

Minutes of Called Meeting
Elbert County Board of Commissioners
Thursday, June 18, 2026

- 1) Chairman Lee Vaughn called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioner David Hunt, Commissioner Casey Freeman, Commissioner Chris Alexander, Commissioner Mike Scoggins, Commissioner Freddie Jones, County Administrator Allen Hulme, County Attorney Bill Daughtry, CFO Macie Witcher, and members of the media.
- 2) After the pledge to the United States flag, the invocation was given by Mr. Daughtry.
- 3) **Adoption of the Agenda.** Commissioner Alexander made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

- 4) **Public Comments.** Chuck Almond addressed the Board regarding staffing shortages and employee compensation. He presented four proposed hourly wage increase options for employees:

- Option 1: \$1.00 per hour (included in the proposed budget)
- Option 2: \$2.00 per hour
- Option 3: \$1.80 per hour
- Option 4: \$1.50 per hour

Mr. Almond encouraged the Board to consider the option that would best address employee retention and staffing needs. No follow-up questions were presented.

- 5) **Discussion and consideration of the Proposed FY2027 budget.** County Administrator Allen Hulme presented the proposed FY2027 budget totaling \$37,029,000, including a General Fund budget of \$18,210,000. He reviewed the major budget increases, noting that more than half of the increase was dedicated to public safety. The county's physical growth was estimated at approximately \$25 million (2.75%).

Mr. Hulme provided a breakdown of the proposed budget increases:

- General Fund: \$1,254,010
- Special Revenue Funds: \$233,740
- Capital Project Funds (SPLOST, T-SPLOST, LMIG): \$2,318,300
- Enterprise Funds: \$33,150

He further explained that the overall budget increase totaled \$3,839,200, with \$1,254,000 attributable to the General Fund. Health insurance costs, originally projected to increase by \$350,000, were successfully negotiated down to \$176,200. Public Safety represented the largest increase at \$946,300, including funding for School Resource Officers.

Mr. Hulme explained that the proposed budget included a \$1.00 per hour wage increase for EMS employees. Increasing the raise to \$2.00 per hour would require an additional \$90,950. Commissioner Alexander recommended increasing the EMS wage adjustment to \$2.00 per hour. Mr. Almond advised that the total included salary and benefits and stated that the proposed increase would help maintain competitiveness with surrounding counties. County Attorney Bill

Daughtry noted that improved compensation could reduce employee turnover, training costs, and overtime expenses.

Commissioner Alexander mentioned Mr. Hulme's raise of \$5,000. Chairman Vaughn stated that the additional wage increase did not require a separate vote. Commissioner Freeman listed justifications for the increase and Vaughn expressed support for the increase, citing this would help get him in line with other counties.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the FY2027 Budget, including an additional \$1.00 per hour increase for EMS employees, bringing the total wage adjustment to \$2.00 per hour. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

- 6) **Discussion and Consideration to Add Old Hartwell Road to T-SPLOST Paving List.** Mr. Hulme presented a request to add Old Hartwell Road to the T-SPLOST paving list at an estimated cost of \$115,000. Commissioner Hunt requested clarification regarding the road's location. Mr. Hulme stated that the road connects Hartwell Highway and Ruckersville Road. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to add Old Hartwell Road to the T-SPLOST paving list. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously by a vote of 5-0.
- 7) **Adjournment.** Commissioner Freeman made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Scoggins and carried unanimously.