

Warren County Board of Commissioners
Public Hearing
Tuesday, September 30, 2025
6:30 p.m.

The Warren County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing on Tuesday September 30, 2025, at 6:30 p.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 hearing to order.

Present:

John R. Graham, Chairman
Richard Burley, Jr., Commissioner District 1
Allen L. Troy, Commissioner District 2

Staff Attending:

Jeffrey Fowler, Community Relations & Project Director
Porsha Johnson, County Clerk

Guest Attending:

Alex Sanders
Peggy Armstrong
Robin Johnson
Randy Taylor
James Newsome
David Sprinkle
John Kent
Stewart Ellis Lord
Rhea Obermeyer

Discussion of Property Tax Increase Year 2025

The purpose of this public hearing is to notify the citizens and to provide an opportunity for questions or concerns regarding a proposed one-mill property tax increase for the 2025 fiscal year. Chairman Graham highlighted that this is only the third occasion in twenty-one years in which the Board of Commissioners has considered an increase to the millage rate. He also mentioned that the current budget is \$5,956,133. Chairman Graham stated that the increase would correspond to approximately \$0.0091 per thousand. He presented a detailed breakdown of the allocation percentages for each department, which together cover the entire 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 briefed the Board on the combined millage rates, including both the Board of Commissioners and Warren County Board of Education. He presented data covering the years from 2015 to 2025.

Please see the table below:

Year:	Board of Commissioners Millage Rate:	Board of Education Millage Rate:	Collective Total:
2015	12.958	17.400	30.358
2016	12.958	17.400	30.358
2017	12.958	17.400	30.358
2018	12.958	17.400	30.358
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 update on recent developments within Warren County operations. He highlighted a 40% increase in Liability, Vehicles and Property Insurance costs. He also addressed the increase in call volume at the Public Safety Building, which houses the Emergency Services Office, 911 dispatch, and the Sheriff's Department. Collectively, these departments represent approximately 40% of the overall budget. Furthermore, Emergency Services operate seven days a week, providing services year-round.

The Sheriff's Department is currently operating with a reduced staffing level, being short two deputies from our usual complement. During the night shift, only one deputy is on duty, which raises safety concerns; as a result, we have increased staffing to two deputies per shift. EMS services are currently operating with a single ambulance, and additional units would significantly improve our response capabilities. During periods of high call volume, we often request assistance from neighboring counties. Additionally, Dispatch now requires two personnel on duty to effectively manage increased call volumes. To accommodate this, we have added additional staff.

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.

Robin Johnson – Resident of Cadley, GA. What's the reason for not publishing the budget in the local newspaper?

Chairman Graham –We are not required to publish the entire budget in the local newspaper. It is on the WarrenCountyga.com website.

Robin Johnson – Can you please tell me about the fees?

Chairman Graham –When I say fees, that includes County Attorney Fees, Workman's Compensation Fees, Insurance Fees, and Retirement Fees.

Robin Johnson – Oh, those are expensive.

Robin Johnson – How many E911 employees are there?

Chairman Graham – Five full-time and three part-time employees.

Robin Johnson – How many fire trucks does the county own?

Chairman Graham – 12 fire trucks total. That includes those located at all the fire stations. Every fire station also has a pumper truck.

Robin Johnson – That’s a lot of equipment. Are you all planning to build a new fire station in Norwood?

Chairman Graham – Yes. The process will start next year.

Robin Johnson – Does E911, EMS and the Fire Department only serve Warren County?

Chairman Graham – We have Mutual Aid Contracts in place.

Robin Johnson – Forty percent of the budget is a healthy portion. Is all training up to date?

Chairman Graham – Yes, but there is always room for continuous improvement.

Robin Johnson – Roads and Maintenance only cover 5% of the budget?

Chairman Graham – That’s correct, because we have T-SPLOST, and that helps a great deal with that. Chair Graham showed a road map that included all paved roads and repaired bridges.

Robin Johnson – How many miles of dirt road does Warren County have? People are complaining about the dirt roads.

Chairman Graham – 165 miles of dirt roads. I can admit the roads are not perfect, but they are in good shape compared to other nearby counties. It costs one-million dollars per mile to pave a dirt road.

Robin Johnson – Does the road crew go to school for any training?

Chairman Graham – They don’t have a lot of training.

John Kent – What Robin is trying to say is the road crew can’t properly operate a motor grader. The dirt roads are not crown. All they have to do is turn the blade the other way.

Chairman Graham – I totally disagree with you. Thanks.

Rhea Obermeyer – Do you know what has caused the increase in emergency calls?

Chairman Graham – It could be several reasons. For instance, we have a large elderly population. If you call doctor’s office, DFCAS or any other medical facility, the first thing they say is, if this is an emergency, please dial 911. Also, we have 80 miles of State Highway traffic and 13 miles of Interstate traffic.

James Newsome – Can you recap Hurricane Helene?

Chairman Graham – The FEMA cleanup efforts will cost about million dollars in funding. Currently, we are awaiting the release of \$1.8 million from GEMA, along with an additional \$200,000 to cover staff salaries during the period of operational downtime.

Robin Johnson – How many fire stations are Warren County?

Chairman Graham – There are a total of six fire stations.

Robin Johnson – How many house fire calls do we receive per year?

Chairman Graham – Approximately 20, but most are minor.

Stewart Lord – What's the reason behind the increase in insurance?

Chairman Graham – There may be a potential increase in storm activity, as it has remained steady over the past seven to eight years.

Robin Johnson – What's the value of the Tax Digest?

Chairman Graham – Year 2024 - \$217,767,873 and Year 2025 - \$236,987,645. This is the first time reassessments on land have been made in the last 20 years.

Alex Sanders – What's the status of the church on Mitchell Road?

Chairman Graham – The Board voted against the proposed request. The request was to change that area zoning to PUD. That is not allowed within Agriculture.

Robin Johnson – How many units did they want?

Chairman Graham – They asked for several different things.

Alex Sanders – Are they appealing it?

Chairman Graham – No sir.

Robin Johnson – Thank GOD. What about the Solar Farm in Mayfield?

Chairman Graham – They are looking at the Ogeechee Area and are currently doing only their due diligence. They have a long way to go.

Alex Sanders – Will they be required to pay property taxes.

Chairman Graham – Yes, they will have to pay property taxes. Chair Graham proceeded to explain the difference between personal and real property. He explained that they are only required to pay property taxes and not sale taxes. There is no franchise fee in the county.

Robin Johnson – Are there limitations on Solar Farms?

Chairman Graham – Yes, certain setbacks are included. They also require insurance bonds, and if they go away, a cleanup must be performed.

Robin Johnson – Is there anything else weird going on with the Planning Department?

Chairman Graham – No.

David Sprinkle – I would like to thank you all for taking care of that poultry issue we had here in Warren County, GA.

Chairman Graham – Yes sir, you're welcome. The crew threatened to take us to court but never did.

Stewart Lord – Thank you all for correcting the solid waste fees.

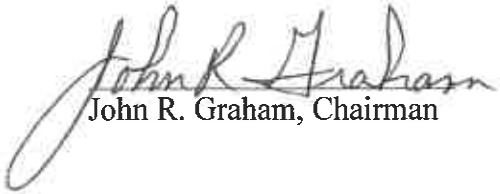
Chairman Graham – Yes sir. You're welcome.

Robin Johnson – The Solid Waste employees are great.

David Sprinkle – I can agree with that. The Solid Waste Center is always so neat and clean. Thanks again.

Chairman Graham – Property tax increases are typically a challenging topic, and I appreciate the concern shown by everyone here. While I regret delivering this tax increase update, it is my responsibility to keep everyone informed. Thank you all once again for your continued support.

The hearing was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.


John R. Graham, Chairman


Porsha Johnson, County Clerk