



REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
Peach County Board of Commissioners
6:00 PM, December 9, 2025

Minutes

I. Public Hearing:

II. Consent Agenda:

1. December 2, 2025

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Agenda Approval:

1. December 9, 2025

Vice-Chairwoman Hill made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approve of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

1. Regular Meeting - November 11, 2025

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 11, 2025 Regular Meeting as presented. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Called Meeting - December 2, 2025

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to approve the Minutes of the December 2, 2025 Called Meeting as presented. Vice-Chairwoman Hill seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Announcements/Updates:

1. Matt Ingram - Human Resources Director - Introduction to New HR Technician - Amari Shockley

Matt Ingram, Human Resources Director, introduced Amari Shockley, the new HR Technician. Ms. Shockley stated she was pleased to meet the Board, briefly shared her previous Human Resources experience, and thanked the Board for the opportunity.

VI. Appearances:

VII. Old Business:

VIII. New Business:

1. Errol Newark - Grants Manager - Peach County Transit 2026 Safety Plan

Errol Newark, Grants Manager, presented the Peach County Transit 2026 Safety Plan. He advised that no changes were made to the plan and that it was updated solely for the 2026 year. Mr. Newark requested approval of the plan and authorization for the Chairman's signature on the document. He further noted that Finance Director Janet Smith was instrumental in assisting with the preparation of the document for presentation.

Vice-Chairwoman Hill made a motion to approve the Peach County 2026 Transit Safety Plan as presented. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. Commissioner Howell inquired whether there were any changes regarding the amount of funding the County would pay or receive, or if any services would be altered. Mr. Newark advised that while costs in the contract have increased slightly, the Safety Plan is separate from the actual contract for transit services. The motion carried unanimously.

2. James F. Banter - County Attorney - Personnel Policy Approval

James F. Banter, County Attorney, presented the revised edition of the Peach County Personnel Policy. Attorney Banter stated the policy was originally presented to the Board during the June 2025 Regular Meeting and has since been reviewed by department heads for feedback and revised with assistance from the Human Resources team. He reviewed recent changes that had not yet been presented to the Board.

Attorney Banter discussed updates to the Compensatory Time and Paid Time Off (PTO) policies. He explained the transition from separate vacation and sick leave to a general PTO system, in which employees will receive a lump sum of PTO hours at the beginning of each year based on seniority. A recommended change added to the policy is that, since the County does not pay out sick leave, sick leave hours will be carried over for employee use. The existing buy-back policy will remain, allowing employees to sell up to 80 hours per year as an additional incentive.

Attorney Banter invited questions from the Board regarding the PTO policy. He further explained that the Compensatory Time policy will allow a maximum accrual of 240 hours, in accordance with federal law, with a higher limit of 480 hours for public safety employees (Fire, EMS, and Sheriff's Office), also pursuant to federal law. Compensatory Time must be used before PTO and must be used within one (1) year of being earned. He stated that the intent of the policy is to maintain uniformity among County employees while providing flexibility.

Vice-Chairwoman Hill asked whether Public Works employees would be included in the public safety category. Attorney Banter advised that he would review this matter and provide a follow-up response. Commissioner Howell asked about Compensatory Time earned by an employee who has moved from a non-exempt to an exempt position. Attorney Banter advised that the timeline in which the Compensatory Time was earned would need to be reviewed and that definitions for exempt and non-exempt employees would be applied to ensure uniformity.

Vice-Chairwoman Hill asked whether the Sheriff's Office would be required to follow the policy. Attorney Banter advised that Sheriff's Office employees are separate; however, the Sheriff, like other elected officials, has the authority to opt into the policy. Attorney Banter further stated that, if the policy is approved, he will meet with elected officials, department heads, and employees to review and explain the changes included in the revised policy. Commissioner Lewis made a motion to adopt the policy as presented. Vice-Chairwoman Hill seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. April Howard - County Administrator/County Clerk - Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) - Proposed Highway 49 Extension

April Howard, County Administrator/County Clerk, provided an update regarding correspondence received from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) concerning the proposed Highway 49 expansion project. Ms. Howard advised that she and Bobby Cowart, Public Works Director, have participated in multiple pre-design meetings for the project. Ms. Howard stated the item was placed on the Agenda for informational purposes, as GDOT is considering a roundabout for the State Route 49 Connector extension to State Route 96.

Commissioner Lewis added that the project is a bypass connecting Highway 49 to Highway 96 and will include a roundabout tying into the existing bypass. He noted that the roundabout will be designed to accommodate semi-trucks and include bike lanes. No action taken.

4. Commissioner Yoder - Implementation of a Land Bank for Planned Redevelopment in Blighted Areas with Dilapidated Properties and Absentee Ownership

Commissioner Yoder discussed the potential implementation of a land bank to support planned redevelopment in blighted areas impacted by dilapidated properties and absentee ownership. He advised that he met with Angela Howard, Tax Commissioner, and obtained a five (5) year tax sale history, which provided insight into absentee ownership and LLC-owned properties. Commissioner Yoder stated that residential real estate is one of the most effective ways to build value for individual property owners who have a vested interest in Peach County. He referenced the County's existing blight ordinance and blight tax, noting their past effectiveness in addressing these issues.

Commissioner Yoder suggested consideration of establishing an intergovernmental land bank involving Peach County, the City of Fort Valley, and the City of Byron. Attorney Banter advised that Macon-Bibb County currently operates an active land bank that assists with redevelopment efforts and lien resolution.

Commissioner Lewis clarified that such a land bank would allow the County, cities, and the school system to work collaboratively to address unpaid property taxes and prevent properties from being acquired by absentee owners. He stated that this approach would enable the County and municipalities to recover owed funds, clean up properties, and ultimately sell them for redevelopment.

Commissioner Howell suggested opening the matter for community discussion to receive input from constituents prior to the Board making any decisions. Attorney Banter advised that a public hearing or town hall meeting could be held to gather public input on the matter. Vice-Chairwoman Hill referenced the Gano Community and emphasized the importance of ensuring her constituents are informed about how the County is working to assist with this matter. She stated that she would like to be included in the process moving forward.

April Howard, County Administrator/County Clerk, advised that she and Errol Newark, Grants Manager, have met to discuss the benefits of establishing a land bank. She noted that Mr. Newark has prior experience with land bank development. Ms. Howard referenced the prevalence of heir properties and unclear property titles in Peach County and stated that a land bank could help streamline the process for addressing numerous dilapidated properties.

Mr. Newark clarified that a land bank purchases properties and does not take property from owners. Commissioner Howell emphasized the importance of ensuring that public perception of a land bank is not negative. It was noted and agreed that educating the public on the purpose and function of land banks would be beneficial. No action taken.

IX. Executive Session:

Commissioner Howell made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 6:53 p.m. Vice-Chairwoman Hill seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Board Reappointment (1) - Planning & Zoning Board

The Board unanimously reappointed Sydney McLeod to serve on the Planning & Zoning Board for an additional one (1) year term.

2. Personnel Matter

No action taken.

3. Property Acquisition

No action taken.

4. Attorney/Client Privilege

No action taken.

X. Chair & Vice-Chair Nominations:

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to appoint Commissioner Lewis to serve as Board Chairman for 2026 and Commissioner Betty C. Hill to serve as Vice-Chairwoman for 2026. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

XI. Adjourn:

Vice-Chairwoman Hill made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.