

The Newton County Board of Commissioners regular board meeting was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners meeting room on the 3rd floor in the Historic Courthouse. This meeting was live streamed on the Newton County Government – YouTube Channel.

Present: Linda D. Hays, Interim Madam Chair, Commissioners Stan Edwards, Demond Mason, Andre Cooper, J.C. Henderson, LeAnne Long, James Brown, Acting County Manager, Stephanie Johnson, County Attorney and Clerk Susan G. Nolley. Members of the media staff and other administrative personnel were present.

Madam Chair called the meeting to order. Commissioner Henderson gave the invocation and Commissioner Long led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Madam Chair entertained a motion to amend the agenda to add item #8 Discussion of Vice-Chair appointment to be placed under New Business. Commissioner Henderson moved the motion, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA Madam Chair entertained a motion for adoption of the agenda. Commissioner Mason moved the motion, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments.

5. REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Commissioner Stan Edwards presented the county’s Guardian Angel Award to Scott Fuss, acknowledging his selfless acts of care, concern and life-saving sacrifices. Mr. Fuss works as Public Relations & Marketing Coordinator for Snapping Shoals EMC.

6. REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER

Departmental Updates - Introduction of Department Directors

Aleah Levendusky – Animal Services

Carmen Cunningham – GIS

Nicholas Sorrells – Information Systems

7. CONSENT AGENDA

7a. BOC Meeting Minutes December 2, 2025

1) Special Called Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

2) Executive Session

3) Regular Session – 7:00 p.m.

7b. RATIFICATION – Superior Court position request

Conversion of two part time positions to new full-time positions.

Coordinator – Annual Salary: \$102,040.92 (with benefits)

Case Manager - Annual Salary: \$85,249.05 (with benefits)

7c. Streetlight Petition – Grand Horizon Estates Subdivision (27 lots) Resolution R010626

A RESOLUTION OF THE NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TO CREATE A STREET LIGHT DISTRICT FOR GRAND HORIZON ESTATES
SUBDIVISION

7d. Board Appointment -Kelly Robinson – Newton County Board of Elections reappointed for 4 years.

This is the end of the consent agenda.

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Mason moved the motion to approve the consent agenda as listed, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Agenda amendment

8. VICE-CHAIR APPOINTMENT

The selection of the Vice-Chair position is conducted by an annual rotation among the Board of Commissioners.

District 3 Commissioner Andre Cooper opted to decline the annual rotation as Vice-Chair due to time constraints and professional obligations.

The Vice-Chair rotation then moved to District 4 Commissioner J.C. Henderson, he deferred the position due to time and his dedication to other responsibilities.

Commissioner Henderson nominated Commissioner LeAnne Long to serve as Vice-Chair, and moved the motion, seconded by Commissioner Edwards. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

9. NEWTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE – 8 NEW DETENTION OFFICER

POSITIONS Total Cost: \$397,595.52 includes salary, benefits, FICA and retirement.

Funding Source: Contingency.

Sheriff Ezell Brown discussed a summary of the history, responsibilities and operational demands for the Detention Center, highlighting the critical need for the requested positions.

PowerPoint Presentation

Ruben Brambila – Financial Overview

- Operational Budget History
- FY2025 Award vs Expense Highlights
- FY2026 General Fund request vs Award
- Comparing FY25 vs FY26 Awarded Operations Budget
- FY2026 Outlook
- Implemented Strategies to cut cost

Brandy Burch - Detention Officer Personnel requests for Newton County Sheriff's Office

- Positions requested and denied.
 - FY 2022 (6)
 - FY 2023 (6)
 - FY 2024 (6)
 - FY 2025 (8)
- There are currently no vacant positions in the Detention Center.

The PowerPoint presentation can be reviewed at: <https://youtu.be/bLxa58jz8yQ?t=3110>

Sheriff Brown concluded the discussion of his request.

Board members expressed their support for the needed positions.

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Henderson moved a motion to approve the request for eight new Detention Officer positions for the Newton County Sheriff's Office, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

10. SUNBELT BUILDERS, INC. CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT DESIGN BUILD CONTRACT AMENDMENT #1 FOR NEWTON COUNTY FACTORY SHOALS PARK PROJECT #RFP 25-22B Cost: \$1,500,000.00. Not to exceed contract amount of \$1,503,500.00.
Funding Source: SPLOST/Budgeted: YES/Match: YES

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Long moved the motion to approve Sunbelt Builders, Inc. Construction Management Design Build Contract Amendment #1 for Newton County Factory Shoals Park Project #RFP 25-22B as presented, seconded by Commissioner Edwards. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

11. BUDGET TRANSFER TO THE NEWTON COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE FOR MANAGEMENT AND ADMINSTRATIVE PROCESSES OF THE PAUPER/INDIGENT BURIAL EXPENSES Transfer amount: \$7,800.00.

The board discussed the current allocation for indigent burial and how the process was handled in the past.

Coroner, Kimberly Griggs spoke to the board regarding the administrative process and procedures that are required to determine indigent eligibility.

Attorney Johnson advised that Georgia statue requires the governing authority to provide a decent interment or cremation for indigent individuals provided the required standards are met.

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved the motion to approve the budget transfer as presented, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

12. ALCOHOL BUSINESS LICENSE

A Huevo Que Si Taqueria (Final Reading)
11230 Highway 36 East Covington, GA 30014
Owner: Rachel Arevalo Marre
District 5

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Long moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Edwards. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

12a. ANNUAL ALCOHOL LICENSE RENEWALS

Alcohol on Premises Consumption

TMN Enterprises, LLC. dba World of Wings
5350 Highway 20 Covington, GA 30016 (7A-39)

Beer and Wine

1313 Limelight Inc.
1313 Highway 11 Social Circle, GA 30025 (122-4)

SS USA INC.
2527 Highway 81 South Covington, GA 30016

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved the motion to approve the alcohol license renewals as listed, seconded by Commissioner Mason. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Alana Sanders
Annette Alston
Fred Johnson

Public comments can be reviewed at: <https://youtu.be/IiztMtWJBCg?t=4691>

14. BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Edwards
Commissioner Mason
Commissioner Cooper
Commissioner Henderson
Commissioner Long

The board comments can be reviewed at: <https://youtu.be/IiztMtWJBCg?t=5180>

There being no further business for discussion, this meeting was called to adjourn at 8:33 p.m.

Approved this 20th day of January 2026.

Linda D. Hays, Interim Chair

ATTEST:

Susan G. Nolley Clerk