

**Minutes of Public Hearing
Elbert County Board of Commissioners
June 9, 2025**

- 1) Discussion and consideration of a request by Peggy LeFevre to rezone 4.31-acres at 2817 Martin Road, Bowman, from A(Agricultural) to R1(Single Family Residential). This request is to allow for a portion to be split out around an existing house. Map and parcel 006 106. Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. There were no public comments.
- 2) Discussion and consideration of a request by Johnny and Carolyn Chatten to rezone 1.50-acres at 2459 Blue Hole Road, Elberton, from RR (Rural Residential) to R1(Single Family Residential). This request is to allow for a portion to be split. Map and parcel 015 038. Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. There were no public comments.
- 3) Discussion and consideration of a request by Linda Collins-Allen to rezone approximately 1-acre on Dixon-McCall Road, Elberton, from A(Agricultural) to R1(Single Family Residential). This request is to allow for a portion to be joined with an adjoining parcel in order for a home to be placed on it. Map and parcel 080 016. Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Ms. Allen stated she wanted the property rezoned so that her daughter could place a home on it.
- 4) Discussion and consideration of a request by Jesus Rodriguez Benitez to rezone from RR (Rural Residential) to R1(Single Family Residential). Property located at 1533 Buck Trail Road, Elberton. This request is to allow for the parcel to be split and an additional home to be placed on the property. Map and parcel 034 001D. Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. There were no public comments.
- 5) Discussion and consideration of a request by Open Road Solutions, LLC to rezone from GB (General Business) to R2(Single and Multi-Family Residential). Property located on Petersburg Road, Elberton. This request is to allow for apartments/duplexes to be built. Map and parcel 042E 118A. Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Mr. Darrell Garner stated it is his request to rezone this to a townhome community with up to 80 units.
- 6) Discussion and consideration of a request by Open Road Solutions, LLC to rezone from I (Industrial) to R1 (Single Family Residential). Property located on Old Middleton Road, Elberton. This request is to allow for homes to be built on the property. In addition, this request is for a preliminary plat review. Map and parcel 042 012. Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Mr. Darrell Garner stated they did extension soil work, but it would not perk for a conventional septic system.

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- 1) Chairman Lee Vaughn called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioner David Hunt, Commissioner Casey Freeman, Commissioner Chris Alexander, Commissioner Mike Scoggins,

Commissioner Freddie Jones, County Administrator Allen Hulme, County Attorney Bill Daughtry, CFO Macie Witcher, County Clerk Tamara Butler and media.

- 2) After the Pledge to the United States flag, the invocation was given by Mr. Daughtry.
- 3) **Adoption of the Agenda.** Commissioner Freeman made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 4) **Adoption of the Minutes of May 12, 2025.** Commissioner Hunt made a motion to adopt the minutes of May 12, 2025. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 5) **Public Comments.** There were no public comments.
- 6) **Discussion and consideration of a request by Peggy LeFevre to rezone 4.31-acres at 2817 Martin Road, Bowman, from A(Agricultural) to R1(Single Family Residential). This request is to allow for a portion to be split out around an existing house. Map and parcel 006 106.** Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Commissioner Scoggins made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 7) **Discussion and consideration of a request by Johnny and Carolyn Chattin to rezone 1.50-acres at 2459 Blue Hole Road, Elberton, from RR (Rural Residential) to R1(Single Family Residential). This request is to allow for a portion to be split. Map and parcel 015 038.** Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Commissioner Scoggins made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 8) **Discussion and consideration of a request by Linda Collins-Allen to rezone approximately 1-acre on Dixon-McCall Road, Elberton, from A(Agricultural) to R1(Single Family Residential). This request is to allow for a portion to be joined with an adjoining parcel in order for a home to be placed on it. Map and parcel 080 016.** Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Scoggins seconded the motion. Commissioner Freeman recused himself from the vote because he has adjoining property. The motion passed 4-0.
- 9) **Discussion and consideration of a request by Jesus Rodriguez Benitez to rezone from RR (Rural Residential) to R1(Single Family Residential). Property located at 1533 Buck Trail Road, Elberton. This request is to allow for the parcel to be split and an additional home to be placed on the property. Map and parcel 034 001D.** Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 10) **Discussion and consideration of a request by Open Road Solutions, LLC to rezone from GB (General Business) to R2(Single and Multi-Family Residential). Property located on Petersburg Road, Elberton. This request is to allow for apartments/duplexes to be built. Map and parcel 042E 118A.** Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Commissioner Freeman

made a motion to approve this rezone request. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

- 11) **Discussion and consideration of a request by Open Road Solutions, LLC to rezone from I (Industrial) to R1 (Single Family Residential). Property located on Old Middleton Road, Elberton. This request is to allow for homes to be built on the property. In addition, this request is for a preliminary plat review. Map and parcel 042 012.** Planning and Zoning recommended approval by a 5-0 vote. Chairman Vaughn stated the applicant has withdrawn the application due to the soil not able to perk. Commissioner Alexander made the motion to deny the rezone request. Commissioner Scoggins seconded the motion. The motion to deny passed 5-0.
- 12) **Second Reading for Discussion and Consideration to amend Elbert County's Multi-Family Residential Standards 6.06.03A Ordinance.** Mr. Daughtry stated it came to the attention of Planning and Zoning that our Multi Family standards were stricter than surrounding counties; one example being that we required 50% greenspace; the amended ordinance would require 15%. We're taking out the section requiring no more than 2 units to acre; and changing the setbacks from 75 ft. to 20 ft. Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve the amendments to the Multi Family Residential Standards Ordinance. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 13) **Mr. John Watson and Mr. Gary LaBagh to address the Board concerning the condition of Ernest Brown Road.** Mr. Watson and Mr. LaBagh stated the road was unsafe and in terrible condition, causing damage to vehicles, trailers, etc. They also stated the road has been neglected for some time and something needs to be done. Chairman Vaughn stated no one is disputing the road is in bad condition; and we will do what we can.
- 14) **Mr. Frederick Bronner, speaking on behalf of the Calhoun Falls Hwy/Bakers Ferry Road Community to address the Board concerning the need for a County Neighborhood Noise/Nuisance Ordinance.** Mr. Bronner provided an audio recording of the gun (guns) being fired at all times of the day and night. He stated he understands the law and does not want to restrict any rights, but the noise is excessive and near daily. He said there are also loud explosions and a barrage of gunfire that lasts for hours. Mrs. Margie Beeson, wife of Mr. Bronner also spoke about the loud explosions both day and night and that it has scared her dogs and horses. She said the neighborhood is just asking for a respectful solution. Mr. Bob Powell, who lives across from the residence reiterated the concerns. Chairman Vaughn said that he sympathizes with them and has talked with the Sheriff and will talk to him again about some type of resolution.
- 15) **Discussion and consideration to reappoint Ms. Rhonda Floyd to the Elbert County Board of Family and Children Services.** Her term is set to expire June 30, 2025. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the appointment of Ms. Floyd. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 16) **Discussion and consideration of the SFY 2026 DFCS (Department of Family and Children Services) budget.** DFCS has requested \$33,590.04, the same amount as last year, which will be paid to them monthly in the amount of \$2799.17. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to

approve the SFY 2026 budget for DFCS. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

17) Discussion and consideration to increase camping rates at Bobby Brown Park as follows:

- 1) Waterfront 50- amp campsite- \$38/night
- 2) Waterfront 30-amp campsite- \$35/night
- 3) Interior 50-amp campsite - \$35/night
- 4) Interior 30-amp campsite- \$30/night (no change)
- 5) Pioneer Savannah/Broad- \$40/night

Chairman Vaughn stated there was some discussion at the work session about the rates and that we were behind what surrounding campgrounds were charging. Mr. Hulme stated the new rates will take effect July 1st. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the increased camping rates. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

18) Discussion and consideration to increase Solid Waste tipping fees from \$65/per ton to \$68/per ton and increase fees to out-of-town residents to \$136/per ton. Chairman Vaughn stated after some discussion at the work session, the tipping fees will be increased from \$65/ per ton to \$69/ per ton and \$138/per ton for out-of-town residents. Mr. Hulme stated this increase will take effect July 1st. Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve the increased rates for tipping fees. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

19) Discussion and consideration of a rate increase of .50 cents for blue and yellow bags.

Chairman Vaughn stated per our agreement with the City of Elberton, if there is an increase to the tipping fees, then we have to increase the cost of the blue and yellow bags for recycling. These increases will also take effect July 1st. Commissioner Scoggins made the motion to increase the price of blue and yellow bags by .50 cents. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

20) Discussion and consideration of changing the days of operation for Convenience Centers to Monday and Saturday. (They are currently open Monday, Wednesday and Saturday). Mr. Hulme stated the centers are expensive to operate and now a lot of residents are using curbside pickup; therefore; this is a cost-saving measure. This will be for all centers. In the future we may look at closing some of the locations, but starting July 1st, we will operate the centers on Monday and Saturday. Commissioner Freeman stated that he is leery of voting on this now without looking at the numbers. Chairman Vaughn said he would like to go ahead and vote on this now and we can always bring it back up if changes need to be made. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to table this item. The motion died for lack of a second. Chairman Vaughn then asked for a motion to go ahead with Mr. Hulme's recommendation of closing the centers on Wednesday. Commissioner Scoggins made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Alexander. The motion passed 4-1, with Commissioner Freeman opposing.

21) Discussion and consideration to continue our partnership with the Community Partnership of Elbert County. Ms. Laura Evans stated the Community Partnership has been around since 1991. The funding from Elbert County has allowed them to apply for federal funds that support 75% of the program and a 25% cash match. Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve the Community Partnership. Commissioner Scoggins seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

- 22) **Discussion and consideration to request the Board of Elections to conduct a study on the cost of holding each election per precinct and to look at how many precincts adjoining counties are using.** Chairman Vaughn stated he wanted a comparison with other same-sized counties; since it cost a lot for us to man each voting precinct. He said after the study, they would have more information and it may be that everything is ok, but also, we may be able to close some precincts. Commissioner Hunt made the motion to have the Board of Elections conduct the study. Commissioner Scoggins seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Chairman Vaughn stated after discussion at the work session, four (4) members of the Planning and Zoning board were up for reappointment. There is one (1) vacant position. It is his recommendation to table items 23 – 26 at this time. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to table items 23-26. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

- 23) Discussion and consideration of the reappointment of Rev. Thomas Jackson to the Planning and Zoning Board
- 24) Discussion and consideration of the reappointment of Mr. Johnny Lutz to the Planning and Zoning Board
- 25) Discussion and consideration of the reappointment of Mr. Quinn Floyd to the Planning and Zoning Board
- 26) Discussion and consideration of the reappointment of Mr. Otho Graham to the Planning and Zoning Board
- 27) **Discussion and consideration of accepting additional LMIG funding.** Mr. Hulme stated this is in addition to what we have applied for and this is used for safety on roads, restriping and minor widening of roads where there are issues. The grant has been applied for in the amount of \$378,000; out match would be about \$113,000. The match would come from SPLOST or TSPLOST. Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve applying for additional LMIG funding. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 28) **Discussion and consideration to seek bids for a side-arm tractor for the Road Department.** Commissioner Freeman made a motion to seek bids for a side-arm tractor. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 29) **Discussion and consideration of a request by Mr. Chuck Almond to surplus a 1990 American General HMMWV.** Commissioner Alexander made a motion the motion to surplus the vehicle. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.
- 30) **Discussion and consideration to seek sealed bids for a cover to go over the batting cages at McWilliams Park and recommit \$150,000 of the committed funds to McWilliams Park.** Chairman Vaughn stated about \$400,000 was set aside for the new 4-H building. We are coming in under budget so far and we will not need to put in a sprinkler system; therefore, we will have funds left over. The Little League program along with other private donors will commit some funds to put a cover over the batting cages. Also, they need new playground equipment; which Mr. Hulme stated would cost around \$60,000. Chairman Vaughn stated the \$150,000 from the

committed funds along with the donated funds will allow us to do all of these projects. Commissioner Hunt made the motion to use \$150,000 from the committed funds for McWilliams Park projects. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

31) Discussion and consideration of a Resolution Calling for a Referendum at the November 2025 election to impose a FLOST for the sole purpose of property tax relief to offset the effect of the floating homestead exemption. Chairman Vaughn explained that HB 381 that the State passed allows counties the option to vote in a 1% sales tax increase which would take us to 9%. But, that extra 1% could only be used to reduce the millage rate and the rate that we collect SPLOST, it would be over 2 mills. Mr. Hulme stated it would be roughly a 2mill reduction in the property tax. This is only to place the item on the referendum in November and allows the taxpayers to vote on it. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to place this item on the referendum in November. Commissioner Scoggins seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

32) Finance Report. Ms. Witcher stated we are operating under budget thru May. General Fund budget expenditures are \$550,248 more than this time last year; some departments are over budget thru May. General Fund revenues are about \$222,000 more than this time last year. SPLOST taxes have a cash balance of \$1,712,000 and TSPLOST has a cash balance of \$1,688,000. Hotel/Motel tax has a cash balance of a little over \$17,000 for local projects.

33) Adjournment. Commissioner Scoggins made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Alexander. The motion passed unanimously.