Charlton County Board of Commissioners
Planning Retreat Day 2 Minutes
Commissioners Conference Room
68 Kingsland Drive, Suite B
Folkston, GA 31537
Wednesday, April 29, 2026
9:00 AM

4/29/2026 - Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:56 AM.

Present was Commissioner Jesse Crews, Chairwoman Alphya Benefield, Commissioner Drew Jones, Commissioner James Everett, Interim County Administrator Rebecca Harden, Director of Administrative Services Joanna Powell, and County Clerk Madeline Nettles.

Absent was Vice Chairman Luke Gowen.

All guests are recorded hereafter.

Invocation and Pledge to the Flag

The invocation was led by Commissioner Crews.

Adoption of the Agenda

The Board agreed to move the executive session to the afternoon session and move the FLOST/SPLOST conversation to the end of the agenda to allow for all members of the Board to be present during the conversation.

County Projects

2. Discuss County Auditorium

   The Board and staff discussed the county auditorium renovations.

   The Board is in agreement for the renovated lighting and sound equipment to be simple, effective, and functional.

   The Board would like to try to use what is current in place, if at all possible.

   The Board would like a dedicated staff member to control the equipment during events.

3. Discuss Recreation Complex and Saddle Club Arena

   The Board discussed the needs of the Deuce Lloyd recreation complex.
   The Board is in agreement that general maintenance and repairs needs to occur on a regular basis by the department.

   The Board talked about the Saddle Club Arena.
   The Board does not want to prioritize potential relocation, but would like to keep it in mind for future project planning.

The Board talked about the Old Bethune Gym and the school, including areas of concerns and rough estimates on cost.
The Board would like staff look into culture and historical grants available.
The Board talked about possibly installing AC in the gym and the estimates provided to the county.
The Board would like to discuss alternatives due to the cost.

The Board talked about planning future visits to all county facilities to see their condition and prioritize repairs and upgrades where necessary.

4. Discuss ABM Solutions

The Board and staff discussed ABM assessment. Staff needs to put out an RFP, but the Board will have to approve RFP before moving forward.

The Board is in favor of moving forward with the process.

5. Discuss St. George EMS Station

The Board and staff discussed moving the St. George EMS Station to a different building. The Board and staff discussed renovations necessary to get the building prepared for EMS.
The Board is in favor of moving forward with the process.

The Board and staff talked about the county's subdivision ordinance and the Department of Public Health's subdivision requirements. The Board would like to update the ordinance to align more closely with the Department of Public Health and State Guidelines.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:55 PM
The Board returned at 2:03 PM
Vice Chairman Gowen was present for afternoon session, when the Board returned from recess.

Executive Session

1. Enter Executive Session to Discuss Personnel

Commissioner Crews motioned to enter executive to discuss personnel. Vice Chairman Gowen seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
The Board and staff entered executive session at 2:04 PM

Commissioner Everett exited executive session and was excused from the meeting at 2:11 PM

The Board and staff exited at 2:41 PM. No action was taken.

County Operations

7. Discuss Trash and Leaf/Limb Pick Up

The Board and staff discussed this item 2:42 PM.

The Board and Staff talked about the city and county services for leaf and limb pick-up, as well as general service delivery for all citizens. The Board would like to review the Service Delivery Strategies with the cities to ensure it is accurate and properly updated.

8. Discuss Hotel/Motel Tax and Chamber of Commerce Agreement

County Administrator Harden discussed the Chamber of Commerce asking for additional funding and asking the county to implement a hotel/motel tax.

The Board is not in favor of pursuing hotel/motel tax at this time, and would like to research it further.

The Board will consider the Chamber's funding during the budget setting process.

6. Discuss FLOST/SPLOST and Homestead Exemptions

The Board discussed FLOST and LHOST at 3:17 PM

The Board is in favor of talking to Joe Wright from GMASS to get more information about the pros and cons of LHOST and FLOST before moving forward with any decision.

County Goals

9. Discuss Commissioners' Goals for 2026

The Board discussed their priorities being a focus on building strong leadership in departments and identifying realistic areas in need of renovation.

Vice Chairman Gowen was excused from the meeting at 3:39 PM

Commissioner Everett returned at 3:41 PM

The Board discussed County Administrator Harden's performance. County Administrator Harden asked that the Board consider when they would like to formally review her and consider her for promotion from Interim to permanent County Administrator, as well as what perimeters they would be measuring her by. The Board had a discussion about the topic, but decided to speak on it further at another time.

Adjourn

Commissioner Crews motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 PM.

Alphya Benefield, Chairman

Madeline Nettles, County Clerk