

**Charlton County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
Commissioners Conference Room
68 Kingsland Drive, Suite B
Folkston, GA 31537
Thursday, April 2, 2026
6:00 PM**

4/2/2026 - Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 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 Chairwoman Benefield.

Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Jones made a motion to Adopt the Agenda as Presented. Vice Chairman Gowen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of Minutes

1. Motion to adopt the March 19th, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Crews made a motion to Adopt the Minutes as Presented. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations

Public Hearings

Petitions

Purchasing Items

Grants and SPLOST Project

Agreements

2. Motion to Authorize EMA to Proceed with Final Evaluation and Negotiation for EAS Vendor

Vice Chairman Gowen made a motion to Table This Item Until Negotiations with the 2 EAS Vendors Can Be Further Explored. Commissioner Crews seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Motion to Accept the 2024 LMIG Bid in the Amount of \$652,885.27 and Award the Project Contract to The Scruggs Company

Commissioner Jones made a motion to Award Bid to Scruggs Company. Vice Chairman Gowen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chairman Gowen announced the 2024 LMIG projects were to pave Henry Lee Bailey Road, JM Jackson Road, Fern Drive, Mimosa Avenue, and Pinehurst Drive.

4. Motion to Accept the 2025 LMIG Bid in the Amount of \$340,223.11 and Award the Project Contract to The Scruggs Company

County Clerk Nettles explained the price difference between the original bid and the acceptance amount, as well as the recommendation from Director of Infrastructure and Development Ronnie Pollock and County Engineer Chad Hofstadter to accept the bid with the increase to incorporate paving for the road.

Vice Chairman Gowen announced the 2025 LMIG projects were to pave Buckhorn Road and Buck Road.

Ordinances

Resolutions

Miscellaneous

County Attorney's Action Items

Public Comments

Public Comments are limited to 3 minutes.

Mary Tofil, from the Tofil Farm Heeler Sanctuary, was present.

Mrs. Tofil was made aware of the situation where someone in a neighboring area had abandoned their animals for the past 2 weeks. Mrs. Tofil estimates that there is about 20 animals who are left on the property. Mrs. Tofil alleged that she could see the rib bones on the animals. There are some concerns that the animals are becoming aggressive.

Mrs. Tofil is aware that there is no animal shelter or animal control in the area. Mrs. Tofil has spoken to Sheriff Phillips and is aware that the owners can be cited about the situation. Mrs. Tofil would like to know what can be done to help the situation. Mrs. Tofil cannot take care of the situation alone and is asking for help.

Commissioner Jones stated that he recommends talking to the Sheriff, Heart 2 Heart, and surrounding areas for animal shelters. Director of EMA Tiffany Yearwood recommended that Mrs. Tofil communicate with her, as she is at a conference with the Department of Agriculture and other potential contacts. Director Yearwood may be able to help connect her with some possible support from them.

Leslie Kulwik wanted to follow up with Mrs. Tofil's comments.

Mrs. Kulwik said it was very disheartening to see the dogs. They look terrible. Mrs. Kulwik stated that as a group the county should get together to provide help to these animals. Mrs. Kulwik stated that the person abandoned these animals which violates Georgia state law. Mrs. Kulwik talked about the safety concerns of animals roaming around freely. Mrs. Kulwik stated that the police departments and the Sheriff's office need to get on the same page about citing and fining people who are mistreating animals or violating the ordinances.

Vice Chairman Gowen asked Mrs. Tofil if the noise was under control. Mrs. Tofil stated that "blown out of

proportion is not a big enough answer." Mrs. Tofil stated that it is typically a bark if they are outside playing or if someone is coming to visit/adopt dogs. Mrs. Tofil stated that it was not a problem with the neighbors for the other dogs in the neighborhood to make noise. Mrs. Tofil said the Department of Agriculture had no issues with the property.

Deborah Milton, of Jacqueline Lane, was present.

Mrs. Milton brought some pictures of the situation on the road. Mrs. Milton said there's a picture of the drain that when it rains backs into Mrs. Chantel Robinson's yard, "trash and all."

Vice Chairman Gowen asked where the trash is coming from. Mrs. Milton said that it is coming from all over the Black Bottom area by draining into the area from the ditch.

Mrs. Milton said there is one area of the road that slopes and is where it washes out. Mrs. Milton wants the clay removed from the road and something else is brought in.

There was discussion held about the issues and the county's active efforts to look into the situation further.

Sheriff Phillips answered in response to the question about the dogs. Sheriff Phillips stated that they have not been writing tickets like they should. Sheriff Phillips will be having a conversation with the deputies on Saturday to work on it.

Charles Smith, Facilities Maintenance Coordinator, was present.

The AC in the auditorium will begin on April 20th. They will be working on painting and cleaning things up after the AC work is complete.

Chairwoman Benefield thanked Mr. Smith and his staff for the beautiful paint job they have done in the building.

Joel Shivar, Director of Parks and Recreation, was present.

Director Shivar stated that baseball and softball starts the Saturday after next. Director Shivar invited the Board to opening day.

On April 17th and 18th, students will be participating in the district track meet in Camden County.

County Administrator Comments

County Administrator Harden stated that she is working on communications on the Georgia Bend tower. They are starting work to get equipment on the tower. County Administrator Harden is working out the agreements with Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation. County Administrator Harden will get the agreement to Attorney East for review.

County Administrator Harden said they had a great meeting with public safety about the amazing events happening in the community this weekend and with Easter. Everyone is on the same page and looking forward to the festivities.

Commissioners' Comments

Vice Chairman Gowen thanked the Sheriff.

Commissioner Jones thanked the staff. Commissioner Jones reminded everyone that it is still dry, and the county is still under burn ban. Commissioner Jones talked about the economic situation in the area and

the lack of revenue in Charlton County. Commissioner Jones talked about the Commissioners' wishes for community benefits like a hotel, hospital, and additional recreation facilities, but the county does not have the revenue to do so. Commissioner Jones stated that the county does not keep businesses out, as there is no zoning and no process to review or approve businesses.

Vice Chairman Gowen stated that he believes that they have a great board, that works well together, and understands exactly what Commissioner Jones was saying. When considering net tax increase, the county has done pretty well per Vice Chairman Gowen. Vice Chairman Gowen thanked board that he serves with.

Deborah Milton told a story about Walmart and used it as a connection to say that the community has ideas about how to make more revenue in the county.

The board and Ms. Milton talked about industry in the county and historic attempts to bring in new revenue.

Chairwoman Benefield talked about the research the board has done into how to promote industry. Chairwoman Benefield also talked about how the responsibility falls onto the Chamber of Commerce and not the Board to promote tourism and industry. Chairwoman Benefield stated that the county now has a wonderful Chamber in place.

Commissioner Everett talked about the lack of cellular service in the south end of the county, which has been an issue since he joined the board. Commissioner Everett has talked about it previously and believes it is something that needs to be worked on.

Commissioner Everett was working in restaurant industry in the 70s, and stated that most of the hotels in town were locally owned. The county had local investment, which he would like to see return.

Mrs. Milton asked if the county could build apartments and collect revenue. Chairwoman Benefield stated that the county is not allowed to use tax dollars for something like that.

Mr. Kulwik stated that he attended a hospital authority meeting. The hospital authority agreed to allow the property to be used to build low-income apartments.

Sheriff Phillips stated that when they are built, calls to EMS and Sheriff's office will increase. Sheriff Phillips stated the Development Authority needs to go after industry and seek it out. The county needs industry here for other things like the pools to happen.

Sheriff Phillips stated that he has bought the cars with the SPLOST money as previously stated.

Vice Chairman Gowen stated that the county went out to the GEO lunch. The county has the largest ICE facility in the country, which will have roughly 3,500 inmates at full capacity. The facility currently makes an average of 2 EMS calls per day. The GEO Group pays \$200,000 to the county annually and also pays taxes. Vice Chairman Gowen wants the Development Authority to advocate for The GEO Group to use local vendors for supplies.

County Clerk Nettles provided clarification about the EMS calls at the ICE Facility and how EMS billing works in the county.

Chairwoman Benefield thanked everyone for praying for the community and Chief Lewis. Chairwoman Benefield said the community needs to be very concerned about the income per capita and asked that a

note about it be placed in the newspaper.

Next Meeting

The April 16th meeting will be at the Georgia Bend Fire Station and will also serve as the Open House and Dedication of the Fire Station. An updated time will be announced at a later date.

Adjourn

Chairwoman Benefield thanked the Sheriff's office and his staff, saying that they go way beyond the call of duty.

Chairwomen Benefield thanked the staff.

Commissioner Crews made a motion to Adjourn. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion Passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 PM.

Alphya Benefield, Chairman

Madeline Nettles, County Clerk

Charlton County Emergency Management

Emergency Alert System Software

Vendor Comparisons

Tiffany Yearwood, Charlton County EMA Director
4-2-2026



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Introduction

Charlton County Emergency Management Agency has undertaken a comprehensive review of Emergency Alert System (EAS) software solutions to support reliable, timely, and accessible communication with the public and partner agencies.

This effort is part of a broader strategy to strengthen a layered and redundant alerting approach—one that integrates software-based notification systems with existing and potential outdoor warning infrastructure. As part of this process, the County is also evaluating the current condition, capability, and long-term viability of its legacy siren system.

The County's previous alerting platform, CodeRED, was cleanly terminated following identified concerns, with no outstanding financial obligation to the vendor and no refund due to the County. The current fiscal year budget allocation for EAS software—\$7,087.50—was based on the anticipated renewal cost of that contract and serves as a reference point for evaluating alternative solutions.

At present, there are key factors that remain in progress and may influence final decision-making. A Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application, submitted under the Hurricane Helene grant extension, is currently pending. If awarded, this funding could support both alerting system enhancements and additional infrastructure improvements, including siren-related needs.

Additionally, while an initial siren assessment has been completed, further evaluation is required at select locations to fully determine operational status and repair or replacement needs. This next phase requires specialized equipment and associated costs, which may be offset through grant funding if approved.

It is also important to note that, while the County evaluates and selects a long-term alerting solution, emergency alerting capabilities remain in place through the State Warning Point. This ensures continuity in the County's ability to issue critical alerts, including IPAWS/WEA messaging, during this transition period.

This document provides a side-by-side comparison of four EAS vendors:

- HQE Systems
- CivicPlus
- Rave Mobile Safety (Motorola Solutions)
- Everbridge, Inc.

The comparisons focus primarily on cost, capabilities, integration potential, and operational considerations. Each platform has been evaluated not only for its alerting functionality, but also for how it supports broader emergency management operations, including situational awareness, internal coordination, and whole community engagement.

Each option presents a different balance of strengths, limitations, and trade-offs. This comparison is intended to provide a clear, transparent foundation to support informed decision-making while acknowledging current variables, funding considerations, and the County's operational priorities.

Cost Matrix

Contract & Cost (As Quoted)

Category	HQE Systems	CivicPlus	Rave Mobile Safety	Everbridge
Contract Term	3 Years	12 Months (Auto-Renew)	5 Years	12 Months
Year 1 Cost	\$7,650	\$6,000.00	\$9,810.35	\$7,040.00
Year 2 Cost	\$7,650	5% to be applied in year 2 (\$6,300)	\$5,040.35	Not specified
Year 3 Cost	\$7,650	Annual Recurring Services Subject to Uplift	\$5,040.35	Not specified
Year 4 Cost	4.75% - 5.95%		\$5,040.35	Not applicable
Year 5 Cost	increase per year thereafter		\$5,040.35	Not applicable
Implementation Cost	Included	Included	Not Specified	No Charge
Total Contract Value	\$22,950	\$6,000 (Year 1)	\$29,971.75	\$7,040.00 (Year 1)
Notes	10% discount included (regular yearly pricing \$8,500)			Cost includes Resident Connection \$1,040 (optional, recommended)

Capability Matrix

Capability	HQE Systems	CivicPlus	Rave Mobile Safety	Everbridge
Mass Notification	Included	Included	Included	Included
IPAWS	Included	Included	Included	Included
SMS / Voice / Email	Included	Included	Included	Included
Situational Awareness Platform	Included	Not specified	Not specified	Included
Internal Communications	SECURE Comms Lite	Internal Secure Chat Included	Included	Included
Weather Monitoring	ThreatSense Lite	NOAA Weather Alerts via mobile app integration	Included	SmartWeather (1 County)
Lightning Detection	Included (ThreatSense Lite)	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
AI Assistance	Duty Officer AI Lite	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Evacuation / Public Info Tools	SAFEvac Lite	Not specified	Not specified	Included
Resident Database	Not specified	Contact Management	Not specified	Resident Connection Included
API / Integration (Application Programming Interface)	Not specified, but discussed	OpenAPI / Webhooks Provided	Not specified	API Access Included

Capability	HQE Systems	CivicPlus	Rave Mobile Safety	Everbridge
Siren Integration Capability	Possible	Via Webhooks and CAP (Atom/RSS feeds)	Possible	Possible
Multilingual Messaging	Supports up to 5 other languages	Included (60+ languages)	Included	Included
Geo-Targeting	Included	Included (ESRI-integrated mapping)	Included	Included
Mobile Application	Included (web-based + mobile-accessible platform; no dedicated resident app specified)	Included (Resident + Admin Support)	Included	Included
Real-Time Reporting	Included (situational awareness dashboard + alert tracking)	Included (delivery and engagement analytics)	Included	Included
Social Media Integration	Included (Facebook)	Included (Facebook, X, Nextdoor)	Included	Included
Message Capacity	Includes 100,000 SMS or voice message credits annually. Messaging is not limited during emergencies; overages may be invoiced.	Unlimited SMS, Email, Push Notifications	Unlimited Emergency/Public Safety Routine/Operational messaging is subject to monthly limits up to 10,000 operational messages	Credit-based (metered)

HQE Systems

Unified Mass Notification & Situational Awareness Platform

Positioning: Operationally strong, feature-rich platform with integrated situational awareness and flexible use beyond emergency alerting.

1. Overview

HQE provides a unified platform that combines mass notification, situational awareness, and internal coordination tools into a single interface. The system is designed to support both emergency operations and day-to-day county functions, offering a broader operational footprint than traditional alerting systems.

2. Key Capabilities

- Multi-channel alerting (SMS, voice, email, IPAWS-capable)
- Map-based situational awareness interface
- Real-time weather and threat visualization (ThreatSense Lite)
- Internal communication tools (SECUREComms Lite)
- AI-assisted alert drafting (Duty Officer AI Assistant Lite)
- Public-facing information sharing (SAFEvac Lite)
- Role-based access and operational coordination tools

3. Cost & Contract Structure

- **Annual Cost:** ~\$7,650/year (discounted rate)
- **Term Options:**
 - 1-year renewable option
 - 3-year fixed pricing option
- **Escalation:**
 - No increase for first 3 years
 - Years 4–5: 4.75%–5.95% annually
- **Billing:**
 - Year 1 invoiced at signing (confirmed as Year 1 only)
 - Annual invoicing for future years

4. Strengths

- Combines alerting + situational awareness in one platform
- Strong operational interface for EOC use
- Flat pricing for first 3 years (high predictability)
- Built-in tools that support daily county operations (not just emergencies)
- Scalable platform with additional modules available

5. Considerations

- Messaging includes **100,000 annual alert credits** (not unlimited)
- Overage handling during emergencies not yet clearly defined
- SLA terms and version control require clarification
- Data ownership and portability language not explicitly confirmed
- Liability cap present (standard, but requires legal review)

6. Siren / Integration Capability

- API-based integration capability (likely feasible)
- No direct “out-of-the-box” siren control confirmed
- Would require coordination with siren vendor or middleware
- Strong potential for integration due to platform architecture

7. Included Professional Services (No Additional Cost)

Alert & Warning Program Assessment (Value: \$3,480)

- Executive-level gap assessment of alerting program readiness
- Review of:
 - SOPs and approval workflows
 - Message templates and quality
 - Training and staff proficiency
- Focused on strengthening operational effectiveness and consistency

Accessibility & Inclusive Preparedness Assessment (Value: \$1,160)

- Executive review of inclusive and accessible emergency communication practices

- Includes evaluation of:
 - ADA and accessibility considerations
 - Plain language messaging
 - Redundant communication strategies
 - Community partnerships and outreach
 - Device compatibility and format accessibility
- Deliverable: Written executive assessment with improvement recommendations

8. Overall Assessment

HQE is a highly capable and operationally mature platform that extends beyond traditional mass notification by integrating situational awareness and internal coordination tools. It offers strong value for agencies seeking a multi-functional system rather than a single-purpose alerting tool. Remaining considerations—primarily related to messaging limits, SLA structure, and data governance—are manageable and should be clarified prior to final selection.

CivicPlus

Communicator (Mass Notification Platform)

Positioning: Cost-effective, straightforward mass notification platform with strong unlimited messaging and solid public alerting capabilities.

1. Overview

CivicPlus Communicator is a mass notification system focused on delivering reliable, multi-channel public alerting. It emphasizes ease of use, broad communication reach, and strong value through unlimited messaging, making it well-suited for jurisdictions prioritizing consistent and scalable alerting.

2. Key Capabilities

- Multi-channel alerting (SMS, voice, email, mobile app)
- **Unlimited SMS messaging** for all communications
- Emergency voice alerting (minutes included for emergencies)
- IPAWS integration for federal alerting
- NOAA weather integration
- Geo-targeting and mapping capabilities
- Polling and resident engagement tools
- Mobile app support for users and administrators

3. Cost & Contract Structure

- **Annual Cost:** \$6,000/year (discounted)
- **Implementation:** One-time standard implementation included
- **Term:**
 - 12-month initial term
 - Automatic 1-year renewals unless canceled with 60-day notice
- **Billing:**
 - 100% invoiced at signing for the contract year
 - Net 30 payment terms
- **Escalation:**

- 5% annual increase starting in Year 2
- NOTE: As an existing CivicPlus client, the County may have the option to amend the current agreement to include this service, which would result in a prorated cost and additional savings for year one.

4. Strengths

- Unlimited SMS messaging removes concerns about alert volume during emergencies
- Lower annual cost compared to other vendors
- Simple, easy-to-understand pricing structure
- Strong core alerting capabilities (IPAWS, NOAA, geo-targeting)
- Predictable annual contract model with straightforward renewal process

5. Considerations

- Primarily a notification platform only (limited situational awareness tools)
- Annual 5% automatic escalation with no cap range flexibility
- Requires opt-out action to prevent auto-renewal (60-day notice)
- Less robust internal coordination tools compared to platforms like HQE
- Integration capabilities require validation and coordination with third parties

6. Siren / Integration Capability

- Provides WebHooks and API-based integration capability (developer-supported)
- Likely compatible with siren systems through middleware or vendor coordination
- No confirmed direct “plug-and-play” siren activation
- Would require collaboration with siren vendor IT or integrator

7. Overall Assessment

CivicPlus is a strong, cost-effective option for jurisdictions seeking a reliable and scalable mass notification system without added operational complexity. Its unlimited messaging model is a significant advantage, particularly for emergency scenarios where communication volume cannot be constrained. While it lacks advanced situational awareness and internal coordination features, it performs very well as a dedicated alerting platform and represents a practical, budget-conscious solution.

Rave Mobile Safety (Motorola Solutions)

Mass Notification & Public Safety Platform

Positioning: Highly scalable, enterprise-grade alerting platform with strong public safety integration, widespread adoption, and high reliability.

1. Overview

Rave Mobile Safety (a Motorola Solutions company) provides a comprehensive mass notification platform designed for government and public safety use. It is widely adopted across state and local agencies and emphasizes reliability, interoperability, and secure alert delivery at scale.

2. Key Capabilities

- Multi-channel alerting (SMS, voice, email, mobile app)
- IPAWS integration for federal alerting
- Geo-targeting and GIS-based alerting
- Citizen opt-in and database management
- Smart911 integration (enhanced caller/resident data)
- Two-way messaging and polling capabilities
- Mobile-friendly interface for field use
- Integration with public safety systems (CAD, 911, etc.)
- High-volume alert delivery infrastructure (enterprise scale)

Messaging Model

- Unlimited messaging for emergency/public safety alerts
- Routine/operational messaging subject to monthly limits
- Monthly allowance is based on user count or 10,000 messages (whichever is greater)
- Message credits reset annually

3. Cost & Contract Structure

(Based on proposal details provided)

- **Annual Cost:** ~\$6,000–\$7,650 range (depending on configuration discussed)
- **Implementation:** Typically included or minimal (varies by scope)

- **Term:** Multi-year agreement (typically 3–5 years standard)
- **Billing:** Annual invoicing typical for government clients
- **Escalation:** Pricing escalation may apply (requires confirmation of % and structure)

4. Strengths

- Widely used across Georgia and nationally (including state-level adoption)
- Backed by Motorola Solutions (strong reputation in public safety)
- Strong integration with 911 and CAD systems
- Mature, proven platform with high reliability and uptime
- Scalable for both small and large jurisdictions
- Smart911 adds enhanced situational awareness for responders

5. Considerations

- Messaging may be tiered or usage-based (not fully unlimited like CivicPlus)
- Less emphasis on built-in situational awareness mapping tools compared to HQE
- Pricing structure may be less flexible depending on contract terms
- Some advanced features may require add-ons or additional licensing
- Siren integration not inherently native (requires integration pathway)

6. Siren / Integration Capability

- Supports integration through APIs and public safety system connections
- Strong interoperability with CAD/911 systems, which can support activation workflows
- No confirmed direct/native siren activation
- Likely requires:
 - Middleware
 - CAD-triggered workflows
 - Vendor coordination

7. Security & Compliance

- FedRAMP Authorized (important for federal/security alignment)
- DHS SAFETY Act Certified

- Strong alignment with public safety cybersecurity expectations

8. Overall Assessment

Rave is a highly reliable, widely trusted platform that aligns well with public safety operations and interoperability needs. Its strength lies in its maturity, integration with emergency communications systems, and proven performance at scale. While it may not offer the same level of built-in situational awareness tools as HQE or the unlimited messaging simplicity of CivicPlus, it represents a balanced, dependable solution with strong credibility and operational integration.

Everbridge, Inc.

Public Safety Communications Platform

Positioning: Enterprise-grade mass notification system with strong reach, robust feature set, and built-in resident data capabilities, but governed by usage-based messaging.

1. Overview

Everbridge provides a comprehensive public safety communications platform designed for large-scale alerting, internal coordination, and community engagement. It combines mass notification with a built-in resident database (“Resident Connection”) to enhance outreach during life-safety incidents.

2. Key Capabilities

- Multi-channel alerting (SMS, voice, email, app, social media, web)
- IPAWS integration (WEA, EAS, NWEM, COG-to-COG)
- Geo-targeting and GIS-based alerting
- Built-in Resident Connection database (preloaded contact data)
- Two-way messaging and polling
- Incident management and internal collaboration tools
- Automated weather alerting (SmartWeather – county-level)
- API integrations and automation capabilities
- Role-based user access and reporting

Messaging Model

- Credit-based usage for SMS and voice messaging
- Email and mobile app (push notifications) are unlimited
- Each SMS message consumes credits based on character length
- Each voice message consumes credits based on duration
- Additional message credits may be required if usage exceeds the annual allocation

3. Cost & Contract Structure

- **Annual Cost:** \$7,040 (Year 1 total)
 - Public Communications Advanced: \$6,000

- Resident Connection: \$1,040
- **Implementation:** \$0
- **Term:** 12-month agreement
- **Billing:** Net 30 terms
- **Escalation:** Not explicitly defined in quote (likely governed by Master Service Agreement)

4. Strengths

- Built-in resident database reduces reliance on opt-in participation
- Strong IPAWS capabilities with unlimited use across federal channels
- Robust incident management and internal communication tools
- Highly scalable and widely used nationwide
- Strong automation, API integration, and reporting capabilities
- Includes weather alerting (SmartWeather) out of the box

5. Considerations

- Message credit-based system (not unlimited SMS/voice)
- Potential for overage charges during high-volume events
- Resident Connection data is owned by Everbridge, not the County
- Mobile phone data use restricted to “imminent threat to life” scenarios only
- More complex system that may require additional training and management
- Messaging delivery is not guaranteed due to third-party carrier dependencies

Operational Considerations

- SMS messaging to mobile devices is restricted to “Imminent Threat to Life” use cases
- Landline messaging may be used for both emergency and non-emergency notifications
- High-volume incidents may consume message credits rapidly
- Messaging delivery is dependent on third-party carriers and is not guaranteed

6. Siren / Integration Capability

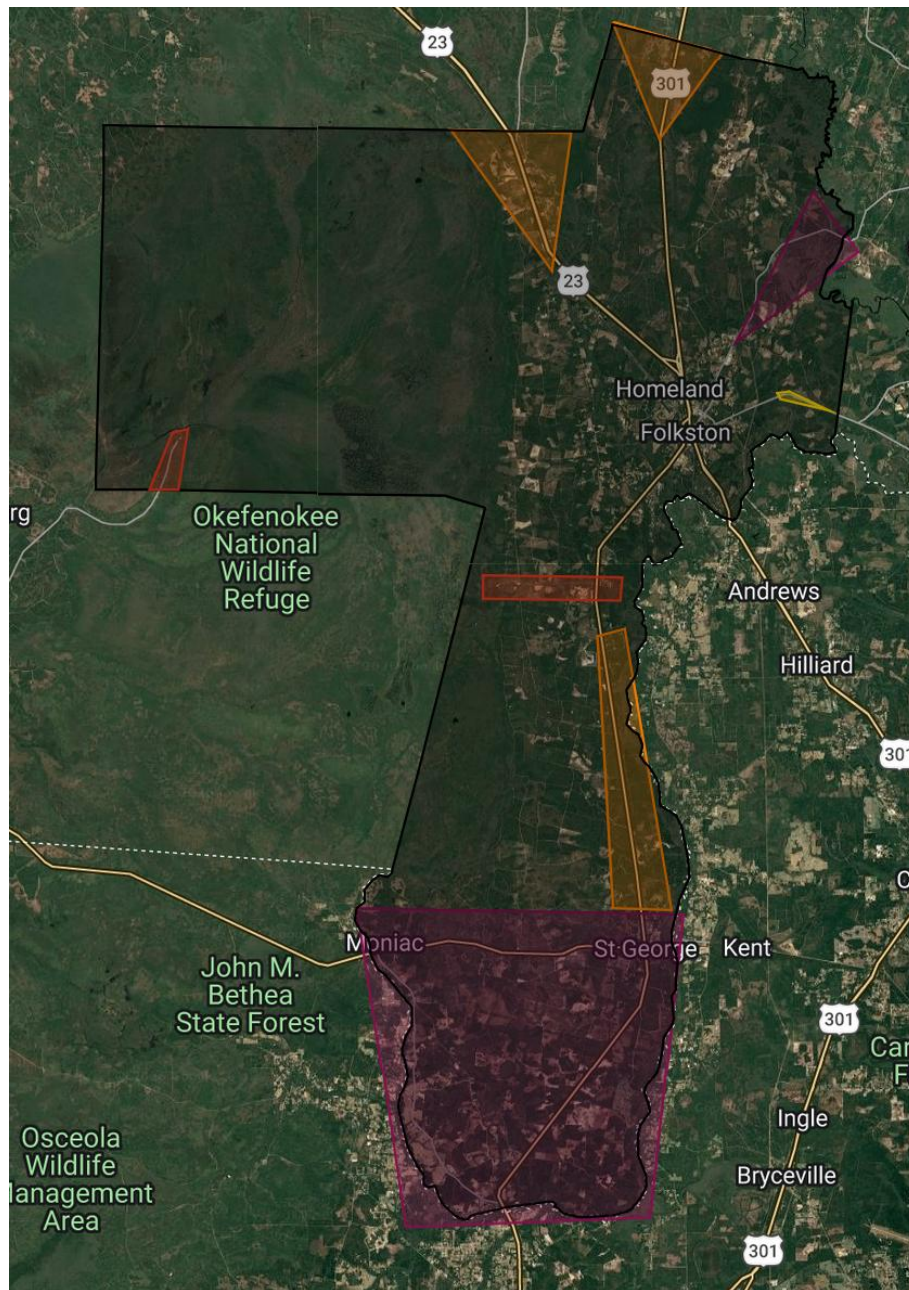
- Supports API-based integrations and automated workflows
- Can integrate with external systems for triggering alerts
- No confirmed direct/native siren activation
- Would require:
 - Middleware or integration layer
 - Coordination with siren vendor

7. Data & Ownership Considerations

- Resident Connection dataset:
 - Owned by Everbridge
 - Provided under limited-use license
 - Access terminates upon contract end
- County-generated data:
 - Not clearly defined in quote (requires contract clarification)

8. Overall Assessment

Everbridge is a powerful, feature-rich platform that offers strong capabilities across public alerting, internal coordination, and community engagement. Its built-in resident database and automation tools are significant advantages. However, its credit-based and usage-controlled messaging model, data ownership limitations, and usage restrictions introduce considerations that may impact long-term flexibility and cost predictability. It is best suited for jurisdictions that value advanced capabilities and are prepared to manage a more structured usage model.



Charlton County Emergency Alerting Survey Results

SURVEY PERIOD: FEBRUARY 2026

Tiffany Yearwood | Charlton County EMA Director

Date of Report: 04/02/2026



Summary of Findings and Partner Brief

Survey Purpose

This survey was conducted to better understand how Charlton County residents receive emergency alerts, the reliability of communications systems during severe conditions, and community perspectives on strengthening public warning capabilities.

Total Responses: 45 residents

Important Context: The final 10 responses were submitted following the recent brush fire incident. These entries reflect feedback influenced by real-world emergency conditions rather than general preparedness perceptions.

Geographic Distribution

Responses were received from residents across the county, with the highest concentration originating from the Folkston area and additional representation from Homeland, Racepoint, St. George, and surrounding communities.

Cellular Service Reliability

- Verizon is the primary cellular provider for more than four in five respondents.
- Only a small portion of residents report flawless cellular reliability.
- Roughly two-thirds of respondents report that service works most of the time but is inconsistent.
- About one in ten residents report frequent or severe service reliability problems.
- Nearly six in ten respondents report that cellular service becomes less reliable during severe weather events.

Interpretation: Cellular networks are heavily relied upon but demonstrate performance degradation during adverse conditions, particularly severe weather.

Power Outage Experience

- Nearly six in ten residents report power outages lasting between one and three days during major storms.
- Approximately one-quarter of respondents report outages exceeding three days during major storms.

Implications: Extended outages reduce the reliability of communication systems that depend on electrical power, including cellular towers, home internet services, and the ability to charge personal devices.

How Residents Receive Emergency Information

Residents report using multiple methods to receive emergency information rather than relying on a single source.

Primary alert sources include:

- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
- Social media platforms
- Television and radio broadcasts
- Word-of-mouth communication

Interpretation: Residents naturally seek redundant information sources, reinforcing the importance of layered public warning strategies.

Outdoor Warning Sirens

- A strong majority — more than seven in ten respondents — indicate outdoor warning sirens would be helpful.
- Approximately one in five residents are unsure but open to siren implementation.
- Only a small percentage believe current alert methods are fully sufficient.

Interpretation: Public sentiment strongly supports adding audible outdoor alerting as an additional protective layer.

Observations from Post-Incident Responses

The final portion of survey responses was submitted following the brush fire incident. These participants evaluated alerting systems based on lived emergency conditions.

This subset of responses provides valuable real-world insight regarding:

- Cellular network performance during incident conditions
- Information-seeking behavior under stress
- Alert delivery effectiveness during active response operations

While not a controlled study, these entries offer practical observations reflecting system performance during a real emergency.

Key Takeaways

1. **Single-system dependence creates risk.** Heavy reliance on cellular networks presents vulnerability during severe weather and power outages.
2. **Infrastructure resilience affects public safety.** Extended power outages degrade communication capabilities when timely alerts are most critical.
3. **Residents favor layered alert systems.** Community members rely on multiple information pathways and support strengthening redundant alert methods.
4. **Public support exists for warning enhancements.** Strong resident backing for outdoor warning sirens indicates community readiness for infrastructure improvements.

Strategic Value of Findings

These findings provide structured community input that can support:

- Public safety planning and policy decisions
- Infrastructure resilience discussions
- Coordination with cellular service providers
- Emergency communications improvement initiatives
- Grant application justification and needs statements

Conclusion

The results of this survey reinforce the importance of a layered and resilient emergency alerting approach for Charlton County. While cellular-based alerts remain a critical component of public warning, community feedback highlights clear limitations during severe weather and extended power outages—conditions when reliable communication is most essential.

The strong reliance on multiple information sources, combined with broad support for additional alerting methods such as outdoor warning sirens, reflects a community that values redundancy and accessibility in emergency communications. These findings will be used to guide ongoing planning efforts, support coordination with state and infrastructure partners, and inform future investments aimed at strengthening the county's overall alerting capabilities.

Charlton County Emergency Management remains committed to a whole community approach—ensuring that residents can receive timely, reliable information through multiple pathways, regardless of conditions.



March 10, 2026

Becky Harden
County Administrator
Charlton County
68 Kingsland
Folkston, GA 31537

RE: 2024 LMIG
Charlton County, Georgia
H&A File No. 1600-155

Dear Becky:

For your reference, file and use enclosed please find a copy of the Minutes for the Bid Opening on the referenced project.

If you should have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

HOFSTADTER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CHAD HOFSTADTER', is written over a faint, light blue rectangular background.

Chad Hofstadter, P.E., LEED AP, APM

Enclosures

CH/jlh



MINUTES

**BID OPENING
FOR
2024 LMIG
CHARLTON COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**MARCH 9, 2026
11:00 A.M.**

ATTENDANCE

NAME

William Thomas
Tom Wyatt
Kelly Clark
Chad Hofstadter

FIRM

Scruggs Company
Reeves Construction
East Coast Asphalt
Hofstadter & Associates

MINUTES: Chad Hofstadter

I would like to welcome everyone to the Bid Opening for the 2024 LMIG, Charlton County, Georgia. It is now 11:00 A.M. and I will start reading the bids in no particular order and I will announce the apparent low bidder once I am finished reading the bids.



2024 LMIG
Charlton County Minutes
March 9, 2026
Page Two

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Bid Bond</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
Curb & Gutter Professionals, Inc.		
East Coast Asphalt, LLC	X	\$ 836,654.10
Reeves Construction	X	\$ 842,573.13
The Scruggs Company	X	\$ 657,967.87*

* Amount was corrected later during math check.

The apparent low bidder is The Scruggs Company. with a bid price of \$ 657,967.87. Once I have reviewed the bids for mathematical accuracy. I will send everyone a copy of the bid tabulations. I would like to thank everyone for their interest and if there are any questions, please feel free to ask them at this time.

There were no questions and the Bid Opening was adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

BID TABULATION SUMMARY

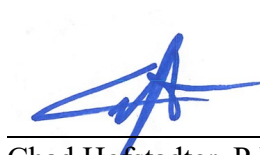
PROJECT: Charlton County- 2024 LMIG
H&A File No. Job #1600-155

ENGINEER: Hofstadter and Associates, Inc.
4571 Arkwright Road
Macon, GA 31210

BID OPENING: March 9, 2026

BIDDER	BID BOND	BASE BID
Curb & Gutter Professionals, Inc.		
East Coast Asphalt, LLC	X	\$ 836,654.10
Reeves Construction	X	\$ 842,573.13
The Scruggs Company	X	\$ 652,885.27

I hereby certify the foregoing as a true and accurate tabulation of bids received for the
Charlton Co.- 2024 LMIG, Georgia, on March 9, 2026 at 11:00 A.M.



Chad Hofstadter, P.E., LEED AP, APM



March 10, 2026

Becky Harden
County Administrator
Charlton County
68 Kingsland
Folkston, GA 31537

RE: 2024 LMIG
Charlton County, Georgia
H&A File No. 1600-155

Dear Becky:

By this letter, Hofstadter and Associates, Inc. recommends award to The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$652,885.27. Hofstadter and Associates, Inc. will prepare contracts upon notice that the project has been awarded to The Scruggs Company and will recommend proceeding with the project upon receipt of the executed contracts containing Payment Bond, Performance Bond and Proof of Insurance.

If you should have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

HOFSTADTER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', is written over a faint, circular blue stamp.

Chad Hofstadter, P.E., LEED AP, APM

CH/jlh



March 10, 2026

Becky Harden
County Administrator
Charlton County
68 Kingsland
Folkston, GA 31537

RE: 2025 LMIG
Charlton County, Georgia
H&A File No. 1600-185

Dear Becky:

For your reference, file and use enclosed please find a copy of the Minutes for the Bid Opening on the referenced project.

If you should have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

HOFSTADTER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CHAD HOFSTADTER', is written over a faint, light blue rectangular background.

Chad Hofstadter, P.E., LEED AP, APM

Enclosures

CH/jlh



MINUTES

**BID OPENING
FOR
2025 LMIG
CHARLTON COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**MARCH 9, 2026
11:00 A.M.**

ATTENDANCE

NAME

William Thomas
Tom Wyatt
Kelly Clark
Chad Hofstadter

FIRM

Scruggs Company
Reeves Construction
East Coast Asphalt
Hofstadter & Associates

MINUTES: Chad Hofstadter

I would like to welcome everyone to the Bid Opening for the 2025 LMIG, Charlton County, Georgia. It is now 11:00 A.M. and I will start reading the bids in no particular order and I will announce the apparent low bidder once I am finished reading the bids.



2025 LMIG
Charlton County Minutes
March 9, 2026
Page Two

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Bid Bond</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
East Coast Asphalt, LLC	X	\$
Reeves Construction	X	\$ 446,504.95
The Scruggs Company	X	\$ 310,151.76

* Amount was corrected later during math check.

The apparent low bidder is The Scruggs Company, with a bid price of \$ 310,151.76. Once I have reviewed the bids for mathematical accuracy. I will send everyone a copy of the bid tabulations. I would like to thank everyone for their interest and if there are any questions, please feel free to ask them at this time.

There were no questions and the Bid Opening was adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

BID TABULATION SUMMARY

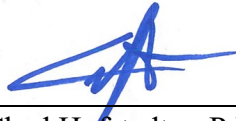
PROJECT: Charlton County- 2025 LMIG
H&A File No. Job #1600-185

ENGINEER: Hofstadter and Associates, Inc.
4571 Arkwright Road
Macon, GA 31210

BID OPENING: March 9, 2026

BIDDER	BID BOND	BASE BID
East Coast Asphalt, LLC	X	\$
Reeves Construction	X	\$ 446,504.95
The Scruggs Company	X	\$ 310,151.76

I hereby certify the foregoing as a true and accurate tabulation of bids received for the
Charlton Co.- 2025 LMIG, Georgia, on March 9, 2026 at 11:00 A.M.



Chad Hofstadter, P.E., LEED AP, APM



March 10, 2026

Becky Harden
County Administrator
Charlton County
68 Kingsland
Folkston, GA 31537

RE: 2025 LMIG
Charlton County, Georgia
H&A File No. 1600-185

Dear Becky:

By this letter, Hofstadter and Associates, Inc. recommends award to The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$310,151.76. Hofstadter and Associates, Inc. will prepare contracts upon notice that the project has been awarded to The Scruggs Company and will recommend proceeding with the project upon receipt of the executed contracts containing Payment Bond, Performance Bond and Proof of Insurance.

If you should have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

HOFSTADTER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', is written over a faint circular stamp.

Chad Hofstadter, P.E., LEED AP, APM

CH/jlh

*Charlton Co 2025 LMIG
Contract*

Scruggs

Item No	Qty.	Unit	GDOT	Description	Unit Price	Total Price
1005	1	LS	150-1000	Traffic Control	\$ 11,416.99	\$ 11,416.99
1010	1	EA	163-0300	Construction Exit	\$ 3,182.28	\$ 3,182.28
1015	1,294	LF	163-0528	Temporary Silt Fence	\$ 5.22	\$ 6,754.68
1020	1	LS	210-0200	Grading Complete	\$ 62,638.96	\$ 62,638.96
1025	191	TNS	301-5000	Portland Cement	\$ 215.49	\$ 41,158.59
1030	6,213	SY	315-0000	GDOT Section 301- Soil Cement Base Construction, 8" Incl Matl and Haul (FDR)	\$ 7.30	\$ 45,354.90
1035	0	SY	424-6196	Triple Surface Treatment, Stn Size 6, 7 & 89, GP 2 Only, Incl Seal Sand W 10 and Latex Modified Emulsion	\$ 8.42	\$ -
1040	232	LF	550-1180	RCP Storm Drain Pipe 18" Driveway Pipe	\$ 76.07	\$ 17,648.24
1045	40	LF	550-1240	RCP Storm Drain Pipe 24"	\$ 110.59	\$ 4,423.60
1050	2	EA	550-4224	Flared End Section, 24 IN, Storm Drain	\$ 2,654.39	\$ 5,308.78
1055	0.98	LM	652-2501	Solid Traffic Stripe, 5" White	\$ 1,538.47	\$ 1,507.70
1060	0.98	LM	652-2502	Solid Traffic Stripe, 5" Yellow	\$ 1,538.47	\$ 1,507.70
1065	36	LF	653-1704	Thermo Solid Traffic Stripe, 24" White	\$ 16.48	\$ 593.28
1070	0.59	AC	700-6910	Perm Grassing	\$ 6,518.90	\$ 3,846.15
1072	950	LF	643-	Remove and Replace Fence	\$ 13.19	\$ 12,530.50
1075	1	LS		Mobilization and Bonding	\$ 6,759.41	\$ 6,759.41
1080	1	LS		Engineering and Owner Approved Contingencies	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
2010	665	TNS	402-3103	Recycled Asphalt Concrete 9.5 mm Superpave, GP1 or 2, Incl Bitum Matl & H Lime	\$ 121.19	\$ 80,591.35
				Total Contract with Asphalt		\$ 340,223.11