

**STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HENRY**

The Henry County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Budget Workshop Meeting on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 4:00 p.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 (**Absent**)
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

HENRY COUNTY CODE OF CONDUCT

(Sec. 2-2-128: Conduct during public meetings)

CALL TO ORDER

BUDGET WORKSHOP #2: RE FY 2026

Bernita Campbell, Budget Director, presented the FY26 Proposed General Fund and Special Service District Budget, which now includes updated revenue projections. She began by outlining the county's budget philosophy which includes maintaining the current millage rate of 15.733 mills, ensuring fair and competitive salaries and benefits for employees, advancing strategic priorities and partnerships and funding departmental essentials to maintain current service levels. She emphasized that the budget is developed to remain balanced without relying on fund balance to support recurring operational costs. Departments were instructed to keep spending levels consistent with FY25 although certain needs, driven by mandates and county growth, necessitated increases.

The proposed FY26 budget totals \$287.823,000, reflecting a \$28.1 million, or 10.8%, increase over the FY25 adopted budget of \$259.7 million. This increase supports maintaining current service levels and funding several key additions, including the North Mount Carmel Recreation Center, the newly established Henry County Police Academy and preparation for two new fire stations (Stations 17 and 18) opening in FY26 and FY27. Additional major expenditures include \$1.8 million for critical personnel needs, \$1.4 million for staff supporting the 5th State Court Judge (expected in January 2026), \$6 million in debt payments, \$4.2 million for longevity and COLA increases, \$3.2 million for insurance and pension bond increases, \$1.5 million for the

Department of Transportation, \$3.3 million for inmate medical services and jail personnel and \$2 million for fire personnel.

Ms. Campbell highlighted the county's consistent population growth, with a 1.4% increase from 2023 to 2024, equating to 4,750 new residents. Long-term projections from the Atlanta Regional Commission estimate a 44% population increase by 2050, bringing Henry County's population to around 346,000. The growth underscores the need for increased investments in infrastructure and public services.

Ms. Campbell stated commissioners also shared their budget priorities. Chair Harrell emphasized public safety and facility maintenance. Commissioner Wilson (District 1) prioritized roadway resurfacing and park upgrades to reduce traffic delays and enhance recreational appeal. Commissioner Robinson (District 2) echoed the need for road improvements and highlighted community celebrations like the Fairview Christmas. Commissioner Anglyn (District 3) focused on continuing the parks master plan, specifically at Heritage Park, and proposed beautification efforts in downtown McDonough. Commissioner Price (District 4) advocated for improvements at Richard Craig Park and better corridor lighting while Commissioner Lewis (District 5) stressed road infrastructure and adequate judicial resources to handle an increasing caseload.

The proposed FY26 budget includes 78 new positions, 12 of which are for support staff for the new state court judge. While departmental requests totaled \$36.4 million for personnel and operating expenses, only \$9.7 million was recommended due to financial uncertainties such as potential tariffs, litigation and delays in grant funding caused by audit issues. Ms. Campbell noted the county lost \$337,000 in grant funds during FY25 but expects reimbursements and recovery beginning in FY26.

Ms. Campbell explained that in FY25, an additional \$17.7 million in revenue was identified but not formally adopted into the budget. It was, however, allocated based on prior commitments: \$7.5 million for fire capital purchases, \$6.4 million as contingency, \$2.9 million for debt service on the central energy plant and \$900,000 for critical personnel and operational needs. Of this, only \$3.8 million impacted the operating budget, increasing the adjusted FY25 budget to \$263.5 million. The current FY26 budget recommendation adds \$24.3 million in new expenses, bringing the total to \$287.8 million.

During the Q&A portion, Commissioner Wilson asked about increases on the Board of Commissioners' side of the budget, which Ms. Campbell confirmed totaled \$145,000 — \$35,000 for operational costs and \$109,000 for personnel. Commissioner Lewis inquired about the timeline for the judicial classification and compensation study. Ms. Campbell responded that the study is still underway, with a projected completion date in late June. HR Director Holly Lafontaine confirmed that any recommended adjustments from the study would be proposed in the mid-year budget.

The next steps in the FY26 budget cycle include a public hearing on May 6, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. and the final public hearing and budget adoption on May 28, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

ADDED: Executive Session RE: Personnel

Vice Chair Neat Robinson made the motion to enter into executive session at 4:25 p.m.; **Commissioner Michael Price** seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

ADDED: Reconvene from Executive Session

Vice Chair Neat Robinson made the motion to reconvene from executive session at 5:45 p.m.; **Commissioner Johnny Wilson** seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

ADDED: Approval of affidavit and resolution pertaining to executive session

Commissioner Kevin J. Lewis made the motion approve the affidavit and resolution from executive session; **Commissioner Johnny Wilson** seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Carlotta Harrell, Chair

Stephanie Braun, County Clerk