

**Charlton County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
Commissioners Conference Room
68 Kingsland Drive, Suite B
Folkston, GA 31537
Thursday, April 2, 2026
5:30 PM**

4/2/2026 - Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

Present was Commissioner Jesse Crews, Chairwoman Alphya Benefield, Vice Chairman Luke Gowen, Commissioner Drew Jones, Commissioner James Everett, County Attorney Remington East, Interim County Administrator Rebecca Harden, and County Clerk Madeline Nettles.

All guests are recorded hereafter.

Invocation and Pledge to the Flag

The invocation was led by Commissioner Everett.

Presentations

1. Presentation from Tiffany Yearwood, EMA Director, Regarding Emergency Alert System and Sirens
Tiffany Yearwood, Director of Emergency Management, was present.

Reached for a grant. Response is delayed regarding status because of the federal gov shutdown.

TY stated that communicated with other EMAs while at conference. Sirens do create a heavy work load, but advocate for them as another layer of warning service. Try to do multi-modal emergency warning process that includes wireless alerts, IPAWS, sirens, socia media, etc.

Talked about benefits of sirens, including areas of lack of cellphone signal. Talked about other counties who had issues with power outage and lack of signal due in various emergencies.

EAS software

4 vendors

Top two contenders from TY perspective is HQE and CivicPlus.

Provided information about the EAS systems and their benefits.

LG asked about the previous messaging that came during the wildfire like an Amber Alert. TY explained that it does tie into it. The one previously came from the state. Residents don't have to subscribe to that. These software being discussed are locally controlled and are subscription based. These integrate to the state notification system. There was delays in the recent wildfire notifications. This would help eliminate some of these delays, as TY would be able to proactively get messaging ready in case it needs to be sent to through the state level.

AB asked if either of these systems would have the ability to only notify certain areas or if it would go out to the entire area. TY stated we can do both. Software can create a Geo-fence portion.

JE asked if there was a code of something with the sirens. TY stated that the sirens are still in need of some assessments. The idea is that it would integrate with the CAD system which would send out the alerts through the sirens.

DJ asked which vendor TY recommended. TY recommended from an EMA standpoint, HQE. DJ asked about civicplus. TY spoke to Civicplus could add this as an addendum to the current contract if we were to choose them.

AB asked if there was a significant negative to choosing Civicplus compared to HQE. TY said there isn't one. HQE has the operational component and also has the disabled population in mind and has equipment that can help disabled residents.

Civicplus is less of a cost. HQE is a little more than Code Red.
HQE is trying to get more customers in Georgia. Recently secured contracts with Atlanta Airport.

TY, DJ, and MN Talked about the possible addendum to civic plus if selected. Would be autorenewed with annual agreement and prorated to current contract.

LG asked if TY would be comfortable with software. TY said she would.

TY would like to have the software by July if possible. Still has IPAWS in the meantime but there are delays in using that system at current.

HQE disability equipment would be an additional cost to county or residents.

BH asked about messaging limits. HQE has limit of 100,000 annual credits. TY does not believe county would reach that. Civicplus has unlimited.

AB asked if TY has figured out how many blind/residents the county has. TY stated that there is not a specific registry for that but there are 250 in our population that are considered the most vulnerable.

Miscellaneous

County Attorney's Action Items

Adjourn

Alphya Benefield, Chairman

Madeline Nettles, County Clerk