

Warren County Board of Commissioners
Public Hearing
Tuesday, September 23, 2025
10:00 a.m.

The Warren County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing on Tuesday September 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The hearing was held in the Warren County Community Service Building located at 48 Warren Street.

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Graham called the meeting to order.

Present:

John R. Graham, Chairman
Richard Burley, Jr., Commissioner District 1

Staff Attending:

Porsha Johnson, County Clerk

Guest Attending:

Don Pesek
Carolyn Martin
Felton Poole
Aiden Hall
Wanda Jenkins

Discussion of Property Tax Increase Year 2025

The purpose of this public hearing is to provide notice and address any questions or concerns from the community regarding a proposed one-mill property tax increase for the 2025 fiscal year. Chairman Graham emphasized that this marks only the third occasion in twenty-one years that the Board of Commissioners have increased the millage rate. He noted that the current budget totals \$5,956,133. He then provided a detailed breakdown of the allocation percentages for each department, which collectively equals 100% of the 2025 budget.

The breakdown is listed below:

Expenditures:	Percentage:
Board Of Commissioners	6.85%
Election Cost	1.44%
Fees	7.27%
Tax Commissioners	2.75%
Tax Assessors	3.10%
County Buildings	5.42%
Court Services – Judge’s Office	0.75%
Board Of Equalization	0.07%

Clerk Of Superior Court	3.14%
Court Services - D.A.	0.40%
Magistrate Court	1.17%
Probate Court	2.34%
Court Services - Juvenile	0.10%
Court Services - Public Defender	0.28%
Sheriff's Office	13.42%
Jail Operations	3.09%
Office Of Emerg Services	16.49%
Coroner	0.42%
E911 Operations Center	9.21%
Public Works	4.79%
Solid Waste	2.87%
Landfill	1.88%
Health Department	0.42%
Dept Of Family & Children Services	0.10%
Senior Citizens Center	1.66%
Transit	3.18%
Library	2.27%
Extension Services	0.97%
Ga Forestry	0.27%
Code /Planning Administration	1.58%
Development Authority	2.27%
Total Expenditures:	100%

Chairman Graham informed the Board of the collective millage rates, including both the Board of Commissioners and the Warren County Board of Education. He provided data ranging from 2019 through 2025.

Please see the table below:

Year:	Board of Commissioners Millage Rate:	Board of Education Millage Rate:	Collective Total:
2019	12.958	18.400	31.358
2020	12.929	18.361	31.290
2021	12.751	18.326	31.077
2022	12.744	18.332	31.076
2023	12.681	18.320	31.001
2024	12.000	18.000	31.000
2025	(tentative) 13.000	17.091	30.091

Chairman Graham concluded by providing an overview of several recent developments within Warren County operations. First, he highlighted the most significant increase in Liability and Property Insurance, which has risen by 40%. Next, he discussed the increased call volume at the

Public Safety Building, which houses the Emergency Services Office, 911 dispatch, and the Sheriff's Department. Collectively, these departments account for approximately 40% of the overall budget.

The Sheriff's Department is currently operating with two deputies fewer than usual. During night shift the Sheriff's Department has only one deputy on duty, which presents significant safety concerns; therefore, we have increased staffing to two deputies per shift. EMS services are currently running with one ambulance, and additional units would greatly enhance our response capabilities. We frequently request assistance from neighboring counties during periods of high call volume. Additionally, Dispatch now requires two personnel on duty to effectively manage the increased call volume. To address this, we have added extra staff in these departments.

Chairman Graham stated that in November 2025, FLOST will be included on the ballot, and if passed, this would allow us to reduce the millage rate in the future. He explained that if FLOST passes, the funds would be collected during January 2026 through December 2026, and the estimated rollback of approximately 2.9mills could be applied starting in 2027 and is good for five-years.

Chairman Graham thanked all the citizens for attending the public hearing and asked if anyone had any questions or concerns. Chairman Graham opened the floor.

Don Pesek – The Board has requested a 1 mill increase in the proposed millage rate? Could you please clarify the rationale for this increase, particularly given that the population in this county has decreased? Additionally, my social security income only increased 2.5% this year, so understanding the implications of this change is important to me.

Chairman Graham –Yes, we are proposing a one-mill increase in the tax rate. This is only the third time in the past 21 years. We aren't sure of the accuracy of the census data, as not all household members may complete and submit the census form, so the population may not be accurate. But the call volume for Public Safety Services has increased and requires additional funding.

Don Pesek – I only have one need for local government and that is for them to stop speeders on Atlanta Highway. I feel the millage rate increase is a big hit at once.

Chairman Graham –While this may represent a significant impact at this time, we must recognize that there is only so long we can delay implementing an increase. Ideally, we might have adjusted earlier, but our efforts to maintain current levels have reached their limit. It is essential that the county continues to operate effectively.

Carolyn Martin – I came into this public hearing with the intentions to fight against the millage rate increase, but you have stated your case so well that I can't. My only question is whether there can be any cuts?

Chairman Graham – Cutting some services is possible, but I don't recommend it.

Carolyn Martin – What about having some speed traps?

Chairman Graham – Speed traps are illegal. The Sheriff's Department has been issuing a higher number of tickets than usual. The City of Warrenton is exploring the implementation of school zone cameras; however, this would not benefit the county.

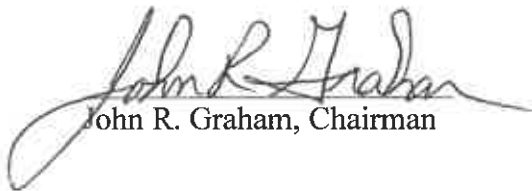
Carloyn Martin – It seems like a no-win situation.

Chairman Graham – Unfortunately, I agree. We have made efforts to maintain the current millage rate; however, due to the rising costs associated with county government operations, we have no other option.

Felton Poole – I feel I live in the greatest county in the State of Georgia. I just wanted to express my appreciation to the Board of Commissioners, along with all county employees, and offer my continued support. It is my wish that all of you receive a pay increase.

Chairman Graham – Property tax increases are typically a challenging topic, and I sincerely appreciate the engagement and concern shown by everyone here. We are committed to attracting more employment opportunities to benefit our community. Hopefully, in the future, the interstate expansion will proceed, allowing us to increase revenue for our county. While I regret delivering this tax increase update, it is my responsibility to keep you all informed. Thank you all once again for your continued support.

The hearing was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.



John R. Graham, Chairman



Porsha Johnson, County Clerk