STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HENRY

The Henry County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Public Meeting ***in-person*** on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Henry County Administration Building (Community Room), 140 Henry Parkway, McDonough GA. HenryTV also streamed this live online at its website, as well as Charter/Spectrum Channel 180 and Facebook Live.

Carlotta Harrell, Chair
Johnny Wilson, District 1 Commissioner
Neat Robinson, Vice Chair/District 2 Commissioner
Dee Anglyn, III, District 3 Commissioner
Michael T. Price, District 4 Commissioner
Kevin J. Lewis, District 5 Commissioner

Staff Present: Cheri Hobson-Matthews, County Manager; Kevin Johnson, Deputy County Manager; Rachel Mack, County Attorney; Stephanie Braun, County Clerk and Jasmin Head, Deputy County Clerk

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPATE

HENRY COUNTY CODE OF CONDUCT
(Sec. 2-2-128: Conduct during public meetings)

INVOCATION
The Invocation was given.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The Pledge was recited.

CALL TO ORDER

ADDED: Chair Harrell called for a motion to add Executive Session regarding litigation.

Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis made the motion to approve; **Commissioner Dee Anglyn** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Proclamation for Fair Housing Month (Presenter: Raven Bodine, Community Development Specialist II)

B. Proclamation for Autism Awareness Month (Presenter: Amber Smith, Public Relations Specialist)

C. Recognition for Lead Communications Officer Savanna Mondy and Communications Officer 2 Caitlyn Canup for being part of a team that was awarded "GECC team of the year" for the State of Georgia (Presenter: Tamika Kendrick, Director of E-911)

D. Recognition of Director Tamika Kendrick for receiving the Thomas Whal Legacy Award from the President of the GA National Emergency Number Association (GA NENA) at the 2024 Georgia Emergency Communications Conference (GECC) Awards Banquet (Presenter: Amanda Maddox, Assistant E-911 Director)

Presentations

A. **(Not Presented)** Financial Update (Presenter: David Smith, Director of Financial Services)

B. Employee Anniversary Recognition (Presenter: Holly Lafontaine, HR Director)

C. SPLOST Update (Presenter: Roque Romero, SPLOST Director)

CONSENT AGENDA

Cheri Hobson-Matthews, County Manager read the consent agenda as follows:

Capital Projects

A. Resolution approving Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Henry County Water Authority (HCWA) regarding N. Mt. Carmel Park sewer. (Presenter: Lynn Planchon, Director; and Rachel Mack, County Attorney)(Exhibit 1) Resolution #25-121

County Manager

A. Resolution requesting approval of a lease agreement between Henry County, GA and the Georgia Department of Driver Services for the Locust Grove Department of Driver Services location. (Presenter: Cheri Hobson-Matthews, County Manager)(Exhibit 2) Resolution #25-122

Financial Services

A. Resolution authorizing the disposal of surplus items and equipment. (Presenter: Susan Harris, Purchasing Director)(Exhibit 3) Resolution #25-123

Parks & Recreation

A. Resolution approving the award of Bid 25-44 for the purchase, installation and maintenance of Kid Safe Playground Mulch - Annual Contract to Preferred Mulch, LLC, as a unit/price with no fixed quantities. (Presenter: Jonathon Penn, Executive Director)(Exhibit 4) Resolution #25-124

B. Resolution approving the award of Bid 25-46 for the purchase, installation and maintenance of Decorative Mulch - Annual Contract to Preferred Mulch, LLC, as a unit/price with no fixed quantities. (Presenter: Jonathon Penn, Executive Director)(Exhibit 5) Resolution #25-125

C. Resolution approving the award of Bid 25-45 for the purchase, installation and maintenance of Long Needle Pine Straw - Annual Contract to Swift Straw, LLC, as a unit/price with no fixed quantities. (Presenter: Jonathon Penn, Executive Director)(Exhibit 6) Resolution #25-126

Stormwater

A. Resolution approving the bid award for the Drainage Improvements at Stokes Drive to DAF Concrete, Inc in the amount of $154,500.00, using Stormwater Enterprise Funds. District 2. (Presenter: Josue O. De Jesus, Deputy Director of Stormwater)(Exhibit 7) Resolution #25-127

(This ends the consent agenda)

Commissioner Dee Anglyn made the motion to approve the consent agenda; **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0

REGULAR AGENDA

Capital Projects

A. Resolution awarding RFP 25-34 for On-Call Architectural Design and Engineering Services to Croft & Associates, Place Services, and Goodwyn Mills Cawood, LLC as needed per proposed fee schedule(s). (Presenter: Lynn Planchon, Capital Projects Director)(Exhibit 8) Resolution #25-128

Lynn Planchon, Capital Projects Director, presented RFP 25-34 for on-call architectural design and engineering services to Croft and Associates, Place Services and Goodwyn Mills Cawood LLC, based on proposed fee schedules. The County's Purchasing Department solicited proposals through its website, Georgia Marketplace, and ACCG/GLGA, receiving a total of 14 submissions. An evaluation committee reviewed and scored each proposal selecting the top three most qualified firms for interviews and final selection. Funding for these services is available through individual project accounts. The document includes evaluation scores for all 14 firms, as well as hourly rates for the three selected firms. The purpose of this resolution is to ensure that qualified firms are readily available for future project design needs, allowing for thorough plan reviews to uphold standards and avoid costly change orders. When a new project arises all three firms will be invited to submit proposals and the one offering the lowest cost will be chosen. Any project costing $100,000 or more will require board approval.

Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis supported the resolution, stating that it is an efficient and cost-effective approach that ensures preparedness and accelerates project timelines with qualified professionals.

Vice Chair Neat Robinson made the motion to approve; **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

Human Resources

A. Resolution approving the Henry County Employee Benefit and Medical Insurance Plans for 2025-2026 (Presenter: Holly Lafontaine, HR Director and Chris Clark, EPIC)(Exhibit 9) Resolution #25-129

Holly Lafontaine, HR and Risk Management Director, introduced the presentation of the upcoming employee benefits renewal plan, noting that Chris Clark would be delivering the presentation in place of James Ford, who was unable to attend due to travel.

Chris Clark from EPIC, explained that the benefits plan renews annually on June 1st, and this year's planning process involved collaboration with the county manager and staff to assess options. The county will continue with United Healthcare as its primary medical carrier under the current self-insured arrangement which has proven financially beneficial over the past three years. A modest 1% increase in the health plan budget is projected for the upcoming year—considered favorable compared to industry norms. The recommendation is also to discontinue the Kaiser plan and transition those members to United Healthcare. For dental insurance, Delta Dental will remain the provider despite a 13.8% rate increase which follows several years without a rate hike. This increase, totaling about $182,000, is recommended to be covered by employees with a new cost of $2.05 per pay period for individual coverage and $34.12 for family coverage. Life insurance renewals were also addressed: while voluntary life insurance rates will remain unchanged after successful negotiations, the basic life and accidental death coverage will increase by 75%, amounting to around $80,000 annually. Despite extensive market research and bidding, the best value remains with Standard Life.

Other benefits including vision, employee assistance, disability, FMLA and spending account administration will remain with existing providers and see no cost changes. Following the presentation, the next step will be the upcoming employee open enrollment period during which all plan changes will be communicated and explained to staff ahead of the June 1st effective date.

Chair Harrell requested clarification on the dental insurance increase, which was confirmed to be approximately $5 per month. She also inquired about the number of employees currently using Kaiser insurance who would be transitioning to the United Healthcare plan. It was stated that approximately 300 employees would be affected, as Kaiser coverage will no longer be offered to employees.

Chair Harrell asked if help would be available to those 300 employees.

Ms. Lafontaine stated that eight team members will be available to assist employees during the open enrollment period along with access to an online portal for additional support. All employees currently covered under Kaiser will be automatically transitioned to United Healthcare (UHC) 75% plan, and they will have the opportunity to choose a specific plan within UHC during the enrollment process.

Commissioner Johnny Wilson asked for a recap on how retirees insurance works.

Ms. Lafontaine stated that retiree open enrollment will take place the week after employee open enrollment and will be offered both virtually and in person. All 365 retirees will have access to the same benefits as current employees, and those over 65 have already been transitioned to Medicare. **Commissioner Wilson** asked about retirees who are hard to contact, and **Ms. Lafontaine** responded that only two have been difficult to reach. She is working with long-term employees to help locate them.

Vice Chair Neat Robinson inquired about the open enrollment timeframe. **Ms. Lafontaine** confirmed that open enrollment will last four days. Retiree open enrollment will follow the employee session and will be available both virtually and in person.

County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews pointed out that required biometric screenings were not included in the current resolution. Previously, these screenings were mandatory, and failure to complete them resulted in a $50 monthly increase in insurance costs. **Commissioner Johnny Wilson** expressed support for including the biometric screenings in the resolution.

Commissioner Johnny Wilson made the motion to approve with added language regarding the biometric screening incentive; **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

SPLOST

A. Resolution approving the Central Georgia EMC relocation estimated cost for Burg Road in the amount of $160,705.67, utilizing SPLOST V funds (District 1). (Presenter: Roque Romero, SPLOST Director)(Exhibit 10) Resolution #25-130

Roque Romero, SPLOST Director, presented a resolution regarding Burg Road. Although the project has already been approved for construction the current request is for the relocation of utilities by Central Georgia EMC. The estimated cost for the relocation is $160,705.67. Funding is available through the project account and staff recommends proceeding with the utility relocation.

Commissioner Johnny Wilson made the motion to approve; **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

B. Resolution approving the purchase of Playground Equipment and Poured Rubber Surface for N. Mt. Carmel Park from GameTime in the amount of $586,935.85 through U.S. Communities Contract #2017001134, utilizing District Impact Fees and SPLOST V Funds (SP5202). District 5. (Presenter: Lynn Planchon, Capital Projects Director)(Exhibit 11) Resolution #25-131

Lynn Planchon, Capital Projects Director, presented a resolution to approve the purchase and installation of new playground equipment and a poured rubber surface for North Mount Carmel Park, totaling $586,935.85. The project will be funded through $400,000 in District 5 impact fees and $186,935.85 from SPLOST V funds. The current playground is outdated and located in a low-lying area prone to flooding. The new playground will be relocated next to the new recreation center and will feature a durable, ADA-accessible poured rubber surface that eliminates the need for mulch and reduces long-term maintenance costs. The equipment, designed in county colors with additional purple, was selected through GameTime under a U.S. Communities contract.

Commissioner Johnny Wilson asked if a fence was included in the playground project cost**. Lynn Planchon** confirmed that it was not included. **Executive Director Johnathon Penn e**xplained that while a fence is not planned for the current phase, one could potentially be added later -- particularly on the front side near the parking area. He clarified that fencing is not technically required but could be added if needed.

Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis noted that impact fees will be partially used to pay for the playground, pointing out that this is the intended purpose and need for impact fees.

Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis made the motion to approve; **Commissioner Dee Anglyn seconded.** The motion carried 6-0-0.

Tax Commissioner

A. **(Public Hearing)** Taxpayer/Ashok Banthia Appeal of Penalties and Interest (Presenter: Lynn Carty, Deputy Tax Commissioner)(Exhibit 12) Resolution #25-132

Lynn Carty, Deputy Tax Commissioner, presented a request from Mr. Banthia for a refund of $1,683.57, covering interest, penalties and fees paid on his delinquent property taxes for the 2023 and 2024 tax years. Mr. Banthia paid his 2023 tax bill for his rental property at 30 Micah Drive on November 9, 2023, seven days before the due date, but the payment could not be processed due to incorrect checking information. He was notified on November 14, 2023, by the online payment processor and again on November 15, 2023 by the tax office. In February 2024, a FIFA notice was sent as the bill remained unpaid. Mr. Banthia has owned the property for 12 years and has paid late 10 times accumulating $5,961.88 in interest, penalties and fees. Interest and penalties accrue as per the Department of Revenue's guidelines. Based on these circumstances, the recommendation is to deny Mr. Banthia's refund request due to willful neglect.

Mr. Banthia did not appear for the public hearing.

Commissioner Johnny Wilson made the motion to deny the refund request; **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

County Manager Comments

County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews provided an update on severe weather in the county, including two tornado warnings. The second warning was confirmed as an EF-1 tornado that touched down. The Emergency Management Agency (EMA) was activated during the storm, and both the county and the Department of Transportation (DOT) worked to remove debris. She urged residents to sign up for emergency activation notices through the county website.

Cheri Hobson-Matthews also thanked staff for an exceptional Women's History Month celebration.

Ryan Morrison, Henry County EMA Director, shared that the county's emergency notification system is called Regroup. He emphasized the importance of sharing documentation and pictures with the National Weather Service for accurate storm assessments, which are crucial for determining the impact and securing federal reimbursement.

Ashley Larrow, Chief of Staff for County Manager provided a legislative update to the board.

PUBLIC COMMENT
No speakers

Approval of Minutes

A. January 29, 2025 - January 31, 2025 BOC Retreat Minutes

B. February 25, 2025 Regular BOC Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis mad the motion to approve; **Commissioner Johnny Wilson** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

A. April 15, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. is a regularly-scheduled BOC Meeting

B. May 6, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. is a regularly-scheduled BOC Meeting

ADDED

A. **Executive Session (Re: Litigation)**

Commissioner Michael Price made the motion to enter into Executive Session (10:26 a.m.); **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

B. **Reconvene from Executive Session**

Commissioner Dee Anglyn made the motion to reconvene from executive session (11:21 a.m.); **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

C. **Approval of an affidavit and resolution pertaining to executive session**

Commissioner Dee Anglyn made the motion to approve the Affidavit and Resolution pertaining to Executive Session; **Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

Financial Services - Budget Workshop

A. FY 2026 Budget Presentation (Presenter: Bernita Campbell, Budget Director)

Bernita Campbell, Budget Director, began her presentation by reviewing the county's ongoing budget philosophy, which includes maintaining the current millage rate of 15.733, providing competitive employee compensation, advancing Board priorities and funding department essentials to sustain service levels. For FY2026, departments were asked to submit budget requests while keeping spending stable where feasible, though some increases were necessary due to state mandates and priorities. The proposed FY2026 general fund and special service district expense budget is $287.9 million an increase of $28.2 million or 10.9% from FY2025's $259.7 million. This budget supports current service levels and funds major initiatives including the North Mount Carmel Rec Center, the new Henry County Police Academy, and two new department stations. Key allocations include $1.7 million for critical personnel, $4.2 million for employee longevity and COLA increases, and additional funding for court staff, insurance, DOT, jail and fire personnel. The county has experienced a steady budget increase averaging 10.3% annually, reflecting population growth and rising service demands. Henry County's population grew by 4,750 residents between 2023 and 2024 and is projected to reach 346,000 by 2050. The FY2026 budget includes 79 new positions, with 12 supporting a new state court judge. Although departmental requests totaled $36.8 million, only $9.8 million is recommended, primarily due to economic uncertainties, pending litigation, and audit-related grant delays. The county lost $337,000 in grants in FY25 but expects to resume full funding in FY26. Additional revenue of $17.7 million identified in late FY25 was allocated to capital purchases, contingency funds, debt service, and operations, but only $4.3 million impacted the operating budget. The proposed FY26 budget includes $23.9 million in new expenses, potentially subject to change pending final revenue projections. The next steps in the budget process include a second workshop on April 15, a public hearing on May 6, 2025 and a final hearing and vote on May 28 2025.

ADJOURNMENT
Meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

Carlotta Harrell, Chair

Stephanie Braun, County Clerk