

MINUTES

Bleckley County Commissioner Meeting Bleckley County JC Building Thursday, February 19, 2026 – 10:03 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Mike Davis, Freida Dykes, Cindy Newman, Allen Yawn, Magistrate Judge Rob Grimsley, Sheriff Cape, Matt Kelley, Tax Commissioner Paige Baggs, Cheryl Ates, Lisa Eisele, Suzanne Wynne, Brad Daniel, Brian Smith, Ricky L. Holland, Wanda K. Holland, Janet Kirkpatrick, Dennis Kirkpatrick, Debra Daniel, David Foskey, Sylvia Baker, Kaye Smith, Tim Smith, Michael Howell, Timothy R. Smith, Michael Smock, Mike Stoy, Caroline Weathersby, Mi Waters, Neil Mullis, Randy Atkinson, Neysa Atkins, JoAnn Thompson, Melody Brown, Tony L. Horne, Kay Horne, Mathew Swanson, Edward Coley Jr., Scott Chester, Julie Lanfair, Tyler Brack, David Hicks, Greg & Donna Conyer, Lisa & Allen Chastain, Billy Darsey, Teresa Jones, Michael Jones, Sammy Moore, Terence Finch, Ricky Smith, Donna C. Smith, Jessica Foskey, April Warner, Tammy Coody, Ray Dixon, Edina Peace, Melvin Higgins, Loraine Higgins, Brian Bergeaux, Ken Land, Chris Coley, Larry Perry, April Read, Jones Summerfield, Tina Haupt, Ronald Thomas, Roger A. Brown, Julie Marshall, Todd Deeson, Jill Fisher, Michael D. Porter, Stephen White, Christine & David Clark, Ronald R. Dains, Scott Wynn, Michael Floyd, David L. Foskey, Freddy Kitchens, Alyssa Teston, Luke Teston, Joseph Teston, Candace Summerall, John Rozar, Frank Brown, Michelle Johnson, Laura Johnson, Loreto Qurrish, Ginger Grantham Asmus, Mark L. Bryan, Scott Garnto, Johnny & Carol Holland, Robert & Deborah Belflower, Andy Lucas, Lynn Brown, Eddie Smith, Lee Rush, Jim A Yawn, Cindy McCranie, Kaysi Boutwell, Ken E. McLeod, Angeline D. Allen, Julie Mullis, Vickie Tomlinson, Phillip Phillips, Jessica Phillips, Stevie Sapp, Steve Davis, Robin Davis, Katy McCranie, Bubba Paulk, David Clark, Melissa Barker, Keith McCleod, Whipple Simpson, Jim Young

Stevie Sapp opened in prayer.

Sheriff Cape led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Davis welcomed all to the meeting.

All attendees received the following:

Minutes January 15, 2026 – There were no questions or concerns. Minutes were approved.

Topics discussed by Commissioner Davis

The FTA Procurement Policy for the Bleckley County Transit was signed.

A Resolution of the Bleckley County Sole Commissioner in pursuance of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, authorizing the adoption of the Bleckley County Hazard Mitigation Plan, was signed.

The City of Cochran is terminating the Intergovernmental Agreement for inspection services, effective March 1, 2026.

Ronnie Smith was appointed to the Regional Council as the Third Member for Bleckley County.

Topics discussed in today's meeting

Magistrate Judge Rob Grimsley reported on the cases for January. There were 52 warrants issued, 80 civil claims, and 22 bond hearings. There has been an increase in civil claims from last year. Training for the Magistrate staff this year will begin in April. Hopefully, he will have some good news about online warrants and a new court management system soon.

John Roland stated renovations continue at that hospital. He encourages all to come by and see it. The new physical therapy room is completed, and they are currently working on a new program application for pulmonary rehab. The staff continues to do a great job.

Sheriff Cape stated that an arrest has been made in the multiple burglaries that have been occurring. The office is fully staffed, and the School Resource Officers are busy with Spring sports.

Paige Baggs stated that the 2025 tax season is coming to an end. The actual due date was February 15, 2026, but it was extended to February 23, 2026.

Allen Yawn, with the Recreation Department, had 200 kids sign up for winter/spring soccer and 200 for baseball, softball, and t-ball. A new sign has been installed at the department's entrance. New bleacher pads are currently being poured and new bleachers will be ordered.

Melissa Barker handed out activity schedules planned by the Chamber of Commerce.

Cheryl Ates stated the voter registration office continues to maintain files. A general primary election will be held on May 19, 2026. Qualifying for the school board will be on March 2, 2026. There are presently 8,724 registered voters.

Camryn Bishop went over the January Building Report. She stated it has been a slow month. A total of 12 permits were issued.

Matt Kelley went over the fire department report for January. The Fire Department responded to two structured fires, one fire alarm, 19 brush fires, one vehicle fire, 19 wrecks, four mutual aid calls in Dodge County, and 16 miscellaneous calls. The Fire Department continues to work on the training facility. We are still months out before completion, but progress continues to be made. There is no report from EMA.

Andy Lucas informed everyone on what the Industrial Development Authority does. There is a nine-member board that researches projects, including vendors and other various information, which is then evaluated. The IDA property is located on Jac-Arts Road.

Ken Land with the Downtown Development Authority stated that the authority continues to finalize approval for downtown revitalization.

Data Center

Commissioner Davis opened the discussion regarding a Data Center being located in Bleckley County. He asked if there was a speaker for the group. There was no designated speaker. All questions and concerns will be addressed by "Speaker".

Commissioner Davis: He does not have any signs of property being purchased or visited in Bleckley County for a Data Center, but there has been talk about it. He is a board member of the Bleckley Dodge Joint Authority. Joe Meadows, Matt Fordham, and Andy Lucas are also on the Board from Bleckley County. Robert Pruitt is the Chair, and Andy Lucas is the Co-Chair. The next Joint Authority meeting is scheduled for the 2nd Monday in April and will be held at Robert Pruitt's office in Dodge County. Now, to address some questions or concerns.

Speaker: Have you had a conversation with the Board regarding a Data Center?

Commissioner Davis: There has been talk regarding possibly located on the Bleckley and Dodge County line.

Speaker: What is your advice for the Board regarding the Data Center?

Commissioner Davis: I'm willing to look at it and see what it can bring to Bleckley and Dodge Counties. "I promise the Board will look into everything, being that I also live here and wouldn't want to do anything to damage my community."

Speaker: Are the people going to get to vote or know before the land is purchased? Once the land is purchased, it is a done deal.

Commissioner Davis: They will have to get permits.

Speaker: Who's going to deny the permits, and would that be the Joint Authority that issues the permits?

Commissioner Davis: I'm pretty sure all the permits would be submitted before the land is purchased. Dodge County would issue the permits as of now.

Speaker: Will there be reports on economic and environmental impacts prior to the land being deeded for development?

Commissioner Davis: Yes, sir.

Speaker: And who would do the environmental studies? Would it be non-partisan so you can get the truth, and exactly, do you know who would do the environmental studies?

Commissioner Davis: We would probably go to DNR and EPA.

Speaker: The people in that area need to be informed and have some kind of input on property taxes, infrastructure, water quality, and many other factors, because once it is built, it is a done deal.

Commissioner Davis: Once someone comes in to purchase property for a data center, that's when the study will be completed. No one is going to buy this property. If property is purchased, it has to be close to available power. Also, a certificate from Georgia Power has to be obtained. The property that's being rumored is off the Eastman Highway.

Speaker: This property is located a quarter mile off my front porch. My question is: what is the time frame for building a data center?

Commissioner Davis: It takes about 10 years. It would take a year or two to obtain power certificates and another year or two to build a substation.

Speaker: We are not talking about anything happening in the next three or five years?

Commissioner Davis: No, sir.

Closing Notes:

Speakers expressed concerns and opinions about noise levels, the timeline for the center's construction, power and water usage, environmental issues, and who approves and denies permits. Will you support the citizens of this county? Will there be a vote on this? The Joint Authority's meeting time is not suitable for working families.

Commissioner Davis ended the meeting by inviting all to attend the next Bleckley Dodge Joint Authority meeting,

Mike Davis, Commissioner

Date

Freida Dykes, County Clerk

10:37 a.m.
Time