HEARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION
May 19, 2026 – 4:00 P.M.

The Heard County Board of Commissioners held a work session on May 19, 2026, at 4:00 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, District 5 Commissioner David Walls, and Deputy Clerk Sandy Cox.

The Board continued its review of the Mobile Home Ordinance, noting errors in the attorney's draft and discussing whether to delay adoption until the full ordinance book is updated. Commissioners reaffirmed that state law prohibits regulating manufactured homes by age and agreed that the ordinance should require a minimum of 1,000 square feet, a 4/12 roof pitch or greater, pre- and post-move inspections, compliance with engineering codes, permanent masonry underpinning, and porches installed before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued. Title retirement requirements and removal of axles, wheels, and tongues for permanent installation were also discussed. The Board agreed the ordinance may need to be tabled until the ordinance book is fully corrected.

The Board then reviewed the draft Data Center Ordinance. The draft was based on another county's ordinance and was not ready for adoption. Commissioners discussed whether to allow data centers to self-generate power, noting that any such systems would require EPD approval and must comply with the county's sound ordinance. Noise concerns, buffer requirements, and the inclusion of cryptocurrency operations were discussed. Commissioners agreed that buffer requirements need revision and that size classifications may be unnecessary. Additional revisions will be compiled for a future work session.

Commissioners discussed complaints about excessive noise from free-range chickens and other birds in residential areas. The Board agreed to research decibel levels and ordinances in other counties before considering any new regulations.

The Board then discussed the need for a duplex ordinance. A potential request in District 5 may involve replacing mobile homes and cabins with duplexes. Commissioners noted that the county does not currently regulate duplexes and agreed that duplexes should require at least 1,000 square feet per unit, or 2,000 square feet total. They clarified that duplexes would not qualify for grandfathering if replacing mobile homes and must meet all current setbacks and ordinances. The Board agreed to develop a duplex ordinance addressing minimum size, setbacks, zoning districts, and design standards.

The Board discussed a request from the City of Roanoke to accept 5–10 animals per month in exchange for a $10,000 annual contribution. Commissioners expressed concern that the amount would not cover the cost of housing, feeding, and veterinary care. The Board discussed calculating the actual per-day cost of animal care before making any commitment.

Animal Control is currently dealing with a significant rat infestation at the shelter. Staff reported that relocating all animals to an outside facility for cleaning and extermination would cost approximately $20,000 per week. Because of the expense, the Board agreed to wait until the shelter population decreased before proceeding. Only a few dogs remained in the facility, and the Humane Society agreed to take the remaining cats. A transport flight is scheduled to remove the last few dogs on the upcoming weekend.

The Board discussed the Freeport tax exemption, noting that eliminating the tax could benefit small businesses but would reduce county revenue. Commissioners discussed the possibility of offering case-by-case exemptions as an economic development incentive and agreed that further analysis is needed.

Staff reported that ordinance revisions discussed in 2017 were never adopted and remained incomplete. Commissioners agreed to attempt to contact the consultant who worked on the drafts to obtain a cost estimate for completing the ordinance book update.

The Board received an update on the county's health insurance renewal. The projected increase was reduced from 25% to an estimated 15%, with a possibility of 12%. The Board discussed implementing a mandatory health fair for employees enrolled in county insurance, with Cigna providing free screenings and bloodwork. Participation is expected to reduce long-term insurance costs.

The District Attorney did not attend the meeting as planned and is scheduled to appear on Thursday, May 21, 2026. The Board will review funding requests at that time.

The next budget meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Work Session.

The work session ended with no official action being taken.

End time 5:33 p.m.

Katrina Billingsley

County Clerk

Date 06/11/2026

Chairman