



Minutes

I. Public Hearing:

1. James F. Banter - County Attorney - Presentation

James F. Banter, County Attorney, advised that the purpose of holding this Public Hearing was to hear an employee grievance. He stated that the Employee Handbook outlines a three (3) step process, with Step Three (3) being an appeal to the Grievance Appeals Committee, designated as the Board of Commissioners. During the Board's Regular Meeting held on September 9, 2025, the Board voted to hold a Public Hearing for the grievance appeal, scheduled for September 15, 2025. Attorney Banter distributed copies of Article VI of the Grievance Procedure, the appeal submitted to the Board by the appellant, Felisha Williams, along with her supporting documentation. Attorney Banter advised that, as this is a Public Hearing on the grievance, Mrs. Williams would first be given the opportunity to present her argument and any evidence to the Board. Following her presentation, Mrs. Williams' supervisor, April H. Hodges, County Administrator/County Clerk, would be allowed to provide her argument and any evidence she wished to present to the Board. Attorney Banter clarified that the scope of the Public Hearing was limited to the employee grievance, which is the subject of the appeal, and specifically to the relief requested by Mrs. Williams in her appeal. Copies of Article VI of the Grievance Procedure, the appeal submitted by Mrs. Williams and her supporting documentation were also distributed to both Mrs. Williams and Ms. Hodges.

2. Felisha Williams - Interim Human Resources Manager - Presentation

Felisha Williams advised that she had prepared a consolidated packet of information for the Board, which was uploaded prior to the Board's meeting packets by Audrey Jernigan, Assistant County Clerk. Mrs. Williams stated that on August 13, 2025, she submitted a formal grievance against County Administrator April H. Hodges. The grievance arose from conversations regarding the plan for Mrs. Williams to assume the role of Interim Human Resources Director following the resignation of former Human Resources Director, Sedrick Swan.

Mrs. Williams stated that Ms. Hodges acted as though these conversations had never taken place. She referenced a Personnel Action Form (PAF) prepared by Mr. Swan and sent to Ms. Hodges, bearing Mr. Swan's signature, which was submitted following a conversation between Mr. Swan and Ms. Hodges in her office. Mrs. Williams also presented a statement written by Mr. Swan summarizing discussions regarding her serving as Interim HR Director. Meetings took place on July 17 or 18, 2025. At Ms. Hodges' direction, the PAF was prepared listing Mrs. Williams as Interim HR Director, but she was to be placed at a manager pay grade for a ninety (90) day period. Mrs. Williams expressed concern about the proposed pay and requested clarification. In a subsequent meeting with Ms. Hodges, it was explained that the ninety (90) day manager rate would apply, after which her performance would be evaluated. Board approval would be required for appointment to Interim or Permanent HR Director, with the alternative for permanent appointment being to post the position and allow Mrs. Williams to apply.

Mrs. Williams stated that the HR Manager position no longer exists, having been converted to the HR Director position. She expressed to Mr. Swan that the title was not important as the duties remained the same. She further stated that Ms. Hodges cited the Board as the reason for the ninety (90) day

period, explaining that the Board would not allow her to act otherwise. When asked whether the Board had reviewed her resume or discussed the matter previously, Ms. Hodges responded no.

Mr. Swan subsequently posted the position for internal applicants, and Ms. Hodges instructed Mrs. Williams to apply. She was informed that once her application was submitted, the window would close, and the PAF would then be carried out. Mrs. Williams stated that she had included her resume in the Board's packets, along with the application submitted by Matt Ingram, who was hired for the position. She noted that Mr. Ingram's application did not list any experience in Human Resources. Mrs. Williams stated that during the interview process, she was instructed to prepare a 30-60-90 day plan outlining her goals and intentions for the HR Director role, which she completed. She noted that this was an added directive for candidates, as Mr. Swan had not completed this process. She was unsure when the requirement was added, who authorized it, or if it was part of official policy, and she was not aware of it until the day of her interview.

Mrs. Williams stated that her system access had been restricted, and she was instructed to focus solely on new hire paperwork, with all other duties to be forwarded to Mr. Ingram. She noted that this posed a problem, as Ms. Hodges' official response to the initially filed grievance indicated that Ms. Hodges serves as HR Director when the position is vacant due to the sensitive nature of the role, including connections to secure systems, financial operations, and other critical functions. Mrs. Williams further stated that she and Ms. Hodges never had a conversation after Mr. Swan's resignation indicating that Ms. Hodges would serve in the role of HR Director, and that she received no directive or communication regarding her duties. She added that, despite asking on several occasions for any directives or assignments to be produced, none have been provided. Mrs. Williams emphasized that she was given no guidance regarding her daily responsibilities and that she fully assumed the role of HR Director upon Mr. Swan's resignation.

Mrs. Williams remarked that she began to notice what she perceived as attempts at retaliation from Ms. Hodges, emphasizing that these were not merely perceived or implied, but actual attempts directed toward her. She further noted that she was falsely accused of stealing time from Mr. Swan. Mrs. Williams reported that Ms. Hodges contacted Bobby Cowart, Public Works Director and Compliance Coordinator, to initiate an investigation into her, despite knowing that Mr. Swan had divided his leftover sick leave among three (3) employees, including Mrs. Williams. She emphasized that Ms. Hodges was already aware of this allocation. Mrs. Williams noted that this incident prompted the filing of her initial grievance, and that an investigation was attempted against her immediately afterward.

Mrs. Williams also stated that Ms. Hodges has been misusing county resources, including using surveillance cameras to monitor Peach County employees, including herself. She provided an example, stating that she went to the Peach County Government Center to assist Mr. Cowart in conducting interviews for Public Works positions. Following this, Mr. Cowart and T'umbia Ashmon, Assistant Chief Appraiser, were questioned by Ms. Hodges regarding why Mrs. Williams was at the Government Center and why they had been speaking with her. Mrs. Williams further stated that Ms. Hodges was aware of her presence at the Government Center, as she had sent an email beforehand notifying Ms. Hodges that she would be assisting with interviews.

Mrs. Williams stated that another incident involved a family member of hers. She advised that her son, Shedrick Nichols, works for Peach County Public Works. When Mrs. Williams contacted the Information Technology (IT) Department to inquire who had revoked her system access, she was informed that it was Ms. Hodges. Upon IT contacting Ms. Hodges about the matter, Ms. Hodges reportedly reached out

to Mr. Cowart, requesting that Mr. Nichols be suspended and asking for an investigation, accusing him of being a spy and a plant within his department. Mr. Cowart declined to suspend Mr. Nichols, stating he had no knowledge of the familial relationship. When Mr. Cowart asked how Ms. Hodges knew of their relationship, she provided a false explanation, claiming she noticed it while entering payroll. Mrs. Williams noted that this would not have been possible, as she and her son have different last names, and the relationship could only have been discovered through some form of private investigation or research.

Mrs. Williams discussed the improper restriction of her access to HR systems. She stated that she was not informed that her access had been limited, which prevented her from performing the duties of her job, and that neither Ms. Hodges nor Mr. Ingram communicated this restriction to her, and she discovered it only when attempting to access the system. This issue prompted her initial request to Mr. Ingram for a list of her job duties. Mrs. Williams noted that, if she is unable to perform her full job duties, she is left without meaningful work. She further explained that Peach County is not a high-volume recruiting office, so her eight (8) hour workday cannot be fully occupied by processing new hire paperwork alone. Additionally, she stated that the arrangement posed a problem because Mr. Ingram had no experience or training in HR, leaving her in the position of instructing him on certain HR processes.

Mrs. Williams stated that Ms. Hodges had falsely claimed that Mr. Ingram had saved the county insurance from being canceled the prior week and that he did not require any assistance from her. Mrs. Williams explained that she had reconciled the unpaid invoices and presented them to Mr. Ingram, and provided him with a snapshot of the necessary actions to take. Upon receiving the invoices, Mr. Ingram took the Aflac invoice into his possession; however, Ms. Hodges had not yet received it back. The invoice was past due and at risk of cancellation as of the previous week. Mrs. Williams further stated that Mr. Ingram was responsible for providing the breakdown of pre- and post-tax amounts for the Finance Department, which had not yet been completed, emphasizing that she was the one who actually prevented the county insurance from being canceled.

Mrs. Williams also stated that, despite these incidents, she has continued performing HR Director duties involving vendors such as MSI, Aflac, and Aetna Meritain, among others, even though she no longer has system access. She noted that, because these vendors had established relationships with her via email and phone, they felt comfortable reaching out to her to ensure tasks were completed. Mrs. Williams further explained that she approached Mr. Ingram to ask what he had been able to access in his role, as she was still receiving emails indicating that insurance bills had not been paid. When she offered assistance, she was instructed to direct everything to him. She emphasized that, although Mr. Ingram had been appointed to the role, she continues to perform certain HR Director functions because he is untrained, no directive has been provided, and no plan has been established to train him.

Mrs. Williams stated that her grievance is a legitimate business matter and not personal. She emphasized that from the beginning, her concerns have been about proper procedures, qualifications, and doing what is right, rather than personal feelings. She noted that she has been placed in a position where she is being squeezed out of her current role. Mrs. Williams explained that her eight (8) hour workday is not being utilized properly, as she spends approximately 75% of the day at her desk attempting to obtain directives from Mr. Ingram, but receives none. She further noted that Mr. Ingram

works from the former Grants Manager's office rather than the HR Director's office, citing his preference for the window view due to his prior experience in outdoor Parks and Recreation roles.

Mrs. Williams referenced an email dated August 26, 2025, in which Mr. Ingram asked if she could meet with him for a side-by-side session to demonstrate HR processes and procedures. She stated that she does not believe it should be her responsibility to train him and that such training should be provided by his leadership. However, as the only person in the office with HR knowledge, she noted that placing someone in the HR Director role who is not structurally qualified based on his own application is completely absurd. Mrs. Williams stated that she believes she should be compensated for the timeframe during which she served in the HR Director role, as she does not believe the process was handled justly. She noted that the interview process was, in her view, a farce, and emphasized that she had been performing the duties of the HR Director prior to the interview. Mrs. Williams explained that Mr. Swan resigned on July 21, 2025, and that prior to his departure, she conducted side-by-side training with him as he transferred processes. She further stated that Mr. Swan introduced her to vendors and other contacts as the person who would be stepping into the role, and that Ms. Hodges was fully aware of this and had been thoroughly informed.

Mrs. Williams stated that she had a conversation with Ms. Hodges on July 31, 2025, regarding her PAF, which had not yet been signed. She noted that Ms. Hodges had the PAF in her possession but had not signed it and made no effort to communicate its status. Mrs. Williams explained that she had to reach out to Ms. Hodges to request a meeting and ask that the PAF be updated, as she did not feel comfortable making the changes herself in the system. During the same period, Mrs. Williams asked Ms. Hodges what duties she was expected to perform as Interim HR Manager. She was informed that she would serve in the interim role for ninety (90) days, after which she would transition to the HR Director position. Mrs. Williams stated that she agreed to this arrangement solely because Ms. Hodges indicated it would be easier and more favorable in the eyes of the Board of Commissioners.

Mrs. Williams stated that there has been a lack of direction from both Mr. Ingram and Ms. Hodges. She noted that there is minimal daily communication between herself and Mr. Ingram. Approximately 90% of the time, no communication occurs. Mrs. Williams explained that she is consistently asking Mr. Ingram about certain policies and procedures because she anticipates potential problems and is trying to prevent issues, while also stepping back to allow him to fulfill the role.

Mrs. Williams addressed a failed attempt to conduct an HR audit. She stated that she has not received any updates regarding the audit since it was presented during a Board of Commissioners meeting, and that Mr. Ingram has not mentioned it to her. She explained that the audit was presented to the Board as a request from Ms. Hodges, but no one communicated to her, as the HR Technician, that an audit of HR files was required. Mrs. Williams stated that she believes this audit request was another attempt at retaliation by Ms. Hodges after learning that her son, Shedrick Nichols, works for Public Works. Mrs. Williams noted that Mr. Ingram subsequently requested the files of three (3) new hires, including her son, to ensure compliance with the drug screening process. She informed Mr. Ingram that all employees are required to follow the same processes, regardless of their identity, and emphasized that she strictly adheres to policies and procedures. Mrs. Williams explained that she felt the request for her son's drug screening results was targeted specifically at him. She further stated that if Ms. Hodges had genuinely intended to conduct an HR audit, she would not have waited until August to request the files from Mrs. Williams. Mrs. Williams also noted that Ms. Hodges later presented to the Board a request for an outside individual, known to her, to conduct the audit, but no action has been taken. She expressed her belief that this audit request was a personal attack directed at her son rather than a legitimate business

matter. Mrs. Williams stated that if she and Mr. Ingram worked together, they could complete the HR file audit in two (2) to three (3) days at most.

Commissioner Howell stated that her original questions regarding an HR audit were for the same reasons cited by Mrs. Williams, emphasizing that such audits should be considered a standard part of HR duties. Chairman Moseley stated that he recalls the Board had planned to reach out to the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) to inquire about HR auditing services before moving forward. He noted that a decision to proceed with the audit had been delayed until after consultation with ACCG. Mrs. Williams stated that after viewing the broadcast of the Board meeting where the request for an HR audit was presented, she reached out to Mr. Swan to clarify whether he had originally requested the audit, as Ms. Hodges had indicated. She referenced a screenshot of their correspondence in which Mr. Swan stated that he did not request an audit, but noted that he had observed issues he did not want to be responsible for and wanted the files vetted prior to assuming his position. Mrs. Williams further explained that when Mr. Swan raised this matter with Ms. Hodges, she told him that an outside person was unnecessary to conduct the audit and that he could handle it himself.

Mrs. Williams stated that she is willing to produce her son, Shedrick Nichols' file for review if there are any questions regarding whether policies and procedures were properly followed during his hiring process. She emphasized that she performs her duties according to policy and procedures, not for personal gain or personal feelings. Mrs. Williams concluded her statements by requesting reassignment in light of events over the past thirty (30) days. She requested immediate reassignment from the Board of Commissioners' office under Ms. Hodges' leadership and direction, citing a lack of fair opportunity and no sustainable career path under Ms. Hodges' leadership. Mrs. Williams stated that she came to Peach County seeking a future, stability, and consistency, and that she remains committed to serving Peach County to the best of her abilities. She emphasized that she has a strong plan for contributing to Peach County regardless of her role, but under Ms. Hodges' leadership, she does not feel she can be successful.

Vice-Chairwoman Hill asked Mrs. Williams where she envisions transferring within Peach County. Mrs. Williams stated that she has discussed a potential transfer with Sheriff Robert "Buck" Shannon. She noted that Sheriff Shannon indicated a lateral move might be possible if necessary. Mrs. Williams added that she has been careful not to overstep procedures or fall out of compliance, and therefore has not had many discussions regarding a transfer. Mrs. Williams stated that, given the current circumstances, she would perform any duties assigned to her, even sweeping floors, because coming to work each day under anxiety, stress, and feeling targeted is not conducive to success. She emphasized that her grievance is not personal, and she is not angry, but she will continue to perform her duties to the best of her ability. Mrs. Williams stated that the matter is about right versus wrong, and concluded her presentation.

Attorney Banter asked Mrs. Williams for clarification on several points. He confirmed that she is seeking back pay from July 21, 2025, through August 13, 2025, for the difference between the Interim HR Manager and HR Director roles. Mrs. Williams affirmed that this is correct. Attorney Banter also confirmed that her request includes an immediate transfer, and Mrs. Williams confirmed this as well. He further asked if she stands by the requests listed in her appeal, to which Mrs. Williams replied affirmatively. Finally, Attorney Banter asked if she had submitted all the documentation she wished to present to the Board, and Mrs. Williams confirmed that she had.

Commissioner Howell asked for clarification regarding Mrs. Williams' comments about retaliation, specifically in relation to her son, Shedrick Nichols. Mrs. Williams explained that she believed the retaliation was directed toward her son because Ms. Hodges had contacted Mr. Cowart, requesting his immediate suspension. Mrs. Williams emphasized that she does not tolerate bullying, targeting, or retaliation against anyone's child, particularly her own. She reiterated her commitment to following policies and procedures, noting that her son did not receive any special treatment and went through the same hiring process as all other applicants. She stated that she had no involvement in his hiring and was not present during his interview. When asked by Mr. Ingram if she had participated in the interview process, she confirmed she had not. Mrs. Williams further explained that applications were submitted directly to Mr. Cowart, who independently selected the candidates for interviews. Chairman Moseley asked if anyone had been made aware that Mr. Nichols is Mrs. Williams' son. Mrs. Williams responded that there was no need for anyone to be aware, noting that Mr. Nichols is twenty-nine (29) years old and a grown man. She emphasized that he does not work for her, and that there is no quid pro quo or nepotism involved.

Vice-Chairwoman Hill asked Attorney Banter to outline Mrs. Williams' requests as listed in her grievance. Attorney Banter referred to page two (2) of the filed grievance and summarized her requests as follows: that the matter proceed immediately to the third-level appeal process; that the record accurately reflect her correct legal name, Mrs. Felisha Williams; that her assumption of HR Director duties be acknowledged and all documentation and communications reflect the true scope of her responsibilities and any underpayment; and that she be immediately reassigned to another position within the County.

Attorney Banter asked Mrs. Williams if she had anything further to present. Mrs. Williams proceeded by summarizing her position. She stated that there was no promise of any particular outcome made to her by Mr. Swan; his decisions were based solely on her credentials, knowledge, and over twenty (20) years of experience in Human Resources. She emphasized that these conversations occurred multiple times with Ms. Hodges, despite Ms. Hodges' statements to the contrary, and were documented in the PAF. Mrs. Williams reiterated her belief that her son's situation constituted a direct attempt at retaliation, as Ms. Hodges could not act against her directly and instead targeted her indirectly. She further stated her belief that Ms. Hodges misused county property for surveillance purposes and that the restriction of her system access was unjustified, particularly given that the HR Director in place was untrained. To Mrs. Williams, this appeared to create a scenario in which she was required to train the HR Director due to the lack of a formal training plan.

Commissioner Howell asked how Mrs. Williams became aware that Ms. Hodges had restricted her system access. Mrs. Williams stated that the IT Department confirmed the restriction and reported that, when they contacted Ms. Hodges about it, she told them to stay out of the matter, indicating it was an administrative issue. Mrs. Williams noted that on the same day, Ms. Hodges contacted Mr. Cowart regarding her son.

With no further questions, Mrs. Williams concluded her statements.

3. April H. Hodges - County Administrator/County Clerk - Presentation

April H. Hodges, County Administrator/County Clerk, presented the Interim Human Resources (HR) Director Personnel Action Form (PAF), prepared by Mr. Sedrick Swan, to the Board. She advised the Board to note the date and time the form was submitted. Ms. Hodges also distributed a screenshot of a

text message exchange with Mr. Swan. The conversation indicated that Ms. Hodges asked Mr. Swan to come to her office on the same day the Interim HR Director PAF was submitted. Upon receiving the PAF, Ms. Hodges requested a meeting with Mr. Swan to discuss why he had sent the form to her, as she had instructed that the position be advertised for applications. Ms. Hodges stated that the position had not yet been advertised and that she had verbally instructed Mr. Swan several times to do so; however, Mr. Swan refused to advertise the position. Commissioner Howell asked why Ms. Hodges allowed Mr. Swan to refuse her direction. Ms. Hodges explained that Mr. Swan had previously been placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), which she believes contributed to his decision to resign from his position.

Ms. Hodges stated that once the position was advertised, the interview process proceeded in the same manner as it typically does for any director-level position, including during the promotion and hiring processes for Janet Smith, Finance Director, and Keith King, Finance Manager. Ms. Hodges cited Janet Smith as an example, noting that Ms. Smith moved from the position of Finance Manager to Finance Director. She emphasized that Ms. Smith did not hold a position comparable to that of Mrs. Felisha Williams, who served as an Administrative HR Technician. Ms. Hodges stated that she did not feel comfortable promoting an HR Technician directly into the HR Director role, which was the reasoning for creating the Interim HR Manager role.

Commissioner Howell asked how many individuals applied for the HR Director position. Audrey Jernigan, Assistant County Clerk, stated that she recalls approximately seven (7) applications being submitted. Commissioner Howell also asked whether the applicants' resumes were compared during the selection process, noting that candidates sometimes possess more experience than required for the position. Ms. Hodges confirmed that the resumes were indeed compared. Ms. Hodges advised that she instructed Ms. Jernigan to select the top three (3) candidates, as is standard procedure for all positions. Ms. Jernigan also prepared interview questions, consistent with the process used for other positions. Ms. Hodges stated that she sought to remain as uninvolved in the process as possible, relying on an interview panel to determine the top candidate. She explained that she does not make the final decision. The panel consists of five (5) directors who score the candidates' responses to the interview questions. The scores are totaled, and the top candidate is determined based on these scores. Ms. Hodges receives the panel's recommendation for the top candidate and proceeds accordingly, as she has done in all similar situations.

Commissioner Howell stated that she did not understand why Ms. Hodges would feel uncomfortable promoting someone from an Administrative Technician position to a Director position, particularly in comparison to Ms. Hodges' own advancement within the county. Ms. Hodges stated that she was never promoted from an Administrative Technician position to a Director position. Commissioner Howell clarified that Ms. Hodges had been given opportunities based largely on trust rather than on her resume and qualifications. She expressed that she did not understand why Ms. Hodges would not extend a similar opportunity to another employee who possessed the credentials and experience indicating they were qualified for the role. Ms. Hodges stated that she did not have an answer to that question.

Chairman Moseley stated that the comparison is not equivalent, noting that Ms. Hodges has been with the county for many years and worked her way up to her current position. Ms. Hodges stated that when she was promoted to the Assistant County Administrator position, she applied and interviewed for the role with her resume. Commissioner Howell noted that she does not recall the interview process for Ms.

Hodges and stated that the Board had created the Assistant County Administrator position specifically for her, and that it was not advertised in the County Legal Organ. Ms. Hodges responded that the position was advertised through the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC), and that she applied and interviewed for it. Vice-Chairwoman Hill stated that the Board did not create the Assistant County Administrator role specifically for Ms. Hodges. Commissioner Howell then asked who held the Assistant County Administrator position prior to Ms. Hodges assuming the role. Ms. Hodges responded that there was no previous holder of the position. Commissioner Howell confirmed, stating that the position was created at that time.

Commissioner Yoder expressed that the Board members all want the best person for any given position. He further stated that he feels taxpayer funds are being spent on a position that is not receiving the value it deserves. Commissioner Yoder also stated that the Board needs to consider qualifications to determine who is best suited for a position. He expressed confusion as to why the Board was not involved in the hiring of the HR Director position, as they typically are with positions such as Fire Chief, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Director, or Public Works Director. Ms. Hodges responded that, while the Board is normally involved in such positions, in the Office of County Administration, interview panels are the standard procedure. She referenced the hiring of Janet Smith and Sedrick Swan as examples of this process.

Commissioner Howell asked where the scores for the HR Director interview candidates were recorded. Ms. Hodges stated that Ms. Jernigan has them compiled on a spreadsheet. She further advised that the interview panel members were Sheila Hayes, E911 Director; Brian Donaldson, EMS Director; Bobby Cowart, Public Works Director; and Ryan Roberts, Assistant Fire Chief/Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director. Commissioner Yoder asked whether the HR Director position was advertised internally only. Ms. Hodges advised that it was posted on the Peach County website for both internal and external applicants. Ms. Hodges stated that three (3) top candidates were selected based on their applications and were subsequently interviewed for the HR Director position. Commissioner Howell asked for clarification as to whether Mrs. Williams was among the top candidates. Ms. Hodges confirmed that she was. Commissioner Howell asked why Mrs. Williams was considered a top candidate if, as previously stated by Ms. Hodges, she was serving in an HR Technician role. Ms. Hodges stated that Mrs. Williams was the second highest-scoring candidate. She explained that her plan for the office was to establish both a Director and a Manager role to create a succession plan. Based on the interview panel's recommendations, the top two (2) candidates were meant to be selected for these positions. The top candidate, Matt Ingram, was offered the Director position, and Mrs. Williams was notified via email that she was not selected. Ms. Hodges emphasized that the office restructuring was intended to implement a succession plan.

Ms. Hodges advised that she reduced the number of Administrative Technician positions in exchange for Manager positions, in order to provide directors with the flexibility to take time off while ensuring that office operations continue to function normally. Commissioner Howell asked what qualified Mr. Ingram as the top candidate for the HR Director position despite having no prior HR experience, particularly when compared to a candidate with over twenty (20) years of HR experience. She emphasized that her question was not intended to be disrespectful toward Mr. Ingram. Ms. Hodges stated that Mr. Ingram is very intelligent and performed exceptionally in his previous role as Grants Manager. She noted that, although he does not have direct HR experience, he possesses extensive experience working in local government. Ms. Hodges reiterated that the interview panel believed he was the best candidate for the HR Director position and that she trusts the judgment of her team.

Commissioner Howell stated that, while she previously trusted her team, she now has many questions because she is observing discrepancies and situations that do not appear to add up. She emphasized that the county is not hiring for general government experience, but specifically for HR expertise, as it is a highly specialized discipline. She further noted that placing someone without proper HR experience in the role could expose the county to significant liability if the position's responsibilities are not carried out correctly. She referenced the recent situation in which the county's insurance was nearly canceled because the accounts had not been properly reconciled, highlighting the potential risks of placing someone without HR experience in the role. Ms. Hodges advised the Board that the invoices in question had not been reconciled since June, but added that they were subsequently reconciled and paid by Mr. Ingram. Commissioner Howell stated that during a recent meeting, Mr. Ingram was asked questions regarding HR processes, and he appeared unsure and unfamiliar with the topics discussed. She noted that he had previously demonstrated much greater confidence and familiarity in his role as Grants Manager.

Ms. Hodges further clarified that Mrs. Williams' assertion that the situation involving her son was personal is not accurate. She stated that she has discussed the matter with the attorneys overseeing the investigation, William H. Noland and Grace Simms Martin, and has provided them with supporting evidence. Ms. Hodges concluded by explaining that her awareness of the familial relationship arose during her routine payroll review process. She maintains a comprehensive record of all employees whenever a PAF is signed. Prior to approving payroll in the banking system, she first verifies that every individual listed is an official Peach County employee. The three (3) employees previously mentioned were flagged because their PAFs had not yet been signed. Ms. Hodges emphasized that, in Peach County, no employee can be officially hired without her approval of the PAF, and therefore unsigned forms automatically raise red flags. Attorney Banter asked Ms. Hodges if she had any additional evidence or arguments she wished to present. Ms. Hodges responded that she did not.

II. Executive Session:

Chairman Moseley advised that he would now accept a motion to enter into Executive Session to deliberate on the testimonies they had just heard. Vice-Chairwoman Hill made a motion to enter Executive Session at 4:51 p.m. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Personnel Matter

Vice-Chairwoman Hill moved to grant Mrs. Felisha Williams the following relief requested:

- 1. That this Board hold a Public Hearing as a third-level appeal process concerning Mrs. Williams' employee grievance—which was completed by the Public Hearing conducted that same night (September 15, 2025).*
- 2. That the record accurately reflects the name of the complainant—Mrs. Felisha Williams.*
- 3. That Mrs. Williams be acknowledged as HR Director for the time period of July 22, 2025, to August 13, 2025.*
- 4. That Mrs. Williams' service of HR Director duties be acknowledged, and that she be paid the remaining amount that equates to the HR Director rate of \$41.38 for the above time period, totaling \$1,251.20. Further, that all documentation and communication reflect the true scope of responsibilities undertaken.*

Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Adjourn:

Commissioner Howell made a motion to adjourn at 5:37 p.m. Vice-Chairwoman Hill seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Called Meeting

The Meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.

V. Executive Session:

Vice-Chairwoman Hill moved to enter into Executive Session at 5:41 p.m. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Personnel Matter

Commissioner Howell moved to issue a three (3) day suspension of County Administrator Hodges for a violation of the Peach County Employee Manual Firearm Policy, and to instruct Ms. Hodges to receive professionalism and/or sensitivity training. The motion died for lack of a second.

Vice-Chairwoman Hill moved that Ms. Hodges receive a written reprimand for violating the Peach County Employee Manual Firearm Policy, and to instruct Ms. Hodges to receive professionalism and/or sensitivity training. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-1 with Commissioner Howell opposing.

VI. Adjourn:

There being no further business to come before the Board at this Special Called Public Meeting on this date, Commissioner Howell moved to adjourn at 7:07 p.m. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.