**HEARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**
**August 18, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.**

The Heard County Board of Commissioners held a regular Commissioners Meeting on August 18, 2026, at 6:00 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, and District 5 Commissioner David Walls, and County Attorney Michael Hill.

**Agenda Item # 2 - Welcome, Invocation, and Pledge to the American Flag**

Chairman Tracy McCormick called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. Citizen Buddy Copeland gave the invocation.

**Agenda Item # 3 – Public Hearings**

None.

**Agenda Item # 4 – Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the July 21, 2026, regular Commissioner's meeting were presented to the Board for approval. On a motion (Perry) and second (Hammond), the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2026, regular Commissioner's meeting as written.

**Agenda Item # 5 – Amend Agenda**

Chairman McCormick noted the need to add Item D under Old Business for discussion of extending the moratorium on data centers. The County Attorney confirmed that the moratorium is currently set to expire at the next meeting date on September 15, 2026, and advised that the Board may amend the agenda to include the item.

On a motion (Mock) and second (Hammond), the Board voted unanimously to add Item D. Data Center Moratorium under Old Business.

**Agenda Item # 6 – New Business**

**a. Discuss/Appoint to the Planning Board**

On a motion (Hammond) and second (Mock), the Board voted unanimously to appoint Tiffany Powers to the Planning Board.

**b. Discuss/Decision Investigator Vehicle**

The Board considered the purchase of an investigator vehicle for the Sheriff's Office. The Chairman reported a quote of $36,000 for the vehicle and $6,559.71 for equipment installation, totaling $42,559.71. On a motion (Hammond) and second Perry), the Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase.

**c. Transit GDOT Grant**

The Board addressed the GDOT Transit Grant under Title 49 USC Section 5311.

On a motion (Hammond) and second (Mock), the Board voted unanimously to authorize execution of the grant documents.

**Agenda Item # 8 – Old Business**

**a. Discuss/Decision Use Permit & Variance for Cell Tower Property Owner Virginia Gripado Hwy 100 and Mahaley Road**

The Board discussed the special use permit and variance request for a cell tower on Highway 100 and Mahaney Road, property of Virginia Grippito. The County Attorney advised that the public hearing had been closed previously and no new evidence could be considered. Commissioners discussed coverage needs and the applicant restated information already included in the application package. On a motion (Mock) and second (Perry), the Board voted unanimously to approve the cell tower request.

**b. Discuss/Decision on Rescue Boat**

The Board revisited prior discussion regarding the purchase of a rescue boat for river response. Commissioners noted increased river activity and past delays in rescue response.

On a motion (Hammond) and second (Perry), the Board voted unanimously to proceed with the purchase using SPLOST funds

**c. Discuss ELA Amendments**

The Board reviewed amendments to the ELA ordinance. The County Attorney summarized changes requested by the Board, including requiring a minimum tract size of 7.5 acres and requiring GDOT approval for driveways on state highways. As this is a zoning ordinance amendment, the Board must hold a public hearing.

On a motion (Walls) and second (Mock), the Board voted unanimously to schedule the public hearing for September 15, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

**d. Extend Data Center Moratorium**

On a motion (Mock) and second Hammond), the Board voted unanimously to amend the existing resolution to extend the moratorium through March 16, 2027.

**Agenda Item # 9 – Public Comments**

Megan McMann addressed the Board and expressed appreciation for the extension of the moratorium on data centers. Ms. McMann urged the Board to adopt a strong ordinance if data centers or other large mechanical infrastructure are ever permitted, emphasizing protection of agricultural land, rural character, and long-term environmental impacts.

Chairman McCormick announced two upcoming work sessions dedicated solely to data center ordinance development and encouraged public participation.

Olga Figueroa thanked the Board for extending the moratorium and urged commissioners to "dig deep" into research on data center impacts, noting concerns observed in other Georgia counties. She expressed appreciation for Heard County's rural landscape and asked the Board to proceed cautiously.

Melinda Brown thanked the Board for extending the moratorium and asked commissioners to adopt strict parameters in any future ordinance. She emphasized protection of groundwater, wells, streams, and ponds, noting she does not have county water access. She also requested consideration of noise, pollutants, and impacts on neighboring properties. She urged commissioners to remember they represented residents.

Natalie Pike spoke regarding the FLOCK automatic license plate readers operating in the county. She acknowledged their usefulness for public safety but raised concerns about privacy, constitutional rights, long-term location tracking, data aggregation, and potential misuse.

Alisha McClain thanked the Board for allowing public comments and for extending the moratorium. She stated that her family remains cautious about data center development and emphasized concerns about long-term impacts such as noise, increased traffic, and the permanent industrial nature of such facilities. She noted that data centers create few long-term jobs and suggested the county reevaluate spending priorities rather than relying on potential revenue from large-scale projects. She expressed appreciation for Heard County's quiet rural character and urged commissioners to consider whether data center development aligns with the community's long-term interests.

**Item # 10 – Executive Session**

On a motion, (Perry) and second (Hammond), the Board voted unanimously to enter the Executive Session at 6:42 p.m. On a motion, (Mock) and second (Hammond), the Board voted unanimously to return to Open Session at 8:02 p.m. During the Executive Session the Board discussed real property.

**Item # 11 – Adjourn**

There being no further business, on a motion (Harris) and second (Mock), the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Adjourned 8:03 p.m.

Katrina Billingsley

County Clerk

Tracy McCurdy

Chairman

COMMISSIONER OF ROADS & REVENUE GA SEAL HEARD COUNTY GA

Date: 09/15/2026