

**HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES
6:00 P.M., MONDAY, JULY 28, 2025
HABERSHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE
JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM
295 LLEWELLYN ST, CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523**

The Habersham County Board of Commissioners held a special called meeting on Monday, July 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Jury Assembly Room of the Habersham County Courthouse located at 295 Llewellyn St, Clarkesville, GA 30523.

Present was Chairman Jimmy Tench, Vice Chairman Bruce Harkness, Commissioner Dustin Mealor, Commissioner Ty Akins, Commissioner Kelly Woodall, County Manager Tim Sims, County Clerk Brandalin Carnes, staff, members of the media and the public.

Chairman Tench called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Commissioner Harkness lead the invocation.

Commissioner Tench lead the pledge of allegiance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Woodall, and voted unanimously (5-0) to adopt the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Consider/Approve SPLOST VIII (2026) Intergovernmental Agreement with the Municipalities of Alto, Baldwin, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest, Mount Airy, and Tallulah Falls

County Manager Sims informed the Commissioners that all seven municipalities have collaborated with the County to draft and approve this intergovernmental agreement for Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) VIII.

Motion by Commissioner Mealor, seconded by Commissioner Woodall, and voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the SPLOST VIII (2026) Intergovernmental Agreement with the Municipalities of Alto, Baldwin, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest, Mount Airy, and Tallulah Falls

- b. Consider/Approve Resolution to Regulate and Provide for the Calling of an Election to Determine the Issuance or Non-Issuance of General Obligation Bonds and the Continuation of a 1% Sales and Use Tax (SPLOST VIII)

County Manager Sims informed the Commissioners that voting on this resolution to call for an election is the next step in the process after approval of the IGAs' with the municipalities. Once approved by the Board of Commissioners, this resolution will be forwarded to the Elections Department who will present it for approval by the Board of Elections at their special called meeting being held tomorrow. This will allow for time to submit the call for election to the newspaper prior to the Wednesday deadline for advertisement in this coming Friday, August 1st edition of the newspaper. Having the call for election in the August 1st edition of the paper would mean that it is being advertised 94 days in advance of the election, which meets the 90 days required by law.

Motion by Commissioner Woodall, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, and voted unanimously (5-0) to approve a resolution to regulate and provide for the calling of an election to determine the issuance or non-issuance of general obligation bonds and the continuation of a 1% sales and use tax (SPLOST VIII).

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Harkness stated that he had heard a lot of talk in the community implying that the Commission is trying to impose a new tax. He wants to clarify to the public that is not the case, and that the Commission is only voting tonight on allowing the citizens of Habersham County to be able to decide for themselves through an election if they wish to continue the special local option sales tax that is already in existence.

Commissioner Woodall echoed this, saying that the beauty of SPLOST is that it puts this decision in the hands of the constituents. Habersham County voters are the ones who will decide whether they approve of continuing the sales tax and the projects that it would fund.

County Manager Sims informed the Commission that he has already scheduled meetings with key community groups and leaders, including Partnership Habersham and the Chamber of Commerce, who plan to assist in promoting and getting information about SPLOST out to the voters. He reminded the Commissioners that while state law prevents local governments from directly advocating for the SPLOST, they can only educate.

Commissioner Harkness asked about the status of the animal shelter project? Mr. Sims informed him that the ground was broken last week and that current estimates are that construction will be completed in approximately 9-12 months. Mr. Sims stated that he realizes that people on social media have talked about how it has taken 5 years to get to this point, but they don't realize all that has occurred with the design, bid, location changes, land acquisition and more. Additionally, the County had to wait for the tax money to be collected.

Commissioner Tench wanted to know how the City of Cornelia was able to get away with putting a waterline down BC Grant Road when there is no known right-of-way? Mr. Sims informed Commissioner Tench he could inquire about this if he wishes.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, and voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

By: _____
Jimmy Tench, Chairman

Attest: _____
Brandalin Carnes, County Clerk