

## **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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



## **FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA**

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

140 Stonewall Avenue West  
Public Meeting Room  
Fayetteville, GA 30214

## **MINUTES**

January 9, 2025  
5:00 p.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.

### **OATH OF OFFICE:**

**Probate Court Judge Angela Landgaard to administer the Loyalty Oath and Official Oath of County Commissioner of the State of Georgia to Commissioner-Elect Lee Hearn.**

Judge Angela Landgaard administered the Loyalty Oath and Official Oath of County Commissioner of the State of Georgia to Commissioner-Elect Lee Hearn.

**Probate Court Judge Angela Landgaard to administer the Loyalty Oath and Official Oath of County Commissioner of the State of Georgia to Commissioner-Elect Charles Oddo.**

Judge Angela Landgaard administered the Loyalty Oath and Official Oath of County Commissioner of the State of Georgia to Commissioner-Elect Charles Oddo.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION:**

#### **Call to Order by County Attorney Dennis Davenport**

County Attorney Dennis Davenport called the January 9, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting to order. He stated that in accordance with Section 252 of the Fayette County Code of Ordinance, he had the duty and responsibility to open the first meeting of the year.

#### **Election of Board Chairman for the year 2025**

Mr. Davenport stated the process for election of the Chair of the Board. He opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Edward Gibbons nominated Commissioner Lee Hearn as Chairman.

Commissioner Eric Maxwell moved to close the nominations for Chair. Commissioner Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner Gibbons moved to elect Lee Hearn as Chairman. Commissioner Maxwell seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Davenport turned the meeting over to Chairman Hearn.

#### **Election of Board Vice Chairman for the year 2025**

Commissioner Hearn opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Maxwell nominated Edward Gibbons as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Charles Oddo moved to close the nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Maxwell seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner Oddo moved to elect Edward Gibbons as Vice Chairman. Commissioner Maxwell seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

### **OFFICIAL SESSION:**

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

Commissioner Charles Rousseau offered the Invocation and led the audience in the Pledge.

#### **Acceptance of Agenda**

Chairman Hearn moved to add, to the Consent Agenda, the following:

Approval of authorization to sign checks combining any of the following two signatures for transactions at or above \$5,000.00: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, County Administrator.

Approval of authorization to sign checks for transactions in the amount of \$4,999.99 or less: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, County Administrator.

Approval of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and the County Administrator to execute contracts, resolutions, agreements, or other documents approved by and on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Oddo moved to accept the agenda with the added items as read. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

### **PROCLAMATION/RECOGNITION:**

#### **1. Recognition of the Fayette County Merry Wreath Decorating Contest winners.**

County Administrator Steve Rapson recognized the winners of the 2024 Merry Wreath Decorating Contest. Third Place - Assessor's Office; Second Place – Information Technology; First Place – Public Works Department.

Public Works Director Phil Mallon accepted on behalf of Public Works. He thanked Mr. Rapson and the Board, stating that it was a fun activity, and it brought different people within the departments, that did not get to work together, a chance to work together and show their creativity. He thanked Leslie, Paola, the Sign Department, Fleet and the Road department.

#### **2. Presentation for discussion related to HB 581, Statewide Floating Homestead Exemption and Floating Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST), and the impacts to Fayette County.**

Finance Officer Sheryl Weinmann gave a presentation regarding House Bill 581. She stated that in 2024 the legislative session decided there were issues in rising property values, assessments and increase in property taxes. The legislators wanted to control the increases in property taxes and to expand sales tax options. Ms. Weinmann stated that the Bill was signed on April 18, 2024, however, it was contingent on the November 5 referendum that added the section for local government to opt out of the exemption and to give the option of a floating local option sales tax (FLOST). The voters voted and the law passed and became effective on January 1, 2025. There are some portions of the Bill that did not directly impact Fayette County. Ms. Weinmann presented the portions pertaining to Fayette County.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations are available for those who are hearing impaired. The Board of Commissioners Agenda and supporting material for each item is available on-line through the County's website at [www.fayettecountyga.gov](http://www.fayettecountyga.gov). This meeting will be telecast on Comcast Cable Channel 23 and on the internet at <https://vimeo.com/user133262656>.

House Bill 581 implemented a statewide floating homestead exemption for all governments, cities, counties and school boards. She stated that the floating homestead exemption would adjust each year to bring the market value to the taxable value of a home which included a CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflationary adjustment. This was not a freeze. A freeze was a type of homestead, but it did not have the inflationary adjustment as HB 581. The inflationary adjustment would be determined by the Department of Revenue and was provided on December 30. The adjustment was as high as 8% in 2022 and as low as 1.2% in 2020. Ms. Weinmann gave an example of how HB 581 would work. The tax bill in 2025 will be based on the 2024 taxable value and multiplied by the millage rate. She stated that the only way the property bill would change in 2025 was if the millage rate changed. She explained that the market value was determined by the Assessor's Office and the taxable value was determined by the CPI shown in the presentation. Through the example, it showed that it would probably cause pressure on the millage rate as time progressed.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked if the County's cost increased by 10%, but the revenue opportunity from property taxes only went up by 2%, then the County would have a shortfall.

Ms. Weinmann stated that was correct. She stated that it would likely cause an upward motion on the millage rate in the future. She stated that this was a benefit to those who stayed in their homes longer, rather than for those who sold their homes.

Chairman Hearn stated that there was a sense of fairness that he was missing and if the State Representatives had an explanation for the unfairness, he would like to hear it. He stated that he was told that if the County needed additional revenue, the Board could go up on the millage rate.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that with the scenarios given in the examples, it was in essence a \$40 savings to citizens that would negatively impact the school system, fuel for buses, electricity, and paying teachers fairly. These things continue to rise.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the School Board implemented something about three years ago and unfortunately theirs was based on the 2017 values, so they are getting even less.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that the delegation pushed that years ago to cap the school, one of our most valuable resources. He stated that schools were behind in respect to student achievement. Fayette County still had a very good rate, but other urban centers and communities suffer, all for a \$40 savings. He asked if governing authorities had the option to opt-in or opt-out. He asked if it could be overridden if a jurisdiction decided to opt-out.

Ms. Weinmann stated that there was a possibility that the jurisdiction could be overridden. She stated that the jurisdiction could come up with its own floating homestead referendum or the state legislators, that created HB 581, could enforce it.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that the delegation should have offered town hall meetings to explain this Bill and the long-term impact.

Mr. Rapson stated that this was a residential issue and did not impact commercial and industrial properties. He stated that it was not just the General Fund that would be impacted but the Fire, 911, and EMS which have historically been excluded from these calculations.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the homestead floating exemption would apply to all millage rates. The only one not impacted was if the County had a bond millage, which it did not. She stated that if a citizen was getting the floating exemption in 2025, the base year would be the 2024 value, unless a home received exemptions in later years, such as a purchase, then the base year would be the prior year value when it sold. The existing \$5,000 homestead exemption was not affected by HB 581, and it would be

included after the floating homestead was completed. Note: Homestead exemptions are not transferable unless it is a surviving spouse.

Ms. Weinmann continued the presentation. She stated that if the government elected to opt-out they must advertise and conduct three public hearings between January 1 and February 28, a resolution must be submitted to the Secretary of State by March 1, and if a government opted-out, there was no future opportunity to opt back in. However, there was an opportunity to come up with a different exemption. The local delegation can pass a local act of the General Assembly to implement its own local floating homestead, and each municipality and school board can decide to opt in or out separately. She stated that if the city opted-out, then the resident would have a different set of values. One for the county and one for the city.

Ms. Weinmann explained there were two changes. One revised the increased percentage of the local sales tax that a jurisdiction may levy and the other created the possibility of a new local options sales tax, contingent on the jurisdiction having a base year homestead value. She stated that the jurisdiction would have to "stay in" to take advantage of the next part.

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated that the legislators have imposed a cap on property tax assessments by local governments.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the cap was on the taxable value. This meant the Assessors were not limited to assessing a real market value. She did not want anyone to think that it capped the market value because it did not.

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated that essentially local governments were no longer relying on cost-of-living increases that go up or assessment values that go up because of good things happening in the community. The legislators have left the County with the option to levy a 1% sales tax on the citizens which was "absolutely regressive".

Ms. Weinmann stated yes, however, in this instance the 1% sales tax was not to make up for the money the County would lose. If the County decided to opt-in and do the FLOST (the 1% sales tax), then the money would go toward reducing the millage rate on the bill. The citizen would be getting an even lower tax bill. For example, the County would collect \$10M but would have to adjust the millage rate to reduce the property tax bill by \$10M.

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated, so the County would tell the voters we are lowering the property tax a little but implement a 1% sales tax. He sarcastically stated, "Oh, ok. Great. Thanks."

Ms. Weinmann stated that the FLOST could be a-half-percent or a full one percent and in order to move forward with the FLOST, the County and all the cities within the county must agree to have the floating homestead exemption and must have a property tax millage rate. The School Board's choice to opt-out would not matter because they would not be part of the FLOST collections. She stated that the Cities and County must enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) which would be distributed with the same percentages as the SPLOST (Special Local Option Sales Tax) and LOST (Local Option Sales Tax), the duration would be five years, and the IGA would include how it would be allocated. It would also have to go on a ballot. She reiterated that FLOST proceeds were not to be used to make up loss revenues for local governments. This, in no way, would be used to make up for loss due to the floating homestead.

The estimated rollback rate was new. Ms. Weinmann stated that it would have to be on the assessment bills that went out to residents in May. She stated that the calculation would be the estimated rollback rate, less (-) the millage rate equivalent of the total net assessed value and added (+) by reassessments. She stated that this was asking the County to make a "guesstimate" in May. If the adopted millage rate, approved in August, exceeded what was placed on the assessment, then the County would have to include a disclaimer on the tax bill of the increase in the taxes owed, because the County had a millage rate that was lower than what was approved. It also removed the provision that the sale prices were the maximum allowable fair market value in the next taxable year because the tax was the CPI. It also made changes to the appeal process, modified the three-year lock

statue so taxpayers can only receive an appeal benefit if they received a value reduction. This was designed to prevent frivolous appeals. It would remove the tax estimate from the assessment notice, require every parcel in the county be appraised every three years, which the County's appraisals take place every year, and if the taxpayer did not participate in good faith, then the taxpayer would not get the 15% temporary reduction in millage rate.

Ms. Weinmann showed a sample assessment notice for informational purposes. She stated that HB 581 rewarded homeowners that resided in the community for a long period after implementation. The taxable value, multiplied by the millage rate, provided the property tax revenue to meet local budgets and service delivery to citizens. She stated that with these changes it may not. Since the floating homestead exemption showed the growth and value for residential homestead properties, it would create upward pressure on the millage rate due to loss revenue. FLOST was an option and not required, it was not available if the County or any municipalities opt-out and it would affect all millage rates.

Commissioner Oddo stated that this applied mainly to residential properties and not the commercial or industrial properties. He asked if the County could only have one millage rate.

Ms. Weinmann stated that there are different millage rates for Fire, EMS, 911.

Commissioner Oddo stated excluding those.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the millage rate would be the same for everyone. The residential had the floating homestead so the taxable value would be less so commercial would not be reduced. She stated that however, if the County did the FLOST there would be a reduction in the millage rate and the commercial properties would be included and receive the benefits of the FLOST collections.

Commissioner Rousseau asked why we did not change the millage rate in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Ms. Weinmann stated that the Board did not change the millage rate because of the demand for public safety and public safety salary increases.

Commissioner Oddo stated that there could be a situation where the residential values could not be adjusted more than 3%, but commercial could go up. He stated that the millage rate could affect businesses and commercial and create a situation where there was a lot of animosity between the commercial establishments and residential. He stated that the Board had to find a balance.

Mr. Rapson stated that if there was a 10% increase, then the commercial / industrial properties would fill that increase associated with a higher millage rate if there was an adjustment for residential because it would impact everyone the same.

Ms. Weinmann stated that it did not make up for the loss revenue. She stated that if the House Bill did not exist, the County would receive the additional money from residential and commercial.

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated that he wanted to echo the point, he believed Commissioner Rousseau was making about 2020, 2021 and 2022. The potential increase in property taxes was governed by the CPI. He stated that there are other inflationary pressures that are placed on local governments, like recruitment and retention of public safety, that could also drive-up cost, not associated with CPI.

Commissioner Rousseau stated service delivery strategies. How will local government serve the citizens?

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated absolutely. The inflationary pressures exist outside of what the government says are the CPI and the County must provide funds to recruit and retain employees for services our citizens expect.

Mr. Rapson stated that the Bill was pushing the County back to the 2024 digest. When it was first released it was going to be pushed back two or three years before 2024. He stated that it would have immediately created a situation for the County that the School Board was in, which was an inflationary reduction in what they can do, and the solution to let teachers go, for the County it would have been letting employees go.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that our children are getting ready to suffer and have teachers dealing with larger classroom sizes. For a \$40 savings. Five Starbucks coffees.

Commissioner Oddo stated that the County would be manipulating how revenues would come in, but it would not change how the expenses come. He stated that there will be a lot of counties that will have to raise millage rates, and the taxpayers will be upset, when in reality, the expense had to be covered one way or another.

Mr. Rapson stated that this was taking something that had been complicated and made it extremely complicated. The Assessor's Office will have to track individual sales as well as timings. He stated that now residents, at homeowner's association meetings, can no longer talk about their property tax bills because they may be radically different from their neighbors if they have been in their home for a while.

He stated that staff was not recommending to opt-out, but if the Board wanted to do something there was a very limited timeframe to do so. He stated that if there was something the Board wanted to do it needed to happen quickly.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that he heard it two ways. The will of the voters have spoken, and the Board needed to respect it. He stated that he was not sure that the voters were properly educated about the vote. He stated that the Board had the opportunity to have three public hearings to evaluate what the Board wanted to do as a body. He stated that a decision needed to be made because of the short window. He stated that he did not hear any projections. He did not know if the Board wanted to entertain a motion for public hearings.

Commissioner Oddo stated that the legislators can make the County do this. If there was a reasonable situation where the Board decided to opt-out and stay opted-out, he would entertain it.

Chairman Hearn stated that he would like some time to digest this information and reach out to some of his colleagues in other counties and then direct staff on what direction to take.

No vote was taken.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

*Speakers will be given a five (5) minute maximum time limit to speak before the Board of Commissioners about various topics, issues, and concerns. Speakers must direct comments to the Board. Responses are reserved at the discretion of the Board.*

Lotta Commerford, Alexa St. Julien, Alice Jones, State Representative Derrick Jackson, Steve Sappington, Laura Line, Elaine Kilgore, Mariam, and Paul made comments of various topics to include, conditions at the Fayette County Animal Shelter, working together as a community, the passing of Charles Persons, taxes, the impact HB 581, zoning code changes, changing the Board meeting time, and increasing the number of members on the Election Board.

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Commissioner Maxwell stated he wanted to make a few comments. He apologized that Representative Jackson was not recognized in the previous comments. He stated that he happened to see him, but he did not jump in to say anything to Chairman Hearn, and he should have. He stated that he did not think the Chairman intended to exclude Representative Jackson.

He addressed Steve Sappington, who made comments. He stated that he received his email and spoke to the County Administrator. He stated that he thought it was an awful position he was in, and he wished there was an administrative way to fix the problem. He continued that he thought the amendment was creating a huge problem and that it would impact all five acre lots that would turn into nonconforming lots. He questioned why the Board was not informed that Mr. Sappington was so far along in the project. He stated that he did not have a clue and next time he would ask questions. He liked the suggestion to have projects this far along, grandfathered in. He stated that next time he would ask the county attorney about grandfathering the project in. He stated that he could make a motion that the start date would not go into effect until a certain number of days. He stated that he thought the Board put Mr. Sappington in a horrible position. He stated that he would support a motion to help Mr. Sappington out.

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated that he did not think that everyone understood the ramifications of what Commissioner Maxwell was asking the Board to do. The unintended consequences.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that Mr. Sappington had maps drawn and he did not know how much money had been placed in the project and this Board changed the ordinance that had a dramatic impact to his project. He stated that he did not think that was the intent of the Board.

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated that it was not, and he did not appreciate being put on the spot particularly. He stated that Commissioner Maxwell was asking the Board to consider this without any staff analysis on what the impact might be. He stated that he would love to help Mr. Sappington but he did not appreciate being put on the spot.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that it was easy to fix for Mr. Sappington.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that he did not agree. He stated that was "singular" and he did not operate on singular issues such as this.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that he did what he could, and he thought Mr. Sappington was in a terrible position.

The Board agreed.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that the decision of the Board was made based on staff recommendations. He stated that the Board only voted on the information that was before the Board. He stated that it was unfair to suggest that the Board put staff in a predicament.

Chairman Hearn asked Mr. Rapson and the County Attorney Davenport if there was an alternate way to handle this. He stated that he was not asking for an answer at this moment.

Mr. Davenport stated that there was nothing the Board could do prior to the meeting date of the Zoning Board of Appeals on February 24.

Mr. Rapson stated that staff did look at alternatives to see if he could be grandfathered in and it was not.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that was what his email response suggested. "Where was this in the process?" He stated that he was open to the conversation that when there are these type changes, to have a window of when it would take effect.

Commissioner Oddo reminded the Board that the amendment came about to help. He stated that unless the Board could really study a situation and understand what was being done, it needed to wait. He stated that if the Board started to become a compulsive Board and get caught up, that the Board would be trying to help a different situation and create another problem. He stated that the Board needed to be careful.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

3. **Approval of authorization to sign checks combining any of the following two signatures for transactions at or above \$5,000.00: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, County Administrator.**
4. **Approval of authorization to sign checks for transactions in the amount of \$4,999.99 or less: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, County Administrator.**
5. **Approval of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and the County Administrator to execute contracts, resolutions, agreements, or other documents approved by and on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.**
6. **Approval to authorize the Fayette County Solicitor's Office to accept a continuing grant award from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in the amount of \$57,752.00 with the continuing grant award period beginning October 1, 2024 and expiring September 30, 2025.**
7. **Approval for Fayette County Fire and Emergency Services to accept the FY2025 Trauma Equipment Reimbursement Grant from the Georgia Trauma Commission in the amount of \$10,679.90.**
8. **Approval of the Fayette County Parks and Recreation Department to accept the Georgia Recreation and Park Association (GRPA) - Hawks Grant in the amount of \$2,380.00.**
9. **Approval of a supplemental grant award for the DUI Accountability Court for Law Enforcement in the amount of \$10,000.**
10. **Approval of the proposed South Sandy Creek Road Resurfacing Project Agreement between the City of Fayetteville and Fayette County.**
11. **Approval of the December 12, 2024, Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes.**

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

12. **Request to accept the 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) grant award for the construction phase of the FY 2022 Fayette County Resurfacing SPLOST project 21TAC (GDOT PI 0017812) in the amount of \$3,742,256.30, to digitally execute the Construction Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and to issue a check payment for GDOT Construction Oversight. This item was tabled at the December 12, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting.**

Public Works Director Phil Mallon stated that this was an administrative item dealing with federal aid and a multi-jurisdiction resurfacing contract. He stated that the design was complete, and the construction contract awarded. He stated that this item was

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requesting the Board to accept the grant through Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the construction funds, approval of the construction agreement with GDOT, and the approval of payment to GDOT for construction oversight.

Attorney Dennis Davenport stated that this was a tabled item and that a motion was on the floor.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve the 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) grant award for the construction phase of the FY 2022 Fayette County Resurfacing SPLOST project 21TAC (GDOT PI 0017812) in the amount of \$3,742,256.30, to digitally execute the Construction Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and to issue a check payment for GDOT Construction Oversight. Commissioner Rousseau seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**13. Consideration of Option #1, to have the Fayette County Marshal's Office to occupy the Old Courthouse or Option #2, to enter an agreement to have the Fayette County Historical Society occupy the additional space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. This item was tabled at the December 12, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting.**

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to withdraw his original motion to allow Commissioner Maxwell to make a motion for the purpose of discussion. Commissioner Rousseau withdrew the second.

Commissioner Maxwell moved to grant the Historical Society to occupy the additional space in the Old Courthouse, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. Motion died for lack of second.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Option #1, to have the Fayette County Marshal's Office to occupy the Old Courthouse. Commissioner Rousseau seconded.

Commissioner Oddo stated that there was more to this decision than it seemed. There are ramifications for changing policies. When a policy was changed for one, it changed for all. He stated that the Board had to be careful in situations such as this one. He stated that both options were good, but the Board had to choose the one with the least potential harm.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that this discussion gave the Board the unique opportunity to revisit something he offered some years ago to have an evaluation completed on how the County supported the non-profit service providers that fill the gap and void where the County did not offer that service delivery. He stated that while the Historical Society found itself as a non-profit because of their status, there are others working on behalf of the community with food insecurities, lack of healthcare options, as examples, and to not have a process for those non-profit organizations that might want to use the space, and selection one over the other, presented the current challenges. He stated that he was disappointed that when the decision was made to not take on non-profits, there was still an entity using space with no fees and without giving others the opportunity to say they would like to use the space. He stated that he had serious issues with that. He expected staff, that when the Board said that was the position to take, that staff would take that position fully to avoid ambiguity and possible tension with other service providers. He stated that he would like staff to revisit looking at a process or policy because the space was taxpayer space and if a dollar amount was assigned per square foot, this organization would be getting it when others would not. He stated that as a history major, he valued the Historical Society and understood their importance, however, he wanted the County's process and procedures to be fair and clear when making decisions. He stated that the Historical Society currently occupied the first floor, Starr's Mill, and the Lee Street building. He stated that his final point was that he would like to revisit putting something in place to safeguard the Board the next time something like this happened.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve Option #1, to have the Fayette County Marshal's Office to occupy the Old Courthouse. Commissioner Rousseau seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 14. Request to approve a recommendation from the Selection Committee comprised of Fayette County Staff, to reappoint Dr. William Yarde to the Fayette County Water Committee for a term beginning January 1, 2025 and expiring December 31, 2028.**

Dr. Yarde thanked the Board for the reappointment. He also thanked the Water Committee for their support.

Commissioner Oddo moved to approve to reappoint Dr. William Yarde to the Fayette County Water Committee for a term beginning January 1, 2025 and expiring December 31, 2028. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

- 15. Request to award Bid #2475-B Justice Center HVAC Roof Top Units (RTU) Replacements in the amount of \$676,477.00 to Wright Brothers, Inc.**

Mr. Rapson stated that there was an award for the roof top replacement at the Justice Center. The funds from the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) were budgeted for this purpose.

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to approve to award Bid #2475-B Justice Center HVAC Roof Top Units (RTU) Replacements in the amount of \$676,477.00 to Wright Brothers, Inc. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS:**

Mr. Rapson updated the Board on the projects including the Parks and Recreation Multi-Use Facility, Starr's Mill tunnel, Coastline Bridge Improvements, Cedar Trail Culvert Replacement, Public Health building, and Water System Update on the AMI project.

He stated that he would make a decision about closing due to the threat of inclement weather at 10 p.m. tonight or by morning. He mentioned that he sent the Board information on staffing during inclement weather and about warming stations.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:**

**Notice of Executive Session:** County Dennis Davenport stated that there were eight items for Executive Session. Seven items involving threatened litigation, and the review of the December 12, 2024, Executive Session Minutes.

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:**

**Commissioner Rousseau** extended the invitation to attend the King Day Parade on Monday, January 20.

He stated that he wanted to salute the library on including books with the Meals-On-Wheel program. He stated that he really liked that and to keep up the good work.

He stated that the article in the newspaper may have caused confusion on when the health building will be open and operational. He stated that he wanted to have the ribbon cutting in February.

He sent condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Charles Persons, who was one of the youngest members of the Freedom Riders. He thanked Mr. Persons for standing in the gap, for him, someone he did not know, so many years ago.

He offered prayers for those in California dealing with the wildfires. He mentioned that he had family there and all were safe. He stated that so many lost so much.

He stated that he was open to changing the meeting times back to 6:00 p.m. He stated that he was open to entertaining that. He stated that it was true that some residents did not have time to get to the meetings in the evenings. He stated that he would speak to the Board, if open to discuss.

He congratulated Chair and Vice Chair on the appointments and stated that he looked forward to continuing to work with them.

**Commissioner Oddo** stated that he did his swearing-in, and he wanted to say he appreciated the privilege of serving. He stated that this was not a job he did for the fun of it, because some of the decisions take a lot of thought and he did not make them lightly or could make everyone happy. He stated that he appreciated being elected for another term.

He stated that this was the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of his wife, Pily, coming from Columbia to the United States to marry him.

**Chairman Lee Hearn** thanked the Board for reappointing him as Chairman and he promised to continue to be fair in all his dealings. He stated that it was an honor to be the Chairman, and he did not take it lightly, but with humbleness.

Regarding public comments, he stated that he and Mr. Rapson spoke about the commercial washing machines at the Animal Shelter.

Chairman Hearn apologized for not recognizing Representative Jackson during the meeting. He stated that he did not mean to omit him.

**Commissioner Rousseau** also wanted to recognize Phil Frieder on his retirement.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Seven items involving threatened litigation, and the review of the December 12, 2024, Executive Session Minutes.**

Commissioner Oddo moved to go into Executive Session. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Board recessed into Executive Session at 6:59 p.m. and returned to Official Session at 7:20 p.m.

**Return to Official Session and Approval to Sign the Executive Session Affidavit:** Commissioner Oddo moved to return to Official Session and for the Chairman to sign the Executive Session Affidavit. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**Approval of the December 12, 2024 Executive Session Minutes:** Commissioner Oddo moved to approve December 12, 2024, Executive Session Minutes. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Vice Chairman Gibbons moved to adjourn the December 12, 2024, Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Oddo seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The January 9, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

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Tameca P. Smith, 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 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January 2025. Attachments are available upon request at the County Clerk's Office.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations are available for those who are hearing impaired. The Board of Commissioners Agenda and supporting material for each item is available on-line through the County's website at [www.fayettecountyga.gov](http://www.fayettecountyga.gov). This meeting will be telecast on Comcast Cable Channel 23 and on the internet at <https://vimeo.com/user133262656>.

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Tameca P. Smith, County Clerk