

**HEARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION**  
**March 17, 2026 – 4:30 P.M.**

The Heard County Board of Commissioners held a work session on March 17, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in the Commission Chamber of the Heard County Administration Building. In attendance at the meeting were Chairman Tracy McCormick, District 1 Commissioner Curtis Mock, District 2 Commissioner James Perry, District 3 Commissioner Iris Harris, District 4 Commissioner Larry Hammond, and District 5 Commissioner David Walls.

The board opened the session with discussion regarding the arena's utility vehicle ("gator"). Arena Director Caleb Pike reported that the current gator, purchased in 2016, has approximately 3,000 hours and 8,000 miles and is experiencing significant mechanical issues, including transmission problems and intermittent electronic power-steering failure. A repair estimate from Sun South was approximately \$4,200. Caleb noted that the gator is used daily for trash pickup, parking-lot cleanup, and stall maintenance, and extended downtime would create operational challenges during the busy season.

Caleb presented comparisons of several replacement models. He stated that Kubota offers the heaviest-built unit, featuring a fully metal six-foot bed, hydraulic dump system, and a three-cylinder diesel engine known for longevity. He contrasted this with models from Can-Am, Polaris Ranger, and Yamaha, which rely heavily on plastic components and have smaller beds. He also noted that while the Kubota has a slower top speed of 25 mph, this would not affect operations because the gator is rarely used on public roads.

The board discussed trade-in options, with AgPro of Newnan offering \$4,000 for the existing gator. Caleb expressed doubt that the unit was worth that amount given its age and condition, stating that even with \$4,000 in repairs, it would not justify the valuation. Commissioners

discussed whether to repair the current gator and retain it as a backup or trade it in immediately. Caleb noted that the unit still runs but is nearing the end of its useful life.

Commissioners reviewed pricing differences among bids, including questions about model years and telematics packages. Caleb confirmed that Kubota's telematics system appears to be a GPS-tracking feature added due to increased equipment theft. Commissioners agreed to narrow the options to two models—the John Deere Gator and the Kubota—for consideration at the next meeting.

Discussion then shifted to surplus equipment. Commissioners noted that scrap prices had previously exceeded surplus auction returns and discussed whether trading the gator would be more efficient than waiting for a future surplus sale.

The board then discussed staffing needs within the fire department. Commissioners reviewed comments from a recent presentation indicating that the department would require approximately 60 employees to staff all stations with two personnel per shift. They noted that the county's ISO rating had recently improved from a 5 to a 4 due to equipment upgrades, staffing improvements, and enhancements to the water system. Commissioners also discussed regional salary competition affecting multiple departments, including law enforcement, EMS, and public safety. The board reviewed ongoing work on proposed data-center ordinances. Topics included maximum building height, acreage requirements, setbacks, buffer standards, and infrastructure obligations. Commissioners discussed aligning local regulations with recent ordinances adopted in Coweta County, including minimum 50-acre parcels, 500-foot setbacks, natural vegetation buffers, fencing requirements, and utility provisions ensuring no cost burden to residents. They also discussed limiting the number of data centers permitted in the county and requiring impact studies for facilities exceeding 500,000 square feet.

Commissioners also reviewed concerns about building height limits. Current county ordinance restricts structures to 35 feet, though the fire department can support firefighting operations up to 45 feet. Members discussed whether to amend the ordinance to allow taller structures or maintain the existing limit.

With no further business, the work session was adjourned.

End time 5:34 p.m.

Katrina Billingsley

County Clerk

Date 04/21/2026

Terrey McLean

Chairman

