

Warren County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Tuesday, September 9, 2025  
4:00 p.m.

---

The Warren County Board of Commissioners met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. This meeting 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.

**Prayer**

Commissioner Allen L. Troy led the prayer.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:**

County Clerk, Porsha Johnson did roll call. The following were present.

- ✓ John R. Graham, Chairman
- ✓ Allen L. Troy, Commissioner District 2

**Staff Attending:**

Jeffrey Fowler, Community Relations & Project Director  
Michael Thigpen, Code / Planning Administrator  
Danyelle Rus, Administrative Coordinator  
Patricia Brown, Transit Director  
Porsha Johnson, County Clerk

**Guest Attending:**

Kay Debeaugrine  
Diane Whitaker  
Minister Rodney Daniels  
Anthony Bingham  
Bethany Bingham  
Charlee Bingham  
Jim Brooks  
Missy Garner  
Clara Mayes  
Stephanie McGarity  
Dudley McGarity  
Tammy Carden  
Adam Heagy – Ogeechee Riverkeepers

**Minutes Approval for August 2025**

Commissioner Troy made a motion to approve August 2025 minutes and dispense with the reading of them. Chairman Graham seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**Finance Report for August 2025:**

County Clerk, Porsha Johnson read the Finance Report for August 2025.

*A copy of this report will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

**FY27 Operating Contract**

Chairman Graham introduced Patricia Brown, Transit Director, and turned the floor over to her. Mrs. Brown started by informing the Board that the Warren County Transit System had received the two new Transits vans and everything was going well. Mrs. Brown stated that the request for the Transit 5311 Grant Application FY2027 is \$192,000.00, this will require a 50/50 split between GA Department of Transportation and Warren County in the amount of \$96,000.00 each. Chair Graham stated that this is an annual contract, and the Warren County Transit System has been in effect for a while now, this grant covers half the cost that's required to keep this program operating.

Chairman Graham made a motion to approve the FY27 5311 Operating Contract. Commissioner Troy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of this contract will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

**Land Use Application #25-7-21**

Chairman Graham introduced Michael Thigpen, Code/Planning Administrator, and invited him to speak. Mr. Thigpen informed the Board that Minister Rodney Daniels of The Church of Christ at Warrenton was present to request approval for a zoning change regarding his property located at 2175 Thomson Highway, Warrenton, GA. Minister Daniels is seeking to rezone the property from Rural Residential to Highway Business District. Mr. Thigpen also noted that the Planning Commission was convened on Monday, August 18, 2025, and approved this request during their meeting.

Chairman Graham made a motion to approve the Land Use Application #25-7-1, zone change from Rural Residential to Highway Business District. Commissioner Troy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of application #25-7-21 will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

**Land Use Application - Variance**

Chairman Graham introduced Michael Thigpen, Code/Planning Administrator, and turned the floor over to him. Mr. Thigpen explained that Minister Rodney Daniels for The Church of Christ at Warrenton was present to seek the Board of Commissioners' approval for a variance concerning the church sign located at 2175 Thomson Highway, Warrenton, GA. Mr. Daniels is requesting a variance for the Church of Christ at Warrenton sign. The sign limit is 48 sq ft per Warren County Ordinance, but since Mr. Dainels' current sign is 70 sq ft and the church was established 19 years ago, he is asking to install a new digital sign that would still be 70 sq ft. Mr. Thigpen noted that Mr. Daniels also requests that his new sign be allowed to have sound. Mr. Thigpen stated that the Planning Commission met Monday, August 18, 2025, and denied the 70 sq ft sign and denied sound for the sign during their meeting.

Chairman Graham stated that the current sign was in place and grandfather before current regulations. Chairman Graham made a motion to approve extending grandfather status and allow new sign to remain at 70sq ft and deny any sound for the new sign. Commissioner Troy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of application -variance will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

#### **Land Use Application #25-7-22**

Chairman Graham introduced Michael Thigpen, Code/Planning Administrator, and invited him to speak. Mr. Thigpen introduced a representative to speak on behalf of Kimley-Hone. She stated that they are requesting the Board's approval for a conditional use permit from APC Towers in conjunction with T-Mobile to install a 255ft guyed tower and associated antenna equipment within a 60 X 60 fenced area located at County Line Road, Gibson, GA 30810 (Map #069 Parcel #004). Mr. Thigpen also noted that the Planning Commission was convened on Monday, August 18, 2025, and approved this request during their meeting.

Chairman Graham made a motion to approve, as presented, Land Use Application #25-7-22. Commissioner Troy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of application #25-7-22 will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

#### **Intergovernmental Agreement – City Elections**

Chairman Graham informed the board that elections are now handled by the Election Board. The City of Norwood and the City of Warrenton have requested that the Election Board oversee their elections. These Intergovernmental Agreements will be in place until terminated by the Board of Elections, County or the cities. The City of Norwood will not be required to hold an election in November 2025, as only one candidate has qualified for the open council member seat. In contrast, the City of Warrenton will need to have an election in November 2025, with three candidates having entered the Mayor's Race. The Election Board has agreed to handle elections for both the City of Norwood and the City of Warrenton for a small fee.

Commissioner Troy made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreements – City Elections. Chairman Graham seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of the Intergovernmental Agreements will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

#### **Intergovernmental Agreement – FLOST**

Chairman Graham informed the Board that HB581 establishes a statewide homestead exemption referred to as a "floating homestead". The bill caps the annual increase in property values used for tax assessment purposes which also allows for a special sales tax to support a rollback of the millage rate.

If approved, the implementation would require placing a measure on the ballot for the November 2025 election. If passed for the five-year limit, collections would begin from January 2026 through December 2026, with the rollback occurring in the year 2027. Based on the 2024 net

taxes and LOST collections for the county and cities, a proposed mill rate reduction for the county and each city would be 2.9 mills.

Commissioner Troy made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement - FLOST. Chairman Graham seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of the Intergovernmental Agreement - FLOST will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

### **Trees Act – HB223**

Chairman Graham stated that HB223, also known as the TREES Act, provides tax relief and financial assistance for landowners, timber producers, farmers, and local governments affected by the Hurricane Helene disaster. The bill allows local governments to reimburse timber harvest taxes for the final quarter of 2024 and all of 2025. It also provides a temporary sales tax exemption for building materials used to repair damaged agricultural structures. Therefore, Ordinance #2025-09-01, drafted by County Attorney Scott Kelly, will need to be adopted to allow citizens to submit reimbursement requests. While it does not guarantee reimbursement, it will provide them with the opportunity to make such requests.

Chairman Graham made a motion to adopt Ordinance #2025-09-01, Trees Act. Commissioner Troy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of Ordinance #2025-09-01 will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

### **Library System Update**

Chairman Graham informed the Board that Columbia County notified the State of Georgia of its interest in establishing a stand-alone regional library. Consequently, Burke, Lincoln, and Warren counties will need to determine the appropriate course of action. Currently, Warren County is unable to establish a stand-alone library, as the State of Georgia requires an investment of one million dollars, which the county is unable to accommodate. Chair Graham reminded us that he had to leave immediately after the Board of Commissioners meeting last month to attend a meeting held in Washington Wilkes, Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the potential for Warren County to join the Bartram Trail Regional Library System. The Bartram Trail Regional Library System decided not to allow us to join their library system. Therefore, Chairman Graham and representatives with Burke County and Lincoln County will meet and discuss plans establishing a regional partnership among the three counties. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday September 16, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Further updates will be provided later.

No Action Taken

### **2025 Millage Rate**

Chairman Graham informed the board that it is now time to establish the BOC 2025 Millage Rate. He stated that the tentative millage rate has been set at 13.000 mills. He noted that the 5-year history has been published in the local newspaper. The Chairman reported that the 2025 Net Digest is projected to be \$236,987,645, and that the 13.000 millage rate would generate approximately \$3,080,839 in total M&O taxes. He also mentioned that this rate represents an

increase of 1 mill, which is only the third increase in the past 21 years. Additionally, he highlighted that the Board of Education's millage rate will decrease, which will be balanced out for taxpayers. The Chairman informed the public about three upcoming Public Hearings scheduled for Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. and at 6:30 p.m., as well as another on Tuesday, September 30, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend.

No Action Taken

*A copy of the 5-year History of Levy and the PT32.1 Form will be in placed Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

#### **4-Way Stop – Mitchell Road at Five Points Jewell Road**

Chairman Graham informed the Board that we have received multiple complaints regarding the intersection of Mitchell Road and Five Points Jewell Road. It has been decided to address these concerns by possibly installing a four-way stop at that location. He explained that a message board will be placed there initially to inform the public of the upcoming change, followed by the installation of stop signs with flashing lights. Hopefully this will help reduce the number of accidents in that area.

Commissioner Troy made a motion to approve 4-Way Stop upgrade at Mitchell Road at Five Points Jewell Road. Chairman Graham seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

#### **GMASS Agreement with Tax Assessors**

Chairman Graham informed the Board that the Warren County Tax Assessors can perform residential appraisals, small and large land appraisals, but are not able to conduct commercial and industrial property appraisals. GMASS, an appraisal company owned by Mr. Gregg Reese, a native of Warren County, Georgia, has the capacity to provide these additional services. According to regulations, property evaluations are required every three years. Mr. Reese from GMASS submitted a contract outlining the scope of services and associated costs. The total fee for this service is \$56,650.00. If approved, the cost will be divided evenly between FY25 and FY26.

Chairman Graham made a motion to approve the GMASS agreement with the Tax Assessors. Commissioner Troy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of this agreement will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

#### **American 250 Commission Resolution**

Chairman Graham introduced Jeffrey Fowler, Community Relations and Project Director, and invited him to speak. Jeffrey began by reading the proposed resolution and highlighted that this will mark the 250th anniversary of our country. Jeffrey recommended using the Hometown Board as the commission and suggested that they potentially partner with Tammy Carden, Organizer of Events for Warren County, for this project.

Commissioner Troy made a motion to adopt American 250 Commission Resolution. Chairman Graham seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

*A copy of this Resolution will be placed in the Attachments to the 2025 Minutes.*

### **2025 Christmas Holidays**

Chairman Graham informed the Board that Warren County observes Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as part of the Christmas holiday schedule. For the year 2025 only, he recommends that the County observe Thursday, December 25th and Friday, December 26<sup>th</sup> for these holiday dates.

Chairman Graham made a motion to approve 2025 Christmas Holidays to be observed Thursday, December 25, 2025 and Friday, December 26, 2025. Commissioner Troy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **Citizens Comments**

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

**Adam Heagy** – Expressed his concerns regarding solar panel farms and is still encouraging a stronger Ordinance against solar farms.

**Chairman Graham** – The sample Ordinance has been received and forwarded to the Scott Kelly, County Attorney. Chair Graham stated that everyone should keep in mind that we have some citizens that support the possibility of additional solar farms.

**Adam Heagy** – I am not totally against solar farms, but I would defiantly want more community input to be allowed.

**Stephanie McGarity** – Expressed that she does not support solar farms and feels it will destroy the soil.

**Chairman Graham** – It is essential to ensure that all processes are conducted fairly and in accordance with legal requirements, regarding solar farms. This is covered in the Comprehensive Plan for Warren County.

**Clara Mayes-** Concerns regarding contamination of the Ogeechee River. If it rains everything will run into the Ogeechee River.

**Chairman Graham** – Thank you for that comment.

**Anthony Bingham** – He mentioned that he and his family relocated to Warren County last year after Hurricane Helene resulted in a total loss of their property in Florida. They arrived with an RV and the clothes they were wearing. He is seeking assistance, as he is facing significant challenges at this time. He requested that his power supply remain active. He also shared that his wife is a teacher in Warren County, and his daughter is attending school locally. His primary concern is ensuring their safety and well-being. He expressed a need for assistance in completing the application process.

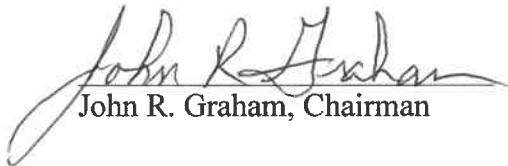
**Chairman Graham** – The county initially authorized a six-month temporary power period, which has now extended to eight months. Following Bingham’s attempt to submit an application, terminating power has been temporarily paused. The power will remain on at this time, and he will follow with the application after today’s meeting.

**Tammy Carden** - Invited the public to attend the Events of Warren County meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

**Chairman Graham** – Again, expressed thanks to everyone for attending today’s meeting and for their comments.

**Credit Card bill was reviewed.**

Meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

  
John R. Graham, Chairman

  
Porsha Johnson, County Clerk