

Jackson County Board of Commissioners Called Meeting

August 6, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Kevin C. Poe Meeting Room

MINUTES

1. Call to Order - Chairman Marty Clark

Chairman Marty Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Marty Clark
Commissioner Jim Hix, District 1
Commissioner Chas Hardy, District 2
Commissioner Ty Clack, District 3
Commissioner Marty Seagraves, District 4
Commissioner Cole Elrod, District 5

Staff Present: Kevin Poe, County Manager
Gina Roy, Assistant County Manager
Kevin McCook, Sheriff
Alisha Gamble, Finance Director
Jamie Dove, Public Development Manager
Bryan Bullock, EMA Director
Ericka Johnson, Deputy Clerk

Press: Mike Buffington, Mainstreet News/Jackson Herald

Chairman Marty Clark announced receipt of County Manager Kevin Poe's retirement letter. He expressed his appreciation for Poe's years of service to the county, acknowledging his contributions to the community and extended best wishes for his future endeavors.

2. New Business

A. Revisions to the Jackson County Government - Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Present an overview of revisions to the HR policies and procedures

Susan Lee, Human Resources Director, presented an update on the Jackson County Human Resources Policy and Procedure. It was last updated in 2020. She stated that best management practices recommend reviewing and updating the document every five to seven years. The proposed revisions have been reviewed by county management and the county attorney. The updated policies will be brought to the board for approval at a future meeting. Ms. Lee outlined the following notable changes:

1. **Payroll Procedures:** Removed outdated time card references, clarified use of electronic timekeeping

2. **Identification Badge Policy:** Updated to reflect new building-wide security requirements for all employees
3. **Probationary Period and Promotions:** Allows employees to be promoted or transferred to departments before completing the six-month probationary period, if qualified
4. **Leave Payout for Early Termination:** Clarified that accrued general leave will not be paid out to employees who separate prior to the six-month eligibility period
5. **County Property Return:** Authorized withholding pay (down to minimum wage) if county property is not returned upon separation
6. **Inclement Weather:** Clarifies options on whether to pay employees or provide equivalent time off, based on department budget
7. **Tuition Reimbursement:** Reiterated it is a reimbursement (not advance) program, up to \$5,000/year, staff will require proof of payment, including for loans and/or grants
8. **Federal Law Compliance:** Updates language to align with new federal requirements for accommodations related to pregnancy, nursing mothers, and infertility treatments. The county was already following these practices.

B. Update on Emergency Preparedness in Jackson County

Provide an update on emergency preparedness in Jackson County.

Bryan Bullock, EMA Director, provided an update on county emergency preparedness efforts. He introduced EMA Coordinator Heather Forrester and noted ongoing hiring efforts for a Radio System Coordinator. Bullock outlined EMA's three primary functions: preparedness, communications, and continuity of government. He emphasized the importance of coordination of resources during a disaster and the connection to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) for assistance.

He discussed lessons learned from deployments to disaster-affected counties in South Georgia and highlighted the importance of establishing a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) comprised of local businesses and government leaders to assist with hazardous materials preparedness and community awareness. Bullock also noted the recent update to the county's Hazardous Mitigation Plan.

C. Update - Jackson County Sheriff's Office & Jail

Sheriff McCook will give a departmental update on the Sheriff's Office and Jail departments.

Sheriff Kevin McCook addressed the board, introducing key staff members involved in the budget process, including Cheryl Davis, Assistant, Jeff Bray, Chief Deputy, Trent Wilson, Finance Manager, and Captain Jody Seabolt, School Resource Officer. He expressed appreciation to the board, County Manager Kevin Poe, Assistant County Manager Gina Roy, and their staff for their efforts in supporting the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff McCook noted the ongoing challenges of staffing needs, emphasizing the necessity of being intentional about adding positions to address operational demands. He cited recent incidents relating to the transport of an inmate to a hospital, a high-profile courthouse case requiring additional security, and patrol shortages. These provided illustrations regarding the strain on resources. He closed by reiterating his gratitude to the board and staff.

D. Unified Development Code (UDC) Changes

Public Development Director Jamie Dove will review proposed changes to the Unified Development Code (UDC)

Public Development Jamie Dove provided an update on ongoing work related to amendments to the Unified Development Code (UDC). Staff are continuing work on agr-hood and data center code provisions. Upcoming proposed changes will include new definitions to aid in land use classification and to assist code enforcement operations. A "repeat offender" provision is being developed for inclusion in the code enforcement section to address instances where a citation is issued for the same violation twice within 60 days.

The staff are also reviewing regulations for car washes and convenience stores. Board members were provided a chart showing current zoning allowances for these uses, which are currently permitted outright in most commercial and industrial districts. A revised chart was provided with recommendations for more selective permitting, potentially requiring a special use permit. The commission was invited to review the material and discuss any feedback with staff.

E. BOC FY2026 Budget Planning Review

To review the proposed FY2026 Budget

County Manager Kevin Poe commended staff members Gina Roy, Alisha Gamble, Jamie Dove, and Kenneth Morris for their exceptional work in preparing the FY2026 budget. He noted the smooth transition of budget preparation duties in light of his pending retirement and he praised the team for successfully learning and implementing a new budgeting platform while completing the process. Poe expressed confidence in their capabilities moving forward.

Finance Director Alisha Gamble provided an overview of the new ClearGov budget software. She explained that by year-end, a public transparency portal will be launched, allowing citizens to access up to ten (10) years of financial data, view an interactive budget book down to the departmental level, and even track strategic goals. The system will also feature a capital projects module, enabling the public to follow each project from planning to completion, including photos and timelines.

Assistant County Manager Gina Roy presented the FY2026 proposed budget. For 2025, the millage rate was 6.748 mills for the incorporated areas and 5.371 for the unincorporated areas. This represented a 2.0 mill rollback reduction. The recommended General Fund budget totaled over \$96 million dollars, representing a \$4.8 million increase from the prior year. All funds combined reflected a \$10 million dollar increase from FY2025. This was attributable to capital improvements, Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA), and projected health insurance projections. Key highlights included a proposed 5% COLA for employees, a projected 12% increase in health insurance costs, and \$11.6 million allocated for capital projects with an \$800,000 contingency designated for recommended additional projects.

Major initiatives involved the new EMS facility, SPLOST 7 projects, and continued debt services for the county's radio system until 2031. Ms. Roy also outlined efforts to centralize expenditures for IT, facility maintenance, and contracted services for pest control, landscaping, and turf management. The Unassigned General Fund Balance at the end of FY2025 was \$30,428,196, which met the reserve requirement of maintaining at least 25% of annual expenditures. Personnel recommendations included fifteen (15) new deputies for the Sheriff's Office, two (2) Facility Maintenance positions for Parks and Recreation beginning in the fourth quarter in preparation for the opening of New Kings Bridge Park and converting a part-time equipment operator for Solid Waste to full-time.

Ms. Roy reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan, which totaled \$26.3 million. She

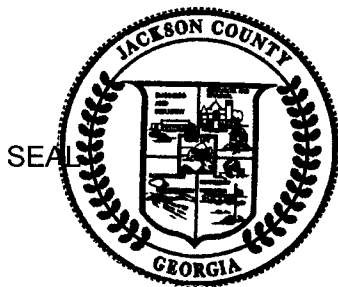
noted it covered FY2026 projects with some funding projections already extending into FY2027 - FY2030. She also reviewed department changes in the FY2026 proposed budget. She reported the transfer of the Capital Projects Manager's salary and benefits from the County Manager's budget to the Engineering/Project Management budget. In Finance, maintenance contracts increased to support the ClearGov platform, while UKG payroll expenses decreased due to shared operations and maintenance costs now split between Human Resources (HR) and Payroll. HR's budget reflected this as well as a mandated state requirement to provide PTSD therapy options for public safety personnel.

Ms. Roy also noted a reduction in BOC contingencies following last year's one-time \$2 million contribution to the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan, which this year's allocation included a \$1.5 million transfer to the medical insurance fund. IT capital spending increased while operating expenses declined as hardware costs were reclassified. The Sheriff's Office budget included fifteen new positions; the Jail's budget increased to address inmate medical services, 24/7 care, and on-call doctor services. Criminal Investigations experienced a slight operating increase due to full staffing.

Court budgets increased to meet rising indigent defense and interpreter service needs, reflecting demographic changes. Facility Maintenance saw a significant increase due to consolidation of building operations, pest control, and maintenance services under umbrella contracts. The Keep Jackson County Beautiful program's financial management was moved from Public Development to the Transfer Station for improved coordination, while staffing remains under Public Development. Ms. Roy closed by officially reporting that the proposed General Fund budget was \$96.8 million, balanced between revenues and expenditures. The first budget public hearing will be held on Monday, September 8, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. in the Kevin C. Poe Meeting Room in the Jackson County Administrative Building. The second budget public hearing will be held on Monday, September 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

3. Adjournment

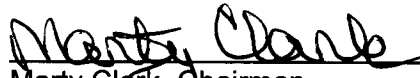
Chairman Marty Clark adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

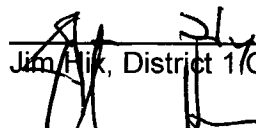


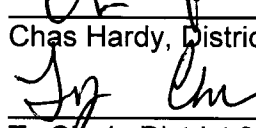
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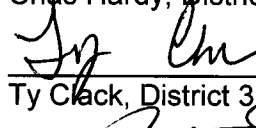
Ericka Johnson, Deputy Clerk

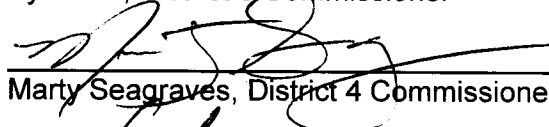
Jackson County Board of Commissioners
Approved: August 18, 2025

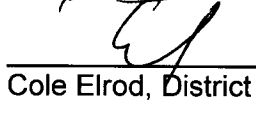

Marty Clark, Chairman


Jim Hix, District 1 Commissioner


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