

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

PRESENT:	ALFRED CASON, BUCK MOON, DARRIEL NOBLES, TOMMY ROLLINS, JOHN M. JONES, AND HELEN HARRIS
Call to Order:	Vice-Chairman Rollins called the September 16 th Regular Board Meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.
Invocation:	Commissioner Cason gave the Invocation.
Approve Agenda:	Vice-Chairman Rollins asked for a motion to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Moon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to amend the Agenda to Consideration the Purchase of a 2008 Fire truck for the Toombs County Volunteer Fire Department. Motion carried unanimously.
Approval of Minutes: August 19, 2025 Regular Board Meeting:	Vice-Chairman Rollins asked for a motion to approve the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting held on August 19, 2025 Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to approve the minutes from August 19, 2025 Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
Development Authority Report:	<u>Michele Johnson</u>, announced the Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA) Annual Conference-Wednesday, September 17th through Friday, September 19th in Savannah. Leadership Greater Vidalia (LVC) Agriculture Session-Friday, September 19th. Greater Vidalia Chamber (GVC) Summit will be held Thursday, September 25th from 8:30 AM until 12 Noon at Southeastern Technical College (STC). The president and CEO of Georgia Hospital Association will attend the Summit. The Chamber is focusing on disaster preparedness and they have preparatory work in advance of participation in the disaster preparedness panel at the Prosperity Summit. Georgia Chamber (GACOC) Rural Prosperity Summit – Wednesday, October 1st Tifton GA. Greater Vidalia Chamber (GVC) State of Healthcare-Thursday, October 2nd from 11:30 AM to until 1:00 PM at Lyons First Baptist Church. Greater Vidalia Chamber (GVC) Board Meeting-Tuesday, October 7th at 11:30 AM in the Dot Foods Business Hub. On October 9th the Greater Vidalia Chamber will be hosting the Business Expo at the Community Center, 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM, Vidalia Community Center. Leadership Greater Vidalia (LGV) Education Session will be held on Thursday, October 16th. Toombs County Development Authority (TCDA) Regular Monthly Meeting - Thursday, October 16th, at 12:00 noon in the Dot Foods Business Hub, Greater Vidalia® Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, 208 East First Street, Vidalia.
Department Report:	<u>Drew James</u>, Director of EMS, stated they inspected the Ambulance today and one minor flaw had to be corrected in the graphic package and should be able to pick up the Ambulance Friday Morning and then two to three weeks for the State Inspector to inspect the Ambulance. This is that ambulance the County purchased in October of 2022; this shows how long it takes to get an Ambulance. Our outreach will be this Thursday at Toombs County High School at the Cross Country Meet, the service will provide medical standby with about 500 to 600 Cross Country Runners on site. <u>Kelli Adkison</u>, ERAssist stated a scoring committee had chosen Looks Great Services to remove debris for the waterways in our County extending 250 feet for the fee of \$47,250 and they would begin the work with a completion date of December 1st. Mrs. Adkison also gave a full overview of the status of the paper work on receiving funds expected from FEMA/GEMA on the damage created by Hurricane Helene that occurred in September of 2024.

Public Participation: Kyle Stewart, 196 and 223 Tot Powell Road, addressed the Commissioner with the question of why his request to close a portion of Tot Powell Road was denied. Vice-Chairman Rollins explained there was concern with the safety of the road equipment backing into Hwy 56 when scrapping half of the road and then proceeding to the other end of the road to continue the maintenance of the second portion of the road. The Ambulance service also expressed a concern with emergencies that could potentially delay in responding to an emergency. Mr. Stewart proclaimed that the portion of the road was owned by him-self and he wanted it to be where he could fence his entire property off. Again, Vice-Chairman Rollins explained that once the County maintained the road for seven (7) years, the road becomes Prescriptive Easement and the use of the land to provide transportation was for the good of the community. (Reference: O.C.G.A. § 32-3-3(c)).

Leonard Dennis, 1004 McNatt Falls Road, He was proposing a different location for the proposed portion of McNatt Falls Road. He suggested the road be closed just after the boat landing so that anyone that needed a turnaround would have a place to do so without being on someone’s private property. County Manager Jones stated he would consult with the County Attorney to determine what options are available.

Wesley Taylor, Administrator, Meadows Memorial Hospital came to the meeting to introduce himself to the Commission. We recently finished an ER expansion and I am grateful for the open house. The leadership in the Chamber is incredible and the Hospital is planning a twenty-three million dollar expansion for our in-patient units. The Certificate of Need has already been submitted in the State of Georgia and HCA hopefully will be funding that project for us. Mr. Taylor expressed that he was a resource for all of the Commission.

Consideration of Resolution Accepting the 2025 Tax Digest and Setting the 2025 Gross Maintenance & Operations Millage Rate: Manager Jones described the process in setting the millage rate; explaining one mill of tax equates to \$1,046,591; with the rollback millage rate of the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) received by the County in 2024, which is 2.7680 mills. The proposed Gross Millage Rate, including the application of the LOST rollback, resulting in a Net Millage Rate of 7.1900. This rate is the same as last year, and proposed no increase in property taxes. A comparison of the Tax Digest from 2019 to 2025 was given in the packet as well. The form PT 32.1, calculates the inflationary growth, indicates the net millage rate a local jurisdiction must not exceed. The amount of Insurance Premium Tax Proceed that the County received, along with the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) was in the packet as well. The comparison of surrounding Counties 2024 Net Millage Rates, which is the most recent data available, shows our County has the lowest Millage rate.

Vice-Chairman Rollins announced the caparison rates to the surrounding Counties: Appling County is set at 12.36 mills; Candler County is set at 12.294; Emanuel County is set at 11.73; Montgomery County is set at 14.85; and Tattnall is set at 13.89; Toombs County is at 7.19, he added, “ That is phenomenal for our County and people like Michele and other people that have improved the Economic Conditions of our County, it’s just phenomenal that we can do that as stated with a growing Community.”

Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to approve the 2025 Tax Digest as presented and the gross millage rate of 9.9580 mills with LOST Rollback 2.7680 mills, a net millage rate of 7.1900 mills and to approve the Vice-Chairman to sign. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Resolution Setting the 2025 Toombs County Development Authority Millage Rate: Manager Jones stated each year the Board sets a millage rate for the Development Authority. This was passed in a referendum, year ago, for the County Commission to levy one (1) mill tax to fund the operations of the Development Authority.

	Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to set the 2025 Toombs County Development Authority Millage Rate of 1.000 and to approve the Vice-Chairman to sign. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of Proposals for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Emergency Watershed Protection Program:	Manager Jones stated, as a result of Hurricane Helene, Toombs County applied for a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist in cleaning up debris in our streams and rivers. There were three Creeks that qualified: Swift Creek at Cadillac Drive in Vidalia, Swift Creek on SR 130 - Loop Road, and Pendleton Creek at John Wilkes Road. The removal work will take place within 200 to 250 feet from the bridge or right-of-way (ROW). Bids were due on Monday, September 15, 2025 in which the County received three bids. (1) Horner Services in the amount of \$64,685; (2) Looks Great Services in the amount of \$47,250; (3) Rocking S. Services, LLC in the amount of \$109,200. All three were evaluated and the scoring results were provided to the Board. Based on the scoring sheets Looks Great Services had the highest score. Natural Resources will pay for the full expense of \$47,250 and the work should be completed by December 1st. Commissioner Moon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Nobles to accept the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Emergency Watershed Protection Program in the amount of \$47,250 from Looks Great Services and paid by NRCS. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of Approval of National Settlement with Purdue Pharma, L.P. as defined in the Purdue Opioid Settlement:	Manager Jones stated the County is a part of this Class Action Law Suit. The County's Attorney has reviewed the settlement and recommends that the Board approve the Chairman to sign. Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to accept the National Settlement with Purdue Pharma and to approve the Chairman to sign. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of Approval of Proposal for Retrofit PowerLoad System and Purchase of a Power Pro2 Stretcher:	Manager Jones asked EMS Director, Drew James to explain the need for the purchase. Mr. James stated, this would help keep from placing our employees under physical stress on their body and would prevent employee absences due to back injuries among our paramedics. The cost is \$62,970.23 and would be paid with SPLOST funds. Commissioner Cason made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Moon to approve the purchase of Retrofit PowerLoad System and Purchase of a Power Pro2 Stretcher at the cost of \$62,970.23 which will be paid with SPLOST funds. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of Request from Probate Judge for an Increase in the Vital Records Fees that the Probate Court Collects:	Manager Jones stated in the Commissioner Packet was a copy of the request from the Probate Judge, seeking an increase in the fees from the current fee of \$16,000 to \$20,000; the State Law permits such an increase. The Board was asked to approve a resolution reflecting the increase, and approve the Chairman to sign the prepared Resolution. Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to approve the preparation of a Resolution reflecting the increase of Vital Records Fees to \$20,000 per year and approve the Chairman to sign the prepared Resolution. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of Proposal for Capital Lease of three (3) Ford 250 Trucks for Public Works and Declare the three (3) trucks being Replaced as Excess Property to be Sold by Enterprise Fleet	Manager Jones stated the previously established leasing program with Enterprise Leasing for vehicles used by Public Works and Administrative departments. The plan was to maintain the lease until we could sell the vehicles at the most opportune time to achieve the highest sale price. That time has now arrived for us to initiate a new lease and put the replacement vehicles up for sale. Included in the packet was a proposal for the purchase of three (3) Ford F250, which is the model we currently have. Each Lease vehicle cost \$52,723, totaling \$158,169 for all three vehicles. The County will finance this through a Capital Lease Plan with Enterprise Leasing, resulting in a monthly payment of

Management:	\$2,931.66. The Board was asked to approve the proposal from Enterprise Leasing to purchase the three trucks and declare the replaced vehicles as excess property to be sold through Enterprise Leasing. Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to replace three Ford F250 through a Capital Lease Plan with Enterprise Leasing in the amount of \$158,169 to be paid with SPLOST Funds and declare the three replaced vehicles as excess property to be sold through Enterprise Leasing. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of Approval of Intergovernmental Lighting Agreement between Georgia Department of Transportation and Toombs County:	Manager Jones, stated this is an agreement for maintenance and lighting upkeep along the proposed GDOT Bike Trail in Toombs County. We have secured grants totaling \$4.5 million to cover these expenses and will be applying for an additional grant of \$1 million to supplement this funding. We have made adjustments to the initial proposal, specifying that the county will only be responsible for routine maintenance of lighting fixtures and equipment. Any damage caused by storms or natural disasters, even if the storm is not declared, will be the responsibility of Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Commissioner Cason made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Moon to approve the Intergovernmental Lighting Agreement between Georgia Department of Transportation and Toombs County and to approve the Vice-Chairman to sign the agreement. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of Approval of ER Assist Invoice for FEMA Consultation on Hurricane Debbie FEMA Grants:	Manager Jones stated the County had never filed any claims for Hurricane Debbie. ERAssist was able to secure permission from FEMA to request various grants related to Hurricane Debbie. To perform the work in submitting the information to FEMA, ERAssist invoice was in the amount of \$9,576.97 and will be paid with General Funds. Although the County have not yet received these funds, FEMA has committed to funding them. These grants will cover the costs associated with contracting work that the County has engaged with two vendors to help clear right-of-ways (ROWs) and the repair of dirt roads. While these expenses will ultimately be reimbursed by FEMA, the county must first pay the invoices and submit the cleared checks before GEMA will process the reimbursement. Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to approve the ERAssist Invoice for FEMA Consultation on Hurricane Debbie FEMA Grants in the amount of \$9,576.97 and to be paid with General Funds with the expectation of reimbursement from GEMA. Motion carried unanimously.
Consideration of the Purchase of a 2008 Fire truck:	Manager Jones noted the picture of the fire truck was included in the packet. This truck will replace an existing unit that we have and will be especially helpful since the County has acquired the Cedar Crossing Volunteer Fire Department. The vehicles purchase price was \$50,000 and be paid with SPLOST Funds. Commissioner Nobles made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cason to approve the purchase of a 2008 Fire Truck for the Toombs County Volunteer Fire Department in the amount of \$50,000 and to be paid with SPLOST Funds. Motion carried unanimously.
County Manager Report: Financial Report:	County Manager Jones stated the Budget Worksheets are due on September 20th from all Constitutional Officers and Department Heads. The (M & O) Maintenance and Operation Budget was within limits, with the exception of FEMA expenses. Landfill’s Revenue is currently at 89% of the budget and is expected to meet the budget by the end of the third quarter. Operating expenses have exceeded the budget, primarily due to ongoing testing and planning expenses related to the development of the Long Range Plan for the Solid Waste Site. We will address this in our year-end budget amendment. EMS has recorded the second strongest month for revenue in 2025. Our efforts to assist the hospital with local transfers have significantly contributed to this

improvement. However, further enhancements are still needed. A copy of the monthly call report was included in the packet for review. SPLOST, Monthly receipts were up 15% compared to August of last year.

Miscellaneous: Fire Department, the lowest call volume of the year, with only 10 calls compared to 36 in July. FEMA, one of the two remaining grants for Debris Right-of-Way removal is currently undergoing FEMA’s final review, amounting to \$23 million and the other is around \$27 million. We have been told that GEMA will commit to a 48-hour turnaround for these types of funds, we will monitor this closely.

**Standing Committee
Reports:** None

**Commissioners
Comments:** None

Adjournment: Vice-Chairman Rollins adjourned the Regular Board Meeting at 6:23 PM.

Tommy Rollins, Vice-Chairman

Attest: _____
Helen Harris, County Clerk