

The Newton County Board of Commissioners regular board meeting was held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners meeting room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the Historic Courthouse. This meeting was live streamed on the Newton County Government – YouTube Channel at [www.youtube.com/@NewtonCountyGovernment](http://www.youtube.com/@NewtonCountyGovernment).

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

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

Madam Chair requested to amend the consent agenda to include two additional items to the consent agenda. (See agenda amendments)

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

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS** Viewed at <https://youtu.be/b1jHEZztCW0?t=9852>

Dennis Taylor

**5. REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN** – None to report

**6. REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER** – James Brown commended staff for their dedication, commitment and outstanding service during the recent winter storm.

### **7. CONSENT AGENDA**

7a. BOC Meeting Minutes January 20, 2026

- 1) Special Called Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
- 2) Executive Session
- 3) Regular Session – 7:00 p.m.

#### **Agenda amendments**

- 4) Ratification – Newton County Sheriff's Office to apply for HEAT Grant
- 5) Ratification – Newton County Sheriff's Office to apply for GOHS TEN Grant

End of the consent agenda

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

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**8. FY27 ACCOUNTABILITY GRANT** Newton County Adult Felony Drug Court to apply. This is a reimbursement grant. Funds to be released July 1, 2026 if awarded. There is a 15% match required. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Henderson moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**9. SUTPHEN CORPORATION HEAVY FIRE RESCUE APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT FOR NEWTON COUNTY FIRE SERVICES** Total Cost: \$1,841,538.00. Funding Source: Capital Fund. There is no match required. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**10. HOME SPRINKLER COALITION GRANT** Newton County Fire Services to apply. Purpose: To purchase materials and build live fire demonstrations to educate on fire sprinklers in the home. Proposed amount: \$750.00. There is no required match. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Mason moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Edwards. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**11. CONGRESSIONALLY SPENDING SERVICES PROGRAM GRANT** Newton County Fire Services to apply. Purpose: To purchase medical equipment to advance the level of care Fire Services can provide. If awarded, grant amount is to be determined. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Mason moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**12. ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG)** Newton County Fire Services to apply. Purpose: To purchase Lucas CPR Devices for every unit in addition with other medical equipment. Proposed Grant amount: \$500,000.00. Funding Source: Requires to be included in FY27 budget. There is a 10% match required if grant is awarded. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Henderson moved the motion, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**13. FIREHOUSE SUBS GRANT** Newton County Fire Services to apply. Purpose: To purchase two Lucas CPR devices. Grant amount: \$40,000.00. There is no match required. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Cooper moved the motion, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**14. WALMART COMMUNITY GRANT** Newton County Fire Services to apply. Purpose: To purchase materials to build a third Life Jacket Loaner Station. Grant amount: \$5,000.00. There is no match required. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**15. FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY(FEMA) FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANT** Newton County Fire Services to apply. Purpose: To purchase a fire safety trailer for fire safety education. Grant amount: \$180,000.00 Budgeted: FY26 General Fund/5% match required Cost: \$9,000.00. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Long moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**16. FY27 STATE ACCOUNTABILITY OPERATING GRANT** Newton County Resource Court to apply. This reimbursement grant is funded through the Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ) & Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). Grant amount to be determined. Funds to be released July 1, 2026. There is a 15% match required if grant is awarded. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Henderson moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**17. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AND NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** Purpose: To support all Newton County Extension personnel operationally. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Long. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**18. MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) BETWEEN GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (GDOT) NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Purpose: Contribution of \$75,000.00 to the Henderson Mill Road Bridge Replacement Project. PI #0020146. Funding Source: General Fund. Funds are budgeted and there is no match required. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved the motion, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**19. COMANCHE CONSTRUCTION OF GEORGIA, LLC. CONSTRUCTION SERVICES**

**AGREEMENT** Purpose: To complete the 2025 Bridge Maintenance and Repair Project, Phase I. Cost: \$1,727,806.85. Funding Source: General Fund (\$1,000,000.00) SPLOST 2023 (\$727,806.85) The funds are budgeted and there is no match required. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved to motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**20. STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES, INC. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

**AGREEMENT** Purpose: Engineering services for water infrastructure improvements at Williams Street Water Treatment Plant. Cost: Pre-Construction Services -\$1,962,653.99 Post-Construction Services- \$1,767,192.09 Funding Source: Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). The funds are budgeted. Due to cost this is one of two of the required requests. No action taken.

**21. REEVES & YOUNG CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK**

**SERVICES (CMaR)** Purpose: Williams Street Water Treatment Plant Demolition Project. Cost: Pre-Construction Phase \$75,000.00. Funding Source: Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). The funds are budgeted. Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

The meeting recessed at 7:22 p.m. for a short break, and reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

**7:30 PM ZONING AGENDA - PUBLIC HEARING**

Shena Applewhaite, Director of Development Services presented five zoning cases.

**1. CASE NUMBER: OTC25-0002**

LOCATION: 620 River Field Lane

TAX PARCEL: 0043 038

PARCEL SIZE: 109.58 acres

FUTURE LAND USE MAP: PRC (Park/Recreation/Conservation) & DN (Development Node)

ZONING: R-2 (Single-Family Residential)

EXISTING OVERLAY: Almon Overlay, Tier 1 Residential

PROPOSED OVERLAY: Almon Overlay, Tier 2 Non-Residential/Mixed Use

WATERSHED: Yellow River

COMMISSION DISTRICT: 4 (Four)

OWNER: Xiaobing Tang & Yuxian Ma, Hua & Ting Zhang

PETITIONER: Jason Jones

APPLICANT'S INTENT TO: Change the property's tier to the Almon Overlay Tier 2 in order to obtain a conditional use permit for an agritourism special events facility.

On 1/27/2026 the Planning Commission recommended approval of petition OTC25-0002 by a vote of 4-1.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Should this petition be approved by the Board of Commissioners, it should be approved for an OTC to Almon Tier 2 Overlay CONDITIONAL subject to the owner's agreement to the following enumerated conditions. Where these conditions conflict with the stipulations and offerings contained in the Letter of Intent, these conditions shall supersede unless specifically stipulated by the Board of Commissioners.

1. To the owner's agreement to abide by the following development standards:
  - a. Maintain compliance with Division 450, Almon Overlay, of the 2009 Newton County Zoning Ordinance.
  - b. Provide a scaled site plan to Development Services based on the concept plan included with this report.
  - c. Ingress and egress to be approved by the Newton County Transportation Department to include upgrading the driveway.
  - d. Bring any unpermitted buildings that will be used for the Special Events Facility into compliance by obtaining building permits.
  - e. Limit the number of total occupants to the occupancy load set by the Newton County Fire Marshal.
  - f. Provide a Sprinkler Inspection to the Newton County Fire Marshall. Inspection must be approved prior to the release of a Business License. Complete an annual Fire Inspection from Newton County Fire Services.
  - g. Prior to the release of the Business License, provide a copy of an approved fire inspection from the Newton County Fire Marshall to Development Services.
  - h. Prior to any construction, addition of or removal of walls, the applicant must apply for all required permits.
  - i. As applicable, obtain Environmental Health approval before the issuance of a business license.
  - j. All outside events shall end at 10:00 p.m. This includes clean-up and take-down of the events per the applicant.
  - k. Adequate parking shall be provided for guests in the area shown on the concept plan. Security personnel will be provided at each event to direct traffic while vehicles are entering and existing the property during events. Parking will be limited to the subject property only.
  - l. Any outside reception shall be held at least 100 ft. off of any property boundaries.

7: 45 p.m. Public Hearing opened  
Domonique Luis spoke in support of the petition.

In opposition of the petition  
Linda Strange & Mike Strange  
Dennis Taylor  
7:53 Public Hearing closed

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Henderson moved the motion to deny Case# OTC25-0002, seconded by Commissioner Long. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**2. CASE NUMBER: REZ25-000010 (Companion Case: FLU25-000004)**

LOCATION: 3400 & 3396 Hwy 212  
TAX PARCEL: 0032 037C & 0032 037E  
PARCEL SIZE: 2.689 ac total  
FUTURE LAND USE MAP: COM (Commercial)  
EXISTING ZONING: CN (Neighborhood Commercial) & A-R (Agricultural Residential)  
PROPOSED ZONING: CH (Highway Commercial)  
CHARACTER AREA: Emerging Suburban  
WATERSHED: South River  
COMMISSION DISTRICT: (1) One  
OWNER: GA Petro Operations LLC  
PETITIONER: Raghupal Damidi  
APPLICANT'S INTENT: To rezone both properties to CH in order to develop a convenience store w/ gas pumps and restaurant.

On 1/27/2026 the Planning Commission recommended approval of petition REZ25-000010 by a vote of 5-0. There was no public opposition.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

Should this petition be approved by the Board of Commissioners, it should be approved CH (Highway Commercial) CONDITIONAL subject to the owner's agreement to the following enumerated conditions. Where these conditions conflict with the stipulations and offerings contained in the Letter of Intent, these conditions shall supersede unless specifically stipulated by the Board of Commissioners.

1. To the owner's agreement to the following:
  - a. Submit a minor plat to combine parcels 0032 037C and 0032 037E into one tract.
  - b. Plans/plats submitted must meet the requirements of the ordinance/regulations and be approved by the Department of Development Services, Public Works, Newton County Fire Services, Environmental Health, NCWSA and GSWCC and GDOT as applicable.
  - c. Prior to any new uses all permits shall be obtained as applicable.
  - d. Must obtain and maintain a business license as applicable.
  - e. No outside storage allowed on the property and no merchandise allowed to be displayed outside of the building, except for an ice machine that is allowed to be situated on the exterior front walk of the building.

f. The septic drain field and detention pond are allowed to be within the transitional buffer as long as an 8 ft opaque fence is installed along the eastern property boundary lines.

g. The following uses shall not be allowed- Tattoo parlor and vape shop.

8:10 p.m. Public Hearing opened

Raghupal Damidi spoke in support of the petition.

There was no opposition.

8:11 p.m. Public Hearing closed

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved the motion to approve Case# REZ25-000010 with staff recommendations, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion passed. Vote 4-1. Commissioner Cooper opposed.

### **3. CASE NUMBER: CUP25-000014**

PROPOSED USE: Special Events Facility

LOCATION: 3281 Salem Rd (Parent address is 3249 Salem Road)

TAX PARCEL: 0012A 142

PARCEL SIZE: 6.83 acres

FUTURE LAND USE: DN (Development Node)

EXISTING ZONING: CH (Highway Commercial), Salem Tier 2 Moderate Commercial Overlay

WATERSHED: South River

COMMISSION DISTRICT: 2 (Two)

OWNER: Salem Square LLC

PETITIONER: Shondell Allison

REPRESENTATIVE: Shondell Allison

APPLICANT'S INTENT To operate a Special Event Facility and to sell alcohol for consumption on premises.

On 1/27/2026 the Planning Commission recommended approval of petition CUP25-000014 by a vote of 5-0. There was no public opposition.

#### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

Should this petition be approved by the Board of Commissioners, it should be approved for a Conditional Use Permit for a Special Events Facility and to sell alcohol for consumption on premises, CONDITIONAL, subject to the owner's agreement to the following enumerated conditions. Where these conditions conflict with the stipulations and offerings contained in the Letter of Intent, these conditions shall supersede unless specifically stipulated by the Board of Commissioners.

1. CUP25-000014 is to allow for a special events facility and to sell alcohol for consumption on premises.
2. Comply with all Newton County fire codes.
3. No fireworks are allowed for any Special Event.
4. Adequate parking shall be provided for guests in the existing parking lot for the plaza.

5. Guest occupancy shall be set by Newton County Fire Services.
6. All events are to be conducted inside.
7. Must obtain and maintain a Newton County business and alcohol license.
8. Obtain all permits required from Development Services, Fire Services, Transportation Department, NCWSA and Environmental Health as applicable.

8:19 p.m. Public Hearing opened  
Shondell Allison spoke in support of the petition.  
There was to speak in opposition.  
8:31 p.m. Public Hearing closed

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Mason moved the motion to approve Case# CUP25-000014 with staff recommendations, seconded by Commissioner Long. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**4. CASE NUMBER: FLU25-000009**

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LOCATION: 498 Rocky Plains Road

TAX PARCEL: 0049 015D

PARCEL SIZE: 11.03 acres

EXISTING LAND USE MAP: AF (Agriculture/Forestry)

PROPOSED LAND USE MAP: RR (Rural Residential)

EXISTING ZONING: A (Agricultural)

PROPOSED ZONING: A-R (Agricultural Residential)

CHARACTER AREA: Emerging Suburban

WATERSHED: Yellow River

COMMISSION DISTRICT: (1) One

OWNER: Clint Harris

PETITIONER: Clint Harris

APPLICANT'S INTENT: To amend the FLUM from AF to RR in order to rezone to A-R. The intent is to subdivide for a family conveyance.

On 1/27/2026 the Planning Commission recommended approval of petition FLU25-000009 by a vote of 5-0. There was no public opposition.

8:28 p.m. Public Hearing opened  
Clint Harris spoke in support of the petition.  
There was no opposition.  
8:31 p.m. Public Hearing closed

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Edwards moved to approve Case# FLU25-000009 to the FLUM request to Tract Two only, seconded by Commissioner Mason. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

**5. CASE NUMBER: REZ25-000011** (Companion Case: FLU25-000008)

LOCATION: 91 & 100 Edgefield Lane

TAX PARCEL: 0049 015D

PARCEL SIZE: 0.55 & 0.51 acre respectively

FUTURE LAND USE MAP: HDR (High Density Residential)

EXISTING ZONING: None

PROPOSED ZONING: RMF (Multi-Family Residential District)

CHARACTER AREA: Live/Work Corridors

WATERSHED: Yellow River

COMMISSION DISTRICT: (4) Four

OWNER: Stanley's Properties LLC

PETITIONER: Newton County Development Services

APPLICANT'S INTENT: To assign the RMF zoning district to properties that were deannexed from the City of Covington.

On 1/27/2026 the Planning Commission recommended approval of petition REZ25-000011 by a vote of 5-0. There was no public opposition.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

Should this petition be approved by the Board of Commissioners, it should be approved RMF (Multi-Family Residential District) **CONDITIONAL** subject to the owner's agreement to the following enumerated conditions. Where these conditions conflict with the stipulations and offerings contained in the Letter of Intent, these conditions shall supersede unless specifically stipulated by the Board of Commissioners.

1. To the owner's agreement to the following:

- a. Construction, subdivision of land, or any type of development shall meet the requirements of the Newton County Zoning Ordinance, Newton County Development Regulations, and other ordinances and regulations as

8:37 p.m. Public Hearing opened

8:38 p.m. Public Hearing closed

Madam Chair entertained a motion. Commissioner Henderson moved the motion to approve Case# REZ25-000011 with staff recommendations, seconded by Commissioner Cooper. The motion passed. Vote 5-0.

This is the end of the Zoning Agenda

**22. PUBLIC COMMENTS** Viewed at <https://youtu.be/b1jHEZztCW0?t=9852>

Denise Williams

Terri Webb

Alana Sanders

Mya Allen Neeley

Dennis Taylor

Mattie Goggins

Natravious Smith

**23. BOARD COMMENTS** Viewed at <https://youtu.be/b1jHEZztCW0?t=10619>

There being no further business to discuss, this meeting was called to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

Approved this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.

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Linda D. Hays      Interim Chair

ATTEST:

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Susan G. Nolley      Clerk