

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 12, 2026
6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Chairman Emmett Collins, Vice Chairman Jennifer Snelson, Commissioner Gene King, Commissioner Bryan Threadgill, and Commissioner Adam Worsley

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: County Administrator John Gorton, County Clerk Allyson Stephens, Finance Director Tammy Lackey, Deputy Clerk Hailee Palmer, and County Attorney Nathan Lee

Staff Absent:

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was Called to Order by Chairman Adam Worsley at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Pastor Jonathan Porter of Greenville Baptist Church.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All.

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Agenda was Amended to Add under New Business #5: Update on Courthouse Progress/Approval of Roof Replacement (Phase I) and Under New Business #6: Reallocation of TSPLOST Widening Funds to E-911 Parking Lot.

A motion was made to Adopt the Agenda by Commissioner Threadgill and Vice Chairman Collins. All were in favor.

1. Appoint Chairman

Commissioner Gene King made a motion to appoint Commissioner Emmett Collins as Chairman for 2026. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Bryan Threadgill. Voting in favor were Commissioner King, Commissioner Snelson, Commissioner Worsley, and Commissioner Threadgill. Commissioner Collins abstained from the vote.

2. Appoint Vice Chairman

Commissioner Gene King made a motion to appoint Commissioner Jennifer Snelson as Vice Chairman for 2026. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Bryan Threadgill. All were in favor.

3. Appoint County Administrator

A motion was made to appoint Mr. John Gorton as the County Administrator by Commissioner Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

4. Appoint County Clerk

A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill to appoint Mrs. Allyson Stephens as the County Clerk and seconded by Commissioner King. All were in favor.

5. Appoint Deputy Clerk

Before making the appointment, County Clerk Stephens made a recommendation: "As Clerk, I genuinely appreciate Hailee and the dedication she brings to this office. She has completed her Clerk Mandate in Athens, GA at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, and consistently shows

reliability, professionalism, and a willingness to learn. Appointing her as Deputy Clerk allows her to continue her training while providing stability and continuity for the Clerk's Office. I believe this is a positive step for our office and for the Board, and I appreciate your consideration in appointing Hailee Palmer as Deputy Clerk." A motion was made by Commissioner Snelson to appoint Ms. Hailee Palmer as Deputy Clerk. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

6. Appoint County Attorney

A motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill to appoint the Law Firm of Glover & Davis which was seconded by Commissioner King. All were in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS

None.

VI. FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Tammy Lackey presented the Finance Report to the Board and reviewed the County's financial status as of that afternoon. She stated that the balances for all accounts were reflected on the front page of the report and that interest and investment accounts had been updated. Director Lackey reported that the County received \$4.7 million from the Tax Commissioner's Office during the prior week, of which \$4 million was transferred into the investment account. She further noted that LOST and TSPLOST distributions received in December were reflected at the bottom of the first page of the report. Director Lackey explained that the second page of the report detailed LOST and TSPLOST commitments, noting that the current SPLOST balance was negative \$462,000, due to no advances having been made from the General Fund at that time. She reported that the MaxAir plumbing jail chase project had been completed and that the MaxAir plumbing sanitary line project was scheduled to begin on January 19, 2026. Director Lackey also stated that Phase One of the courthouse project began that day. She concluded by reporting that the balance in TSPLOST projects was \$849,000.

VII. DEPARTMENT HEADS

County Administrator Gorton introduced department head updates and welcomed new staff in attendance. Administrator Gorton recognized Mr. Bryon Brown, the County's new I.T. Director, and asked him to stand and be acknowledged by the Board. Administrator Gorton also introduced Mr. Scott Mitchell, the new Deputy Director for Public Works, who was also present. The Board welcomed both employees aboard. Administrator Gorton stated that four department heads would provide annual updates, beginning with Finance.

Finance Director Tammy Lackey reported that the Finance Department has hired a staff accountant and is now back to full staffing. She stated that the department would be processing 1099s and W-2s the following week and would continue routine operations, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll. Director Lackey also reported that the department is preparing for the annual audit and that Mauldin & Jenkins will be on site beginning February 2, with the audit expected to be completed by March 31. She further stated that she has been working with County Administrator Gorton to maximize investment income.

Building, Planning, and Zoning Director Cassandra Jones presented a summary of the department's activities for calendar year 2025. She reported that the department issued 509 permits during the year for residential, commercial, and industrial development throughout the County, with activity primarily driven by residential construction and infrastructure improvements. She stated that the permit activity included 121 new homes, 22 residential remodels, 20 in-ground pools, 27 demolitions, 34 barns, 32 garages, 15 generator installations,

two new office buildings, six office remodels, one manufacturing plant, three manufacturing plant expansions, two cell towers, and ten additions and replacement towers. She further stated that the department processed numerous additional permits for HVAC installations and replacements, residential additions such as decks, signage, reroofs, panel upgrades, and general repairs. Director Jones reported that Code Enforcement handled 190 cases during 2025 related to public safety, land use, and property maintenance. She stated that common violations included timbering without permits, noting that the County handled 82 timber cases, including some illegal activities requiring permitting. Additional cases included 23 inoperable or junk vehicle violations, 21 waste/refuse and unlawful dumping cases, 15 unsecured or unsafe buildings, 10 cases involving living in campers, eight erosion and sediment control cases, and nine cases involving work performed without permits. She stated that 117 cases had complied and closed, with 73 cases remaining open but currently in compliance, most of which were timbering sites. She reported that three cases required court action, with two cases closed in court and one remaining open. Director Jones stated that 2025 reflected continued growth and increased regulatory activity, and that her department remains focused on responsible development, public safety, compliance, and coordination with property owners.

Public Works Director Brian Griffith provided the annual update for the Public Works Department and thanked the administration and the Board for their support as the department continues to grow. He stated that one of the first priorities was training and that the department completed extensive in-house training in areas including dirt road maintenance, patching, and grass-cutting efficiency. Director Griffith reported that one employee obtained a license at no cost to the County, stating that it is easier to develop drivers internally than to hire experienced drivers. He stated that Public Works acquired a hot box earlier in the year and reported that road patches completed using the equipment are holding well, with more work still to be completed. Director Griffith stated that several roads that had been closed for years had been reopened, including Trammel Road, and that work would continue, including beginning additional efforts during the week. He also stated that gravel continues to be applied to dirt roads to reduce dust and maintenance costs, with the long-term goal of improving all dirt roads. Director Griffith reported that three flooding locations were addressed during the year and stated that none of those areas have been underwater since improvements were installed. He stated that there have been zero return trips for maintenance since installation and described the work as a success. He stated that plans are in place to reapply for the grant to address additional locations. Director Griffith also reported that the department now has its own patching equipment and stated that Public Works is preparing to begin patching operations full-time. He reported that the department completed the road assessment book and thanked staff, specifically Deputy Clerk Hailee Palmer, for assistance in compiling the information, stating that it would serve as a reference tool for the department moving forward. Director Griffith also reported that the department replaced numerous missing and faded "No Through Truck" signs across the County and stated that enforcement would soon be supported by local law enforcement. In closing, Director Griffith reported that the department cleared a significant backlog of work tickets and stated that response times have improved to the point that the department is nearing a proactive approach rather than remaining reactive. He asked for any questions, comments, or concerns from the Board. During discussion, Commissioner King acknowledged the new "No Through Truck" signage and requested that the department confirm the required installation height for enforcement purposes, noting that signage must meet the correct height requirement in order to support valid citations. Director Griffith stated that Public Works used existing shorter posts

temporarily and confirmed additional posts had been ordered to meet the required height standard. He thanked the Board for its continued support and expressed excitement about the progress anticipated for the coming year.

Chief Tax Appraiser William Harris presented an update and thanked the Board for its continued support of the Tax Assessor's Office. He stated that the Board's actions have improved the office's ability to move forward and noted that the County now has more accurate and reliable data since the implementation of EagleView. He reported that the office has already identified over \$500,000 in additions and stated that Board support of updated residential tables has helped property values better reflect current market conditions. He also referenced the Board's approval of commercial valuation work, which he described as a critical step toward fair and equitable values across all property classes. Chief Appraiser Harris stated that these decisions improve accuracy, support transparency, and position the County for responsible growth and economic development. He thanked the Board on behalf of himself and the tax staff and affirmed the office's commitment to maintaining transparency and integrity. Chief Appraiser Harris reminded residents that from the present date through April 1, the Tax Assessor's Office will accept applications for primary residence exemptions, and that April 1 is also the deadline for several other filings, including conservation value applications under the Forest Land Protection Act and business personal property returns, including items such as boats and planes. He encouraged property owners to contact the office with questions and stated that staff are available to assist. During discussion, Commissioner King asked whether the office notifies property owners when a conservation-use period is nearing expiration. Chief Appraiser Harris confirmed that notification letters were sent and explained that in October 2025, the office sent notices for conservation-use periods expiring December 31. He stated staff would be available to assist with any questions regarding individual timelines.

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENT

County Clerk Stephens reported that one citizen had signed up to speak during Citizens Comment; however, the individual advised staff prior to speaking that the County had already addressed the issue related to gravel placement on a roadway. Clerk Stephens stated that the citizen withdrew their comment as the matter had been resolved.

IX. MINUTES

1. Minutes, December 23, 2025, Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m.

A motion was made to adopt the minutes from December 23, 2025, Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. by Commissioner King and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

XI. APPOINTMENTS

1. Appoint ACCG Legislative Coordinator - 1-year term that expires January 1, 2027

County Clerk Stephens stated that this position was currently being held by the prior Chairman, Commissioner Adam Worsley. She added that this appointment was typically held by the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, but could be any member of the Board or an appointed member of staff. County Clerk Stephens concluded that she would need to notify ACCG that night since they had already started having sessions. A motion was made to appoint

Vice Chairman Snelson as ACCG Legislative Coordinator by Chairman Collins. This motion was seconded by Commissioner King. All were in favor.

2. Appointment to the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, District 2. This is a 2-year term that will expire on January 28, 2028.

County Clerk Stephens stated that Ms. Dora Terry was currently holding the position — she hadn't had a chance to speak with her, but was sure that Ms. Terry would like to continue serving in that role. Chairman Collins agreed that he was sure she would want to continue serving. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Snelson to appoint Ms. Dora Terry to the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, District 2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

3. Appointment to the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, District 4. This is a 2-year term that will expire on January 28, 2028.

Commissioner Threadgill stated that this was currently held by Ms. Robin Wilkinson. A motion was made to appoint Ms. Robin Wilkinson to the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, District 4 by Commissioner Threadgill. This motion was seconded by Commissioner King. All were in favor.

4. Appointment to the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, Commissioner. This is a 1-year term that will expire on January 28, 2027.

County Clerk Stephens stated that Chairman Collins was currently serving in that role. A motion was made by Commissioner King to appoint Chairman Emmett Collins to the Lake Meriwether Advisory Board, Commissioner. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. Voting in favor were Vice Chairman Snelson, Commissioner King, Commissioner Threadgill, and Commissioner Worsley. Chairman Collins abstained the vote.

5. Appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals. This is a 3-year term that will expire on January 5, 2029.

County Clerk Stephens stated that Ms. Vivian Smith was currently holding that position -- she reached out to her and Ms. Smith stated she was willing to continue to serve. County Clerk Stephens added that this was not a district specific appointment. A motion was made to appoint Ms. Vivian Smith to the Zoning Board of Appeals by Commissioner King and seconded by Vice Chairman Collins. All were in favor.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Ordinance Amendment 25-05: Amendments to Chapter 4 (Alcoholic Beverages) of the Meriwether County Code of Ordinances — This was tabled from the December 23, 2025, Regular Meeting.

The Board considered Ordinance Amendment 25-05, amendments to Chapter 4 (Alcoholic Beverages) of the Meriwether County Code of Ordinances. This item had been tabled from the December 23, 2025 Regular Meeting. Staff explained that the ordinance updates Chapter 4 following the voter-approved referendum allowing the sale of distilled spirits by the package. County Clerk Stephens reported that a public hearing was held on December 23, that public comments were considered, and that revisions were made. A clean copy of the ordinance was provided to the Board, and staff stated that approval would finalize adoption, including signing the associated resolution. County Clerk Stephens further reported that County Attorney Michael Hill reviewed the suggested changes to the ordinance language, particularly the enforcement

provisions under Section 4-12, and that the wording had been clarified to ensure it was accurate and made sense. Staff noted that the ordinance language referencing multiple instances in a calendar year had been addressed for both patrons and employees, and that the word "events" had been removed from the updated language. Following discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Worsley and seconded by Commissioner King to approve Ordinance Amendment 25-05 as presented and allow Chair or Vice Chair to sign. All were in favor.

2. Approval of Telecommunications Services Agreement with AT&T (Dedicated Internet and Voice Bundle) for E-911 — *This was tabled from the December 23, 2025, Regular Meeting.*

The Board considered approval of the Telecommunications Services Agreement with AT&T for dedicated internet and voice services for E-911, which had been tabled from the December 23, 2025, Regular Meeting. Staff reported that the item had previously been tabled due to the Board not having the confirmed cost savings. Staff stated that the cost savings documentation had since been received and provided for the Board's review. County Administrator Gorton explained that the agreement would replace the existing copper line telecommunications service currently used for 911, noting that the monthly cost of the existing service was approximately \$11,000. Under the proposed AT&T agreement, the new monthly cost would be \$798, resulting in savings of over \$10,000 per month, which equates to approximately \$120,000 in annual savings by converting to fiber service. Administrator Gorton stated that written confirmation of these savings from AT&T was included in the Board's meeting packet. A motion was made to approve the Telecommunications Services Agreement with AT&T as presented by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Commissioner Worsley. All were in favor.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on qPublic Subscription Levels — Will Harris

The Board discussed qPublic subscription levels and updated pricing for the County's digital property information platform. County Administrator John Gorton stated the item was placed on the agenda at the request of Vice Chairman Snelson in order to review pricing and subscription options related to updates for public-facing property information. Administrator Gorton reported that the vendor had proposed two subscription packages that included increased annual costs and one-time setup fees, and staff requested Board direction on whether to proceed with further discussion, select a preferred option, or table the matter pending additional clarification. Administrator Gorton noted that Chief Tax Appraiser Will Harris was present to address the topic. Chief Tax Appraiser Will Harris explained that he had spoken with Vice Chairman Snelson and worked to clarify the original request. He stated that the primary concern was ensuring that ownership information on qPublic remained current. He explained that qPublic ownership updates could be completed on a monthly basis beginning February 1, and that this change could be implemented at no additional charge. Vice Chairman Snelson stated that she requested the review after noticing that ownership information only updated on January 1, and she wanted to confirm whether a subscription upgrade was required. She explained that while tax data would remain the same, the goal was for property ownership changes to reflect more frequently for the benefit of County residents. She further stated that staff learned the County could request monthly ownership updates through a ticket process and that this would not require changing the County's subscription package. Chairman Worsley confirmed that monthly ownership updates could be accomplished under the County's current qPublic arrangement.

Both Vice Chairman Snelson and Chief Tax Appraiser Harris confirmed that no subscription upgrade was needed to complete the requested ownership updates. Commissioner King stated that he agreed monthly ownership updates should be implemented. At the recommendation of County Attorney Nathan Lee, the Board proceeded with formal action. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Snelson to update the ownership portion of qPublic on a monthly basis. The motion was seconded by Commissioner King. All were in favor. Vice Chairman Snelson thanked Chief Tax Appraiser Harris for his assistance.

2. Discussion of 2026 LMIG Projects

The Board discussed the selection of road projects to include in Meriwether County's 2026 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) application. County Clerk Stephens presented the item and explained that Board direction was needed to finalize the project list prior to submitting the County's application by the February 1 deadline. Clerk Stephens reported that Meriwether County has been allocated \$942,445.22 in state LMIG funding and is required to provide a 30% local match in the amount of \$282,613.36, resulting in a total project budget of \$1,224,657.88. She stated that proposed project lists had been provided to the Board in advance for consideration. Clerk Stephens also advised that she had contacted the State Aid Coordinator to notify her that the application would likely be submitted close to the deadline, and noted that she would need at least two days to finalize the submission due to required signatures and supporting documentation. During discussion, Chairman Worsley asked whether the cost estimates included in the packet reflected what it would cost the County to complete the work in-house using new equipment, noting that contract costs would likely be higher. Public Works Director Brian Griffin confirmed that the costs reflected internal estimates and stated that contractor pricing would likely be higher. The Board discussed prior conversations regarding the County purchasing equipment to perform a portion of paving work in-house while continuing to complete larger LMIG projects through contracted services to increase mileage and productivity across the County. The Board also discussed paving funds included in the budget, and County Administrator Gorton stated that the County had budgeted funds using TSPLOST and other sources, and that he would provide exact figures at the next meeting. Administrator Gorton also stated he would email the Commissioners the following morning with the dollar amount available for in-house paving. Commissioner Threadgill asked how the costs presented for specific road segments were calculated, and Director Griffin explained that costs vary based on treatment type and the condition of each roadway. The Board discussed internal cost estimates for larger roadway projects such as Rocky Mount Road and noted that internal estimates primarily reflected trucking and materials, with labor not included since staff is already budgeted. Chairman Worsley stated that his preference would be to contract larger road projects as funding allows, while completing smaller roadway projects in-house, in order to address multiple districts and maximize mileage completed. Commissioner King agreed, stating that focusing in-house efforts on smaller projects would allow the County to complete more work throughout the year while ensuring Public Works is not overextended. Vice Chairman Snelson asked how contractor timelines compare to in-house paving, including whether contracting would result in faster completion. Director Griffin stated that contractors can deliver quality work, but the County is often at the contractor's mercy for scheduling due to higher-priority projects such as interstate work. Commissioner Threadgill stated that he preferred the County complete smaller projects first using the new equipment in order to evaluate performance and results before committing to internal work on million-dollar projects. Director Griffin agreed with this approach. The Board also discussed how road priorities are evaluated, including

considerations such as traffic volume, number of households served, and preserving roads that are beginning to decline before they require more costly reconstruction. Director Griffin stated that addressing roads before they “fall off the cliff” allows the County to make the best use of funding and prevent higher repair costs in future years. Clerk Stephens stated that the County must identify a list of roads and project limits for the LMIG application and include estimated costs and treatment types. She explained that project approval is not dependent upon whether the work is completed in-house or by contract, so long as the County completes the improvements and provides required documentation of expenditures. She also noted that LMIG funds may be carried forward up to three years, but doing so requires planning and reporting as part of the annual application process. Following discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Worsley to include the following roads in the County's 2026 LMIG application: King Road, Coleman Creek Circle, and two miles of Alvaton Road. This motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Snelson. All were in favor.

3. Discussion of Surveillance Signage at Red Oak Covered Bridge and Lake Meriwether

The Board discussed approval of surveillance signage for the Red Oak Creek Covered Bridge and Lake Meriwether. County Administrator Gorton reported that surveillance cameras for both locations had been received that day and stated that signage would be required to notify the public that the properties are under 24-hour/7-day video surveillance. Administrator Gorton advised that a proposed sign design was included in the Board's meeting packet for review and stated that approval was requested so the cameras and signage could be installed. Administrator Gorton stated that the signage would be posted at the entrance to the Red Oak Creek Covered Bridge on both sides, as well as at the entrance to Lake Meriwether. Commissioners reviewed the proposed design, which included the message, “Smile, You're on Camera.” Commissioner King commented that the sign design was attention-getting. Vice Chair Snelson stated it appeared friendly while still clearly providing notice. Administrator Gorton noted that a larger, heavy-duty sign was selected to ensure durability and that the signage would remain in place for an extended period. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner King to approve the installation of surveillance signage at both locations, including the Red Oak Creek Covered Bridge and Lake Meriwether. This motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Snelson. All were in favor. After the motion was made, Commissioner Worsley asked about the cost of the signage. Administrator Gorton reported that each sign would cost \$35.99, and that three to four signs would be installed, not to exceed four.

4. Discussion and Possible Action to Amend Prior Approval of 2025 LMIG Project — Wrightsville Road

The Board discussed and considered action to amend the prior approval of the 2025 LMIG resurfacing project for Wrightsville Road. Administrator Gorton reported that the Board had previously approved the Wrightsville Road project with a cost not to exceed \$100,000.00. Administrator Gorton stated that an updated cost estimate had been received in the amount of \$113,000.00, which included a 10% contingency. Administrator Gorton recommended amending the previously approved project amount to not exceed \$113,000.00 in order to avoid delays and additional mobilization costs. Administrator Gorton also stated that the contractor was currently working in the area on Melvin Harris Road and would be ready to proceed to Wrightsville Road if the revised amount was approved. During discussion, the Board requested input and clarification regarding project costs and available funding. Mr. Chris Brazell with

EMC Engineering Services, explained that the project was part of a price contract and indicated that the County remained under budget on the current work to date. It was further noted that the County had remaining funds available from another project, with staff stating there was an additional balance of \$79,656.00 remaining from the Alvaton Road and Judson Bullock Road project. Following discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Threadgill to amend the previously approved Wrightsville Road project to a revised amount not to exceed \$113,000.00, with the additional \$13,000.00 to be funded from the remaining balance available from the Alvaton Road and Judson Bullock Road project funds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner King. Voting in favor were Chairman Collins, Commissioner King, Commissioner Threadgill, and Commissioner Worsley. Vice Chairman Snelson abstained the vote. The motion passed.

5. Amended to Add: Update on Courthouse Progress/Approval of Roof Replacement (Phase I)

The Board received an update on Phase I of the Meriwether County Courthouse Renovation Project, which had been previously approved by the Board on November 25, 2025. Staff reported that since the original approval, the project team has continued evaluating the roof system and has recommended changing the originally proposed TPO roofing system to a standing seam metal roof in order to better protect the historic structure, extend the useful life of the roof, and reduce long-term maintenance concerns. County Administrator Gorton stated that the recommended roof change would also provide cost savings and improved warranty coverage. Representatives from EMC Engineering, Mr. Chris Brazell, and River City Contracting, Mr. Travis Evans were present to explain the change and answer questions from the Board. Mr. Evans explained that the original proposed roof system included a 10-year material warranty, and that the recommended change to a standing seam metal roof would result in a cost savings of approximately \$25,000, while providing improved warranty protections. It was stated that the metal roof option would include a 30-year paint finish warranty, a 5-year workmanship warranty, and a 20-year weathertight guarantee from the manufacturer. Mr. Evans stated that this option would provide additional coverage for less overall cost. Commissioner Worsley asked whether the roof would include color options, and Mr. Evans confirmed that color charts would be available for selection. Mr. Brazell stated that the standing seam metal roof option was an approved alternative and aligned with historic preservation requirements.

During discussion, Commissioner Worsley asked how the roof replacement would impact the existing gutter system, noting concern that runoff could overshoot gutters if not properly integrated. Mr. Evans responded that the gutter system would be modified as needed and would work together with the new roofing system, stating that the roofer would be responsible for completing the related work. County Clerk Stephens requested confirmation that all required warranty documentation would be provided if the change was approved. Following discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Worsley to approve proceeding with the standing seam metal roof replacement as part of Phase I, contingent upon receipt of the appropriate warranty documentation and confirmation that the gutter system would function properly with the new metal roof system. This motion was seconded by Commissioner King. Additional discussion was held regarding selection of the roof color, including whether the Board desired to choose the final color or leave the decision to staff. It was noted that a bronze/copper-toned option would likely align well with the historic appearance of the Courthouse. Project representatives advised that physical vendor samples could be provided to ensure an accurate color selection. The motion was amended to authorize staff to approve the final roof color selection, with the Board

noting that bright colors such as pink, red, or turquoise would not be appropriate. The amended motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board. The Board also received a scheduling update regarding Phase I work. Project representatives reported that work began that day and that visible progress had already been made. It was reported that overhead protection had been installed at multiple exterior doors and that stair tower work would continue during the week. Representatives stated that the engineering team planned to return the following week for an additional review prior to the next scaffolding phase. It was reported that scaffolding would proceed to the north and west elevations first, which was described as a minor alteration that would not result in additional cost. Representatives stated that the roofing contractor would return the following Monday to install slab edge protection on the roof, allowing for removal of some protective coverings and the beginning of demolition work involving exterior lighting. Representatives further stated that additional progress would become more visible once scaffolding installation was fully underway. A design update was also provided, noting that the HVAC system drawings were expected within a couple of weeks, with progress continuing toward the next stages of the project. Commissioner Snelson requested that staff provide continued updates to the Board as major milestones occur, including masonry mockups, so that Commissioners may observe progress and remain informed throughout construction.

6. *Agenda Amended to Add: Reallocation of TSPLOST Widening Funds to E-911 Parking Lot*

The Board considered reallocation of remaining TSPLOST widening funds to support improvements to the E-911 parking lot project. Staff explained that following completion of the Alvaton Road and Judson Bullock widening projects, along with the additional approved work on Wrightsville Road, the County had a remaining balance of \$66,656.10 available from the project funds. County Administrator Gorton requested that the remaining funds be applied toward paving improvements at the E-911 facility, with any leftover funds returned to the TSPLOST balance for future road paving projects. Administrator Gorton stated that the purpose of this request was to complete full paving of the E-911 parking lot, including improving the area adjacent to the ramp and bringing the lot into ADA compliance. Administrator Gorton advised the Board that the parking lot project would not require the full \$66,656.10 and provided an estimated project cost of approximately \$26,000, which would allow the remaining funds to be returned to TSPLOST for future road projects. Administrator Gorton also explained that the County could not use LMIG funds for the parking lot project, as the completed work would be considered a capital asset. Public Works Director Brian Griffith noted that completing the E-911 parking lot project would also provide an opportunity for the County's equipment operators to continue training and become fully prepared for upcoming in-house paving work once weather conditions allow. Following discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill to reallocate \$66,656.10 to the E-911 parking lot paving project, with any remaining funds to be returned to the TSPLOST balance for future road paving projects. All were in favor.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

County Administrator John Gorton provided his report to the Board. Administrator Gorton stated that much of his update had already been addressed during earlier discussion with EMC representatives. He reported that courthouse scaffolding began going up that day and stated that progress on the courthouse renovation project had officially started. Administrator Gorton also reported that the 2025 LMIG work began on Melvin Harris Road the previous Friday and stated

that the project would continue to Wrightsville Road, potentially beginning the following day. Administrator Gorton noted that Public Works Director Brian Griffith had provided an updated road list and recognized Deputy Clerk Hailee Palmer for assisting with the compilation of the road assessment materials. Administrator Gorton stated that 496 roads had been identified throughout Meriwether County. He also reported that there were seven firefighters currently in recruit training taking place in Greenville. Administrator Gorton stated that he looked forward to continued accomplishments and additional improvements throughout Meriwether County in 2026. He further stated that he has been providing weekly updates to the Board and would continue doing so in order to keep Commissioners informed of administrative activities.

XV. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Vice Chairman Jennifer Snelson: Vice Chairman Snelson reported that she had been enjoying attending Recreation Department basketball games and supporting students participating in the program. She stated that schedules have been posted to encourage residents to come out and support the County's youth, and she commended the Recreation Department for the work being done. Vice Chairman Snelson also reported that the County is looking forward to potentially beginning work on a new ball field and stated that information is being gathered in order to submit plans and begin seeking bids for the project. She noted that she has been receiving positive feedback from citizens, including calls thanking staff and the Board for improvements being made in the County, particularly regarding roads and tree work. Vice Chairman Snelson stated that she appreciated citizens reaching out with positive feedback and expressed that she looked forward to the new year.

Commissioner Gene King: Commissioner King stated that, as the first meeting of the year, he hoped that all citizens and County staff had a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year and expressed his hope that everyone would have a prosperous and healthy year. He stated that he looked forward to seeing what would be accomplished in 2026. Commissioner King also recognized Commissioner Worsley for his work as Chairman during 2025 and stated his appreciation for his leadership. Commissioner King made additional remarks to Commissioner Worsley, stating that his efforts were valued and did not go unappreciated.

Commissioner Bryan Threadgill: Commissioner Threadgill stated that he wished to thank everyone for what they do on a daily basis and expressed that he was looking forward to the new year. He stated that 2026 would be a significant year and noted that it is an election year in the County. Commissioner Threadgill stated that there were three positions coming open on the Board for re-election and described 2026 as an important time for Meriwether County. He concluded by thanking staff and the public for their continued work and support.

Commissioner Adam Worsley: Commissioner Worsley thanked the Board and staff for the opportunity to serve as Chairman during the prior year and stated that he enjoyed serving in that role. He expressed appreciation for the work completed in 2025 and stated that he was excited about the projects discussed during the meeting and the progress being made moving forward. Commissioner Worsley also commented on the departmental updates presented during the meeting, stating that he believed those quarterly department head reports were informative, beneficial to citizens, and should be presented on record at the end of each quarter. He concluded by thanking everyone for their efforts and stated that he looked forward to 2026.

Chairman Emmett Collins: Chairman Collins thanked the County's constituents, staff, and County employees. He expressed appreciation to the citizens for trusting him to serve as Chairman for 2026. Chairman Collins acknowledged that 2026 would be an important year, noting elections and national milestones, and stated that he hoped to perform as well as previous

Chairmen had during their terms. Chairman Collins concluded by stating that it was an honor to serve.

XVI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Nathan Lee stated he had no report, unless the Board had any questions.

XVII. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Collins read the Future Meetings & Notices before entering into Executive Session.

XVIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made to enter Executive Session for the purposes of Personnel, Litigation, and Real Estate at 7:00 p.m. by Commissioner King and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

A motion was made to exit Executive Session at 8:02 p.m. by Commissioner Threadgill and seconded by Chairman Collins. All were in favor.

A motion was made to go back into Regular Session at 8:05 p.m. by Commissioner King and seconded by Commissioner Worsley. All were in favor.

After returning from Executive Session a motion was made by Commissioner Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill to change a job title from "Assistant Administrator" to "Deputy Administrator." All were in favor. Another motion was made by Commissioner Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill to approve the merit increase for the County Administrator. All were in favor.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, a motion was made to Adjourn the Meeting at 8:05 p.m. by Commissioner Worsley and seconded by Commissioner Threadgill. All were in favor.

Approved by:

Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Alyson R. Stephens, County Clerk

Date:

January 27, 2026