

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON **JANUARY 6th, 2026, AT 6:00PM** IN 4H AND BEN HILL COUNTY EXTENSION
SERVICE BUILDING LOCATED AT 321 DEWEY MCGLAMRY RD

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Hope Harmon	Vice-Chair
Daniel Cowan	Commissioner
John Mooney	Commissioner
Hampton Raulerson	County Manager
Pamela D Turner	County Clerk

Chairman Hal Wiley was absent

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Hope Harmon called the meeting to order

Commissioner Bennie Calloway gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda/Agenda Changes

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes that was held on December 02, 2025. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to close Regular Monthly Meeting and enter Public Hearing. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Public Hearing

- Special Exception for Temporary Telecommunication Tower for up to 24 months on the property at 267 Nora Morris Road, Fitzgerald GA

Jake Hughes Building and Zoning Director stated that Crown Castle has applied for a Special Exception for a Temporary Tower site at 267 Nora Morris Road. They applied for 24 months, if it goes beyond that they will reapply. Because a Tower was previously there, there aren't any issues with setbacks, there will not be any extra traffic coming in or out. This special exception does not change anything with zoning, it's far enough away not to affect any residential zoning. We don't see that this will cause any issues in the County,

this will be a benefit because it will be filling a void.

- Review and Transmit the Joint 2026 Ben Hill County and City of Fitzgerald Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Marcus MaConico from Southern Georgia Regional Commission stated State Law requires that Comprehensive Plans must be updated every 5 years so we will go through this process again 2030 or 2031. We began this process back in April, we had the Public Hearings, we have had at least 3 required meetings. What has changed is the Work Programs with both the County and the City, both have a lot of Projects going on. Both City and County have completed a lot of projects since the last Comprehensive Plan compared to other Cities and Counties. This Plan will go to DCA to be reviewed. Your current Comprehensive Plan is up at the end of February. A little change may be needed and you guys will be ready to go.

There were no Public Comments

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to close Public Hearing and enter Regular Monthly Meeting. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Required Annual Actions:

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to rehire County Manager Hampton Raulerson. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to rehire County Clerk Pamela Turner. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to rehire County Attorney Hall, Smith & Booth Managing Partner Tony Rowell working with Nick Kinsley. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to rehire Tony Eckler CPA Auditing Firm. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Commissioner John Mooney nominated Commissioner Hope Harmon for Vice-Chair.

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to close the nominations. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer:

Tax Commissioner Barry Foster reported:

- 2024 Property tax collections are 98.79%. 2025 is 81.72%
- State has been running late on the Public Utility appeals causing their bills to be late going out and them paying after the first of the year, which reduces our end of the year percentage.
- Property Tax Sale will be first Tuesday in March.
- Mobile Home Tax Sale will be first Tuesday in April
- TREES Act Grant has been deposited in the bank, \$252,632.01. The County will get approximately \$120,999.00 and School approximately \$131,632.00. Waiting on letter from DOR to disburse money.
- Timber cuts have been down since Hurricane Helene. In 2024 we had 47 cuts, 2025 we had 20 cuts, when we normally run 100 cuts per year.
- We will need two printers
- Penny shortage and the need to figure out going forward how to handle this issue.

Department Head Reports:

DLS Director Keith Morrison reported:

- Fall Season sports are completed
- All-star football completed
- Hosted Annual Kiwanis Bowl
- 8 & under and 12 & under won Kiwanis Bowl
- District Football tournament-8 youth District Champion, 12 youth runners up, both advance to State tournament and 8 youth runners up in State tournament
- Soccer- 12 youth girls District tournament they were runners up in State tournament
- The first Flag Football Season started in December, all girls aged 11-14, there were 44 girls, 4 teams. Looking forward to building on this.
- Started Basketball played first game on January 5th, 2026, games are scheduled Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report:

County Manager Hampton Raulerson gave an update:

- Resurfacing started on Tulip
- Ed Ward road should be completed by the end of February
- Will be aggressive with road maintenance- on Miller Road we re-build the ditches, will be going to Justice Ave. next. We will be going to roads that need pipe replacement.

Annexation Request/Notification: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Appointments:

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to appointment Vice-chair Hope Harmon to the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill Library Board to replace Hal Wiley. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting on the motion

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to appoint Warren Elder to the Ben Hill Planning & Zoning Commission. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Chairman Hal Wiley all voting on the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan nominated Commissioner Hope Harmon as the Liaison for ACCG

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to close the nominations. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Old Business: NONE**New Business:**

Special Exception for Temporary Telecommunication Tower for up to 24 months on the property at 267 Nora Morris Road, Fitzgerald GA

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the Special Exception for Temporary Telecommunication Tower for 24 months on the property of 267 Nora Morris Road. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting on the motion

Tax Commissioner Authority to Waive Penalties & Interest Resolution

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the Tax Commissioner Authority to Waive Penalties & Interest Resolution. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Authorizing the Tax Commissioner to Accept Payments of Taxes and Fees Resolution

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve the Authorizing the Tax Commissioner to Accept Payments of Taxes and Fees Resolution. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting for the motion.

Resolution Declaring County Property as Surplus and Authorizing the Disposal of Said Property

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve Resolution Declaring Property as Surplus and Authorizing the Disposal of Said Property. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chair Hope all voting for the motion.

Quotes for 2026 Purchasing of Fleet Vehicles for Sheriff Office

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to approve Quotes for 2026 Purchasing of Fleet Vehicles for Sheriff Office (2) Ford F150 Super Crew \$46,919.00ea and (1) Dodge Durango \$44,631.00. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chair Hope all voting for the motion.

Review and Transmit the Joint 2026 Ben Hill County and City of Fitzgerald Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the Review and Transmittal of the Joint 2026 Ben Hill County and City of Fitzgerald Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan and Vice-Chair Hope Harmon all voting on the motion.

Acceptance of Bids for County Property

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to accept the bid of Iristeen James in the amount of \$5,015.00 for County Owned Property located at Lot number 3 in Square Number 8 in block Number 7 formally City of Fitzgerald, formally Irwin County now Ben Hill County, Georgia. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chair Hope all voting for the motion.

2026 LMIG Proposal and Estimated Cost for Roads Project

Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to accept 2026 LMIG proposal and estimated cost for road projects. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chair Hope all voting for the motion.

Agenda Changes and/or add on: NONE

**Legislative Report:
Executive Session**

Commissioner's Remarks:

Meeting adjourned.

_____ Hal Wiley, Chairman

_____ Pamela D. Turner, County Clerk