the program, the topics, and especially the food. She said participants identified several topics they wanted to see added, including County department services related to seniors and mental health, the Health Department, the Tax Commissioner, and possibly someone from the TAG office.

Ms. Smith stated that she planned to reach out to the Health Department and related agencies located in the Community Health Building to see if they could participate. She also planned to add an administration week that would cover the County Clerk's Office, Administration, and the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Smith also proposed adding a capstone-type project so attendees could reflect on what they learned and demonstrate the outcome of their experience. The County would then recognize participants at a Board of Commissioners meeting, as it had done previously.

The next Citizen Workshop was planned to begin in September. The proposed time remained 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., which had worked well for participants. Ms. Smith stated that the previous workshop had been scheduled for about 35 participants, reached around 30 at one point, and had about 20 to 21 people attend each session consistently. She thanked all departments for helping make the program successful.

### **Commissioner Topics and Retreat Closing**

Mr. Rapson stated that the next part of the program was reserved for commissioner topics and noted that it had been advertised that way, even though it was not visible on the printed agenda.

Ms. Smith clarified that the item had been posted on the website agenda but had shifted on the printed version.

Mr. Rapson invited commissioners to raise any topics they wanted staff to review or any issues that had not been covered during the retreat. No additional major commissioner topics were raised.

Mr. Rapson then thanked Ms. Tameca Smith, Deputy Clerk Marlana Edwards, staff, department heads, and commissioners for helping organize and participating in the retreat. He stated that the retreat had been kept to one day because staff wanted pointed direction from the Board, and he believed staff had received the direction needed.

Mr. Rapson acknowledged that staff had worked under tight deadlines and thanked everyone for their contributions.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Rapson concluded the 2026 Retreat.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to adjourn the May 13, 2026 Retreat. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 4-0. Commissioner Rousseau was absent.

The May 13, 2026 Board Retreat adjourned at approximately 3:36 p.m.

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Marlana Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk

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Lee Hearn, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of June 2026. Attachments are available on request at the County Clerk's Office.