

HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

5:30 P.M., MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025

HABERSHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE

JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM

295 LLEWELLYN ST, CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523

The Habersham County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Monday, May 19, 2025 at 5:30 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 Attorney Ralph Taylor, County Clerk Brandalin Carnes, staff, members of the media and the public.

Commissioner Tench called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Commissioner Akins lead the Invocation.

Commissioner Harkness lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

a. Discussion on Recycling

Solid Waste Director Johnnie Vickers addressed the Commission.

He reviewed a list of accomplishments in the recycling program that have occurred since May 2023. These accomplishments include upgrades to the recycling centers, increasing operating days from three per week to six days per week, the purchase of a roll of truck to allow the county to haul it's own recyclables, partnerships with non-profits for clothing/textile collection, a partnership with Fusion Green for recyclable electronics collection, and grinding yard debris to offer back to citizens as wood chips/mulch at no cost. Mr. Vickers informed the Commissioners that improvements were made to the Clarkesville and Cornelia Recycling Center offices to provide safe and sanitary working areas for the site coordinators. This included replacing the Clarkesville Office and repairing the Cornelia Office to provide both with working indoor restrooms with hot water as well as heating and air conditioning. Safety was also improved for both citizens and staff by installing self-contained compactors (SCCs) that allowed for individuals to be able tow walk directly up to the SCC to deposit cardboard and/or paper, eliminating the use of dangerous metal steps and improving accessibility for handicapped individuals. These SCCs also improve efficiency by increasing the amount of material that can be transported while reducing the number of hauls. The old containers were repurposed by placing them at the landfill for trash collection. Mr. Vickers reviewed the costs versus revenue transporting recyclables in comparison to the equivalent monetary value of the airspace saved in the landfill from not dumping this material. He informed the Commission that the latest projections now show the landfill as reaching full capacity by July of 2043, and recycling efforts would only continue to extend its usable life.

Commissioner Woodall inquired as to whether Mr. Vickers was saying that the County makes a profit from recyclables? Mr. Vickers informed him that it isn't so much that they make a direct profit from recycling as it is that they save valuable airspace in the landfill which extends its usable life. Commissioner Woodall expressed that it sounds as though recycling is not a long-term solution to the problem. Mr. Vickers agreed that recycling is not the end-all solution, however it buys the County more time to figure out a long-term solution down the road. Commissioner Akins concurred, stating that it

is also a matter of being responsible with the County's assets. Commissioner Woodall stated that while he understands this, he wonders if it would not be a better to go ahead and use the money being expended towards as long term solution rather than on expanding recycling services. Commissioner Harkness stated that he feels that it is time for Mr. Vickers to regroup with County Clerk Carnes about reaching back out to the USFS to see if they would be willing to do a land swap for the location of a new landfill, as he knows individuals who own properties bordering USFS lands that may be willing to sell their properties to the County to be able to do this swap.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Harkness, seconded by Commissioner Akins and voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the work session at 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

By: 
Jimmy Tench, Commission Chairman

Attest: 
Brandalin Carnes, County Clerk