



# BANKS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Courthouse Annex Boardroom | 150 Hudson Ridge | Homer, GA 30547

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 6:30 PM

## MINUTES

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Ch. Griffith called the meeting to order.

#### PRESENT

Chairman Taylor Griffith  
Vice Chairman Danny Maxwell  
Commissioner Chris Ausburn  
Commissioner Keith Gardiner  
Commissioner Bo Garrison

#### STAFF

County Clerk Regina Gailey  
Deputy County Clerk Erin Decker  
County Attorney Randall Frost  
Planning/Zoning Director Kerri Fincannon  
Tax Commissioner Becky Carlan  
Sr. Center/Transit Director Tracie Hammond  
Coroner Brian Ivey  
Fire Chief Steve Nichols  
Human Resources Director Arlene Ivey

### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Garrison stated he would like to add Health/Ancillary Insurance RFP to the agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### a. 12/10/2024 Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

### 4. PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG:

Vice Ch. Maxwell led the Pledge to the American Flag.

## 5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ch. Griffith stated that Recreation Spring Sports was open for registration.

### a. Board of Commissioners: 2025 Vice Chairman Appointment

Motion to appoint Commissioner Danny Maxwell as Vice Chairman.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 4:0

Abstain: Danny Maxwell

All yea votes and the motion passed.

### b. Board of Commissioners: District Townhall Meetings

Ch. Griffith stated he thought it would be a good idea for the Commissioners to have a town hall meeting in each district. He asked each Commissioner to contact someone in their district for a venue to hold the meeting.

### c. House Bill 581 Local Opt-out Floating Homestead Exemption - Next Steps

Ch. Griffith stated there would be a meeting Friday with all the cities and invited the public to come. He stated HB581 was a floating cap on homestead exemption.

## 6. RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES:

### a. Board of Commissioners District Boundary Amendment

Ch. Griffith stated the District Boundary Amendment read as follows:

Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of Banks, Georgia, approving a redistricting plan for the Banks County Board of Commissioners, requesting that its local legislative delegation have such redistricting plan introduced as local legislation at the 2025 regular session of the Georgia General Assembly, and for other purposes.

Whereas, the 2020 Decennial Census was completed; and whereas, the 2020 Census does not reflect all the changes in the population of the citizens of Banks County; and whereas, approximately one hundred citizens of Banks County were not included in the 2020 Decennial Census; and whereas, the existing County Commission Districts will not allow an existing County Commissioner to run for reelection; and whereas, the Board of Commissioners of Banks County desires to submit a proposed redistricting plan to its local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly so that such redistricting plan can be approved by the General Assembly at its 2025 regular session and then signed by the Governor; and whereas, the Board of Commissioners has determined the most appropriate redistricting plan for the Board of Commissioners and citizens of Banks County; now therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners, acting in its capacity as the governing authority of Banks County, as follows: (1) The Board of Commissioners approves the redistricting plan attached hereto as Exhibit A and by reference made a part hereof. (2) The Board of Commissioners requests that its local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly draft and introduce during the 2025 regular session of the Georgia General Assembly such redistricting plan. (3) This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Ch. Maxwell stated this was putting the district back like it was.

Motion to approve the resolution.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Garrison.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 4:0  
Abstain: Commissioner Ausburn  
All yea votes and the motion passed.  
*(Copy of Resolution filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2) 2025-01*

**b. Tax Commissioner: Resolution Enabling the Banks County Tax Commissioner to Undertake Judicial In REM Tax Foreclosures - Becky Carlan**

Tax Commissioner Becky Carlan stated this resolution would enable her to have foreclosure sales for unpaid property taxes.

Motion to approve the resolution.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.  
*(Copy of Resolution filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2) 2025-02*

**c. Tax Commissioner: Resolution to Authorize the Tax Commissioner to Receive Personal, Company, Certified, Treasurer's, and Cashier's Checks, Banks, Postal, or Express Money Orders and Credit Cards in Payment of Ad Valorem Taxes and Fees - Becky Carlan**

Ms. Carlan stated this resolution authorized her to receive personal, company, certified, treasurer's, and cashier's checks; banks, postal, or express money orders; and credit cards in payment of ad valorem taxes and fees.

Motion to approve the resolution.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.  
*(Copy of Resolution filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2) 2025-03*

**7. MISCELLANEOUS:**

**a. Broadband/Fiber: TruVista - Andrew Seaver**

Andrew Seaver with TruVista stated they were applying for some grant funds to install infrastructure in Banks County to underserved areas of the County.

Ch. Griffith asked Atty Frost if issuing the letter would contractually indebt the County in any way and Atty Frost stated no.

Motion to issue a letter of support for the grant.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yeas votes and the motion passed.

*(Copy of Letter filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2)*

**b. Senior Services: FY2026 RFP - Legacy Link Inc. - Tracie Hammond**

Ms. Hammond stated it was time to send out the FY2026 Legacy Link RFP for senior services.

Motion to approve the RFP.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yeas votes and the motion passed.

*(Copy of RFP filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2)*

**c. Alcohol License Renewal: Commerce Food Mart - Kerri Fincannon**

Ms. Fincannon stated she was asking for the approval of the Commerce Food Mart alcohol license. She stated they were late but have now applied and paid their fees.

Motion to approve the alcohol license for Commerce Food Mart.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yeas votes and the motion passed.

**d. Coroner: Walk-in Cooler - Brian Ivey**

Coroner Brian Ivey stated he was coming before the board to request a walk-in cooler. He stated currently they were contracting that out to the transport service to hold our bodies. He further stated he felt like it would be better to have those in County whenever we had a death and Banks County would have possession of the body.

Comm. Gardiner asked how many times last year we had to store a body?

Mr. Ivey stated there were 56 calls total and about 30 went for autopsies and those bodies were held overnight at a cooler facility.

Comm. Gardiner and Ch. Griffith stated we could enter into an IGA with Jackson County for them to store our bodies for \$100 per month.

Mr. Ivey stated the only problem with that was if Jackson County needed to use the space it would not be available for Banks County.

Mr. Ivey stated if we built the cooler it needed to be in a secure location and would have to have security.

Ch. Griffith stated last year the County spent about \$6,200 on transport and his concern was that the County could not transport and maintain the cooler for anywhere near that number.

Mr. Ivey stated he had talked to Jackson EMC and if the cooler was built at the Carson Segars Fire Station then they said it would cost about \$320 for power.

The Commissioners thought that was an unrealistic number and Comm. Garrison stated it cost him more than that to operate and maintain his walk-in cooler at his store.

Comm. Gardiner recommended that we keep it as is and research more before we make a big change.

Comm. Ausburn stated we needed to explore all our options and make sure we get it right.

No action was taken.

**e. County Vehicle Transfers between Departments**

Ch. Griffith stated there were two med units that went out of service.

Comm. Gardiner stated the road department and water distribution had asked for them.

Motion to transfer one unit to the water department and one unit to the road department.

Motion to transfer the two med units.

Motion made by Commissioner Gardiner, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

Ch. Griffith stated there was a Ford Explorer that Fire/EMS were not using anymore and the custodians were now handling recyclables now and need a vehicle to haul the recyclables in.

Motion to transfer the Ford Explorer to the custodians.

Motion made by Commissioner Gardiner, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**f. Roads & Bridges: Lawn Mower Quotes**

Ch. Griffith stated we RFP for grass cutting would be discussed late and no action was taken.

**g. Hotel/Motel Tax: Expenditure Reports**

Ch. Griffith stated he had a letter that he would like the Commissioners to consider to send to the Chamber/CVB asking for some detailed expense reports. He stated these reports would allow them to see if the money was being spent correctly.

Motion to issue the letter to the Chamber/CVB and authorize Ch. Griffith to sign the letter.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

*(Copy of Letter filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2)*

**h. Grounds Maintenance: Grass Cutting/Landscaping RFP**

Ch. Griffith stated we spend a lot of money on gas, equipment and staff and thought a grass cutting RFP was worth looking into.

Comm. Gardiner stated the Recreation Dept did a great job keeping everything cut. He stated they cut around 85 to 90 acres every week.

Ch. Griffith stated he thought the RFP should be broken out into geographical areas.

Comm. Gardiner stated this would not take any jobs away from the Rec. Dept.

Comm. Ausburn stated this would allow the Rec. Dept. to concentrate more on the Rec. Dept.

Motion to put an RFP out for grass cutting and light landscaping.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**i. Roads & Bridges: Emory Chambers Rd - Paving - LMIG**

Ch. Griffith stated the LMIG Grant was approved for application last month but a road was not chosen to be paved. He stated KCI had recommended paving North Mangum Bridge Rd and patching for Grove Level Rd and Yonah Homer Rd. The total estimate was \$855,000.

Motion to approve the paving for North Mangum Bridge Rd and patching for Yonah Homer Rd and Grove Level Rd.

Motion made by Commissioner Gardiner, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**j. Public Utilities: Water Insurance Policy Amendment**

Ch. Griffith stated the Water Insurance Policy needed to be amended to add the following two items:

- Probation period of 6 months after opting into leak insurance to be eligible to file claim.
- Claim must be made within 60 days of first bill that is eligible for insurance coverage.

Motion to amend the policy.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**k. Public Utilities: Hydrant Repair RFP**

Ch. Griffith stated there were quite a few fire hydrants that needed repair. He stated there was a manpower issue with doing all the repairs while doing normal day to day operations. He stated this Hydrant Repair RFP would allow us to keep caught up and then we could maintain what we had.

Motion to put out the Hydrant Repair RFP.

Motion made by Commissioner Gardiner, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**l. Fire/EMS: Forestry Grant 50/50 Match**

Fire Chief Steve Nichols stated this was a new grant that was 100% funded. He stated the grant would be used for Slide-In Units used to fight forest fires. He stated he was asking permission to move forward to apply for the grant.

Motion to approve the application for the grant.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**m. Fire/EMS: Trauma Grant**

Chief Nichols stated this grant was in the amount of \$7,119 and allowed them to buy some trauma gear for the med units.

Motion to move forward with the grant with no county match.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**n. Fire/EMS: Turnout Gear**

Chief Nichols stated the gear was dated and expired every 10 years. He stated he had 15 sets that would become out of date. He stated in the past he had gotten a FEMA grant for the replacement of turnout gear but they were turned down for the grant this year. The cost of the 15 pair of turnout gear was \$71,000 and 2022 SPLOST funding had been set aside for this expense.

Motion to purchase the turnout gear and pay for from the 2022 SPLOST funds.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**o. Fire/EMS: Radio Tower - County Line Rd Water Tank Project**

Chief Nichols stated the radio tower for the North County Line Rd watertower was a planned project in the 2022 SPLOST. He further stated this would give more coverage in the area. He stated to outfit the site it would cost \$89,068.

Motion to approve the site and pay for the project from the 2022 SPLOST funds.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.

Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All yea votes and the motion passed.

**8. BOARDS & AUTHORITIES:**

**a. Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D - 1 year term to expire 12/31/2025**

**Motion to appoint Taylor Griffith to the Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D for a one-year term to expire on 12/31/2025.**

Motion to appoint Taylor Griffith to a 1-year term to expire on 12/31/2025.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell  
Voting Yea: Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison  
Voting Abstaining: Chairman Griffith, Commissioner Gardiner  
Vote: 3:0  
Abstain: Ch. Griffith, Commissioner Gardiner  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

**b. Development Authority: To finish unexpired term of Huy Nguyen - 2/28/2028**

Motion to appoint Ashley Fountain to finish the remainder of a 4-year term to expire on 2/28/2028.

Motion made by Commissioner Ausburn, Seconded by Commissioner Garrison.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

**c. Development Authority: To finish unexpired term of Scott Ledford - 2/28/2027**

Motion to appoint Elizabeth Evans to finish the remainder of a 4-year term to expire on 2/28/2027.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

**d. Development Authority: To finish unexpired term of Jimmy Morrison - 2/28/2027**

Motion to appoint Brad McCook to finish the remainder of a 4-year term to expire on 2/28/2027.

Motion made by Commissioner Gardiner, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.  
Voting Yea: Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Gardiner  
Voting Nay: Chairman Griffith, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 3:2  
Motion failed by majority vote.

**e. Industrial Building Authority: to finish unexpired term of Jimmy Morrison to end 9/30/2027**

No action taken.

**f. Joint Development Authority - 4 year term to expire 12/31/2028**

No action taken.

**g. Joint Development Authority - to finish unexpired term of Jimmy Morrison to end 12/31/2026**

No action taken.

**h. Planning Commission: to finish unexpired term of Taylor Griffith to expire 10/31/2027**

Motion to appoint Adam Swinehart to finish the unexpired term to end on 10/31/2027.



Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

## **9. CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS:**

### **a. Roads & Bridges: Moss Farm Rd Bridge Replacement MOA with GDOT**

Ch. Griffith stated this was an MOA with GDOT for the replacement of Moss Farm Rd bridge. The cost of the replacement was \$50,000. He stated this was voted on at last months meeting but the MOA needed to be approved.

Motion to approve the MOA and authorize the Chairman to sign the documents.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

*(Copy of Agreement filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2)*

### **b. Roads & Bridges: City of Maysville Intergovernmental Agreement for Mitchell Rd**

Ch. Griffith stated this was an agreement with the City of Maysville for paving a portion of Mitchell Rd. The County portion was 56% and the City would pay 44%.

Motion to approve the agreement.

Motion made by Commissioner Gardiner, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

*(Copy of Agreement filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2)*

## **10. PREVIOUS BUSINESS ACTION:**

### **a. Tabled 11/12/2024: Public Library Sewer Easement**

Ch. Griffith stated that the easement may not be needed.

No action was taken.

## **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: PERSONNEL**

Motion to enter into executive session for personnel at 7:34 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.  
Motion to close the executive session at 8:00 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner,  
Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.  
*(Copy of Agreement filed in Attachment to Minute Book 11-2)*

**7. p. Health/Ancillary Insurance RFP**

Ch. Griffith stated they needed to go back and discuss Item 7P. that was added to the agenda.  
Comm. Garrison stated he would like to have an RFP put out for all health/ancillary insurance.  
Motion to put an RFP out for all health insurance.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Ausburn.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner  
Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Vice Chairman Maxwell.  
Voting Yea: Chairman Griffith, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner,  
Commissioner Garrison  
Vote: 5:0  
All yea votes and the motion passed.

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Chairman

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Deputy County Clerk