Coweta County Board of Commissioners

Work Session

Minutes

22 East Broad Street
Newnan, GA 30263
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Shannon Zerangue
County Clerk
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June 11, 2026 **9:00 AM** **Commission Chambers**
37 Perry Street
Newnan, GA 30263

Coweta County Board of Commissioners

Roll Call/Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Bill McKenzie	District 2 - Chairman	Present
Alphonso Smith	District 5 - Vice Chairman	Present
Jeff Fisher	District 1	Present
Bob Blackburn	District 3	Present
John Reidelbach	District 4	Present
Michael Fouts	County Administrator	Present
Kelly Mickle	Assistant County Administrator	Present
Sandy Wisenbaker	Assistant County Administrator	Absent
Tod Handley	Public Works Administrator	Present
Nathan Lee	County Attorney	Present
Shannon Zerangue	County Clerk	Absent
Autumn Payne	Deputy County Clerk	Absent
Madonna Overton	Development Clerk	Present

The Honorable Board of Commissioners of Coweta County, Georgia conducted a Work Session on Thursday, June 11, 2026.

Meeting Called to Order

Chairman McKenzie called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman McKenzie led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Invocation was given by Commissioner Smith.

Notification of Location of Rules

Chairman McKenzie explained that the rules governing the meeting could be found on the County's website as well as on the table located in the lobby outside the meeting room.

Regular Session

1. **Discussion Regarding the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget**

Administrator Fouts explained that he would like to take a moment to express appreciation to the County's budget team for another year of outstanding work. He recognized Finance Director Hans Wilson, Assistant Finance Director Amy Henson, and Budget Manager Hannah Coody, along with Assistant Administrator Mickle, Assistant Administrator Wisenbaker, and Public Works Administrator Handley and many others who worked behind the scenes to make the budget process successful. In addition, he expressed thanks to I.T. Technical Support Manager Chris Hargreaves and the I.T. department for their hard work and dedication. He noted that Mr. Hargreaves developed a new internal tool to support the County's budget process, and that the feedback received from Department Directors and Elected Officials was overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding its ease of use and functionality.

Administrator Fouts explained that staff has prepared a preliminary rough draft of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget and briefly highlighted the budget and millage rate timeline. He provided the 2025 millage rates and an overview of the draft Fiscal Year 2027 budget, explaining that the draft budget provides for the maintenance of service levels, programs, and operations, funds necessary capital projects/improvements, funds a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and supports the addition of personnel to improve service delivery. He also noted that last year marked the first year that the County implemented the three (3) special service districts for 911, EMS, and Parks and Recreation with separate millage rates. He reviewed changes in the Operating Funds from Fiscal Year 2026 to Fiscal Year 2027, and highlighted the proposed General Fund revenues.

Administrator Fouts reminded everyone that the voters approved a referendum in 2025 authorizing a new Floating Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST) in Coweta County. During this year's Georgia General Assembly legislative session, additional legislation was approved that affected the implementation of FLOST. As a result, the County is authorized to utilize six (6) months of sales tax proceeds (January through June 2026) during the upcoming Fiscal Year. He reiterated that the draft budget reflects only five (5) months of sales tax collection, because of the timing of the distribution, not 6-months or a full year of revenue. These sales tax revenues directly offset property taxes.

Regarding the primary expense drivers in the draft FY 2027 budget, Administrator Fouts explained that roadway maintenance, employee healthcare costs, cost of living adjustments (COLA), debt service, and additional personnel are the most significant factors affecting the FY 2027 budget.

Administrator Fouts explained that $4 million is proposed to be dedicated to roadway maintenance. Road maintenance costs are currently funded entirely through Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) revenues. At present, there is no dedicated funding for roadway maintenance in the County's operating budget. Additionally, many of the projects included in the 2025 SPLOST program focus on roadway improvements, new road construction, and intersection enhancements rather than ongoing roadway maintenance. As a result, a smaller portion of SPLOST funding is being directed toward routine road maintenance. Based upon staff's assessment, it is important to stay ahead of the County's road maintenance needs, and this proposed funding is intended to help address that goal.

Administrator Fouts explained that at this time, staff is budgeting for a 15% increase in employee healthcare costs. Staff continues to work with the County's benefits broker to finalize those projections and expects to receive updated figures in early July, which will be incorporated into the final budget proposal. In addition, the draft budget includes a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for employees in lieu of performance-based merit increases. Also, approximately $2 million in debt service has been included in the draft budget associated with proposed financing of the new Government Center and Animal Adoption Center projects. The draft budget also includes approximately $1.6 million in new personnel costs to support County operations. These are the most significant factors affecting the FY 2027 budget.

In response to a question from Commissioner Blackburn, Public Works Administrator Handley explained that last year's asphalt overlay and patching projects averaged approximately $295,000 per mile to mill the top inch and a half of asphalt and replace it with a new surface layer.

Regarding the General Fund revenue, Administrator Fouts provided a comparison of the FY 2026 adopted budget, the FY 2027 preliminary budget, and the year-over-year change. He explained that the FY 2026 budget included just over $50 million in projected property tax revenue. The FY 2027 budget will incorporate the new FLOST sales tax, and as a result, the preliminary budget reflects an approximate $10 million reduction in property tax revenue, which is offset by the new FLOST revenue. In addition, both Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) and sales tax revenues are projected to increase modestly. Overall, General Fund revenues are projected to increase approximately $3.2 million over FY 2026, while also incorporating the new FLOST revenue source. He emphasized that the preliminary FY 2027 budget includes only five (5) months of FLOST revenue because of the timing of the collections distributed by the State. At this time next year, the budget will reflect a full twelve (12) months of FLOST revenue. Under Senate Bill 33, however, the County is authorized to recognize only the revenue from January through June 2026, limiting the FY

2027 budget to five (5) months of collection (June revenue is received in July).

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts clarified that the approximately $10 million in FLOST revenue represents only the portion collected from January through June 2026 that is allowed to be used in the FY 2027 budget per state law. To develop the property tax revenue projection, the FY 2026 base of approximately $50 million was first adjusted to reflect an estimated 2.5% increase in new growth, based on preliminary tax digest data. This estimate assumes growth from new development only and does not include inflationary increases. After applying the projected growth, the anticipated FLOST revenue was used to offset the property tax levy, resulting in a projected property tax revenue of approximately $40.5 million for FY 2027. He further explained that once a full fiscal year of collections is recognized, annual FLOST revenue is projected to be approximately $26–27 million. Beginning in FY 2028, the County anticipates recognizing a full twelve (12) months of FLOST revenue.

Administrator Fouts explained that property taxes remain the County's largest General Fund revenue source, followed by sales taxes. He noted that sales tax revenues have remained strong over the past several years. While the preliminary FY 2027 budget reflects a modest year-over-year increase, the projection primarily assumes normal growth driven by factors such as population increases and ongoing economic activity, rather than significant expansion.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie regarding the amount of FLOST revenue included in the preliminary FY 2027 budget, Assistant Administrator Mickle explained that the FY 2027 budget includes approximately $10.9 million in projected FLOST revenue. Based on current guidance from the Georgia Department of Revenue, 7the County may apply only the portion of FLOST revenue collected from January through June 2026 when reducing the property tax levy for FY 2027. Accordingly, FY 2028 will be the first fiscal year in which the County can recognize a full twelve (12) months of FLOST revenue in the budget.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie, Administrator Fouts confirmed that the preliminary budget applies the full $10.9 million in projected FLOST revenue toward reducing the property tax levy. The difference between the $10.9 million FLOST amount and the approximately $9.6 million change reflected in the property tax line is attributable to an estimated 2.5% increase in the tax digest from new growth, including new residential, commercial, and industrial development. As a result, the property tax reduction does not exactly match the FLOST revenue because the budget also accounts for anticipated growth in the tax base.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding who determined that only six (6) months of FLOST revenue could be used in the FY 2027 budget, Administrator Fouts explained that it was established in Senate Bill 33, which governs how the revenue may be applied during the initial fiscal year. He further noted that the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) has provided recent guidance to tax commissioners regarding implementation and reporting, including how FLOST is reflected in the property tax rollback process through the PT-32 form.

Administrator Fouts emphasized that the County intends to utilize all FLOST revenue collected during the eligible six-month period to reduce the property tax levy.

Assistant Administrator Mickle also explained that staff continues to work with ACCG and the DOR to ensure proper implementation and compliance. At this time, the approach being presented today reflects staff's current understanding of the requirements.

Administrator Fouts continued his presentation by providing a breakdown of the General Fund budget by function, including General Government, Judicial, Public Safety, Public Works, Recreation and Library, Public Health and Welfare, Housing and Development, Capital, and Debt Service. He also reviewed the General Fund expenditures (not including SPLOST projects), noting that the year-over-year increases across departments are driven primarily by health insurance cost increases and the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). He noted that the most significant departmental increase appears in Public Works, which reflects the approximately $4 million increase for roadway maintenance that he mentioned earlier in the presentation.

Administrator Fouts presented the General Fund budget broken down by function. New operating and personnel requests are shown at the bottom of each function to indicate where they are incorporated within the overall budget. Regarding insurance costs, he explained that the preliminary budget includes medical coverage for pre- and post-65 retirees, workers' compensation, and property and casualty insurance. He highlighted an expected increase in property and casualty premiums, as well as higher deductible requirements. To account for these changes, the FY 2027 budget includes an additional $400,000 to cover anticipated deductible costs.

In response to a question from Commissioner Smith, Administrator Fouts explained that the proposed $295,000 included in the Commissioner's budget includes compensation for the Board, health insurance, and funds for training and seminars. Because some of the Commissioners are not enrolled in the County's active health insurance plan, there is a projected reduction (from FY 2026) of approximately $25,000 in the overall budget.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie regarding a projected $119,000 decrease in the Elections budget, Administrator Fouts explained that Elections costs vary significantly from year to year based on the number of scheduled elections. The primary cost driver is staffing, particularly poll workers, which causes the budget to fluctuate depending on election activity. The proposed FY 2027 reduction reflects an updated projection for the number of elections expected in the upcoming year, resulting in lower anticipated staffing and operating costs. He noted that Elections Director Ashley Gay refines these estimates annually to reflect actual election schedules.

In response to a question from Commissioner Fisher regarding the projected $385,000 increase in the Information Technology budget, Administrator Fouts explained that the majority of the increase is driven by maintenance and software subscription contracts, including licensing and other enterprise systems utilized by the County. While software costs previously increased at a modest annual rate of approximately 2%-3%, current market conditions have resulted in increases closer to 8%-12% year over year. The remaining portion of the increase is related to health insurance and COLA.

Regarding the Judicial function, Administrator Fouts explained that this section covers all court-related operations. The year-over-year budget is generally flat, with changes primarily driven by health insurance and cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for personnel. He also noted that, in coordination with the District Attorney's Office, several staff members have been transitioned from County-funded State employees to County employees. The budget reflects this change, along with the addition of one requested position from the District Attorney and other court-related personnel adjustments. He emphasized that the personnel totals for this area are still being finalized and will be updated in the final budget to reflect the most accurate figures.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie, Administrator Fouts confirmed that the District Attorney's personnel request is included in the preliminary budget. He explained that the approximately $1.6 million DA's budget reflects the cost of bringing existing District Attorney staff on as County employees, along with the Victims' Witness program. The District Attorney's new personnel request, along with additional court-related positions, is included in the approximately $766,000 new personnel requests line item.

Moving to the Public Safety function, Administrator Fouts explained that the primary year-over-year change is related to the consolidation of operations. The County is closing the Work Release Center (WRC), and the associated budget and personnel are being transferred into the Corrections Institute for the FY 2027 budget. This transfer represents the most significant change within the Public Safety function. Staff noted that additional personnel requests are also included in this section and will be outlined in further detail later in the presentation.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding staffing levels in the Sheriff's Department, including the impact of retirements and overall personnel deficiency, Sheriff Lenn Wood responded that the department is currently operating at approximately 80% to 85% of full staffing capacity. While there are some vacancies, the department continues to maintain strong recruitment and retention performance. He noted that the agency is actively hiring and benefits from a strong reputation, which has helped support staffing levels despite normal turnover and retirements.

Administrator Fouts noted that, based on the most recent data from Human Resources, the Sheriff's Department currently has approximately 40 to 45 vacancies. However, this number fluctuates because of ongoing hiring activity and retirements. The County continues to fund the department using its standard approach, including funding for vacant positions. He also noted that the Sheriff requested additional personnel in the current budget cycle. However, following discussion, the recommendation is to prioritize filling existing vacancies first and then return to the Board with any additional staffing requests once those positions are filled and operational needs are better assessed.

Sheriff Wood confirmed the agreed-upon approach, noting that the current focus is on filling existing vacancies before adding new positions. He also expressed appreciation to Administrator Fouts and staff for collaborating with the Sheriff's office in addressing operational needs as they arise.

Administrator Fouts noted that the Sheriff's budget includes multiple divisions, each with distinct operational needs. As part of ongoing coordination, staff is working with the Sheriff's office to ensure flexibility in managing vacancies. Specifically, if a vacancy exists in one division, but resources are needed in another, positions may be reallocated internally to better meet departmental priorities before requesting additional staffing from the Board.

Administrator Fouts highlighted the ongoing partnership with the School System, noting that the School System continues to fund 65% of School Resource Officer (SRO) costs. While these costs appear on the expenditure side of the budget, the corresponding reimbursement is also reflected in the County's revenue accounts. He also noted that the School System previously added investigator positions, which have been incorporated into the current structure. Under the existing agreement, the School System covers 100% of vehicle costs, while other expenses such as equipment are shared 50/50 between the County and the School System.

Regarding the Public Works function, Administrator Fouts noted that the primary change year over year is the road maintenance budget increase, specifically the approximately $4 million for road maintenance. In addition, the department has submitted personnel requests, primarily related to fleet operations, as well as several new operating expense requests included in the preliminary FY 2027 budget.

Administrator Fouts explained that the Public Health and Welfare function includes the Health Department, the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS), and the County's Transit program, with only minor year-over-year changes overall. He further explained that the Transit operations continue to be significantly supported through federal and state funding sources. He noted that the DFACS budget request for FY 2027 was provided by the local DFACS Director, and that, consistent with prior years, any unspent DFACS funds are returned to the County at the end of their fiscal year (June 30). He emphasized all these programs continue to efficiently utilize funds provided by the County and partner agencies.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie regarding the Transit program, Assistant Administrator Mickle explained that the amount shown on the preliminary budget represents the General Fund appropriation, not total program funding. This figure represents the local share (or shortfall) between the total cost of providing transit services and the federal and state funding received. The grant revenue itself is recorded in the revenue section of the budget under intergovernmental grants. She added that updated grant information that staff has received indicates that the required local contribution will be lower than initially projected, now expected to be under $400,000. Overall, the amount shown represents the County's share of the cost to operate the local Transit system.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Assistant Administrator Mickle clarified that the $400,000 represents the General Fund appropriation, not fare collections or total program revenue. She explained that the County does charge fares for rides ($3 per trip), but fare collections only generate about $40,000 annually. The majority of transit funding is instead supported through reimbursements and program funding, particularly through the Department of Human Services (DHS), including coordination with the Rutledge Center and the Coweta County Senior Center. She noted that the reimbursement rates from DHS are approximately $22 per trip, which makes up a significant portion of program support, along with federal funding.

Regarding the Recreation and Culture function, Administrator Fouts noted that this section includes the Georgia Forestry, the Extension Office, and the Public Library System. Although the function is titled Recreation and Culture, Parks and Recreation is no longer included here because, as mentioned previously, a separate special service district was established for Parks and Recreation in 2025. He explained that overall, there are very few year-over-year changes. The primary difference is within the Public Library System, where the projected state grant has been slightly reduced. This reduction is reflected in the overall $151,000 difference for the function. That amount also includes the combined impact of health insurance cost increases and COLA.

Administrator Fouts highlighted the Housing and Development function, explaining that it includes Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Building Division, Planning Division, and Development Authority. He noted that the primary budget change is a projected increase of approximately $648,000, which is related to the County's contract with SafeBuilt. The increase is based on projected permit activity and is partially offset by inspection fee revenue under the current 65%/35% revenue-sharing agreement.

Administrator Fouts presented General Fund expenditures by type to provide context for commonly questioned budget line items to show their year-over-year changes. He noted that salaries and benefits are proposed to increase from approximately $81.3 million to $87.5 million, primarily because of higher health insurance costs and the 3% COLA. In addition, the costs for contracted services, purchased services, and maintenance contracts continue to increase. He also explained that the proposed General Fund budget includes approximately $1.5 million for new personnel and $113,000 in new operating expenses.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding a comparison of full-time employees to benchmarks in other counties, Administrator Fouts explained that staff has reviewed some of this data in the past, but it is difficult to compare across counties because organizational structures vary. Differences such as whether services such as water and sewer, fire and EMS, or correctional facilities are operated by the County, or a separate entity, can significantly affect staffing levels and make direct comparisons challenging. He further noted that Coweta County's general operations and staffing levels compare favorably to similar counties.

Commissioner Reidelbach commented that rather than comparing budget expenditures, he would be interested in analyzing the County's number of employees in relation to population versus the same data for other counties.

Administrator Fouts presented the proposed FY 2027 General Fund capital expenditures. He explained that the presentation included only the General Fund capital requests and did not include SPLOST- funded purchases. SPLOST currently funds transportation projects, Sheriff's patrol cars, and Fire apparatus, among other items. He reported that the different departments submitted $5.8 million in General Fund capital requests, of which approximately $3.8 million was recommended for approval. He noted that detailed information regarding the capital requests had been provided to the Board and offered to review specific items or field any related questions.

Administrator Fouts included the proposed personnel requests by functional area, comparing current full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, requested positions, and staff's recommended additions. He clarified that he had misspoken earlier regarding the Information Technology (I.T.) department, explaining that I.T. had requested two (2) additional positions and that staff was recommending approval of one (1) of these positions. He noted that departments requested a total of 41.5 new FTE positions across all County funds, with staff recommending approval for sixteen (16) positions. He highlighted several of the recommended personnel additions, including 4.5 positions within the Judicial function, 5.5 positions in Public Safely, and three (3) of the 6.5 requested positions in Public Works. He also noted that the additional requests were submitted for Recreation and Libraries and Housing and Development. He explained that partial FTEs represented part-time positions. He concluded his presentation by reminding the Board that the Public Hearing regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget was scheduled for July 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers. He advised that staff would continue refining the proposed budget prior to the Public Hearing.

The following Department Directors, Constitutional Officers, and Elected Officials addressed the Board regarding the draft Fiscal Year 2027 budget:

- Chief Superior Court Judge Emory Palmer addressed the Board and thanked the staff for their support over the past years as the court system has experienced growth. He explained that as more people move into the county, the demand for court services also increases, which creates a need for additional staff and resources. He noted that while the Superior Court is primarily funded by the state, growing counties increasingly rely on local funding because state funding normally does not fully meet their needs. He recognized staff's challenge of balancing service demands with budget constraints and asked for them to be considered during the process.

- District Attorney Herb Cranford addressed the Board explaining that the County-funded Rapid Resolution Assistant DA position has improved by focusing less on complex inmate cases and more on simple ones, such as probation violations, drug offenses, and property crimes. That has helped resolve cases more quickly, reduce inmate jail time, lower incarceration costs, and free up jail space for more serious offenders. He noted that the position has reduced the office's case backlog, increased the number of indictments, and improved the overall efficiency of the court system. He thanked the Board and staff for considering continuing to fund the position after the grant expires, stating that it will make a difference.

- Chief State Court Judge Seay Van-Patten Poulakos addressed the Board and thanked them and staff for their continued support. She noted that, unlike Superior Court, the State Court is funded entirely by the County. She requested that the unfinished office space in the Justice Center be completed and the addition of a shared law clerk or staff attorney to assist the three (3) State Court Judges. She explained that the court's civil caseload has increased by 119% since 2019, while the case dispositions have increased by more than 134%, demonstrating the court's efficiency. She stated that additional support is needed to help manage the growing workload and maintain the court's high level of performance. She concluded by thanking the Board and offered to field any questions.

In regard to questions from Chairman McKenzie, Judge Poulakos explained that the increase in civil cases is likely because of population growth, more individuals representing themselves in court, and changes in how insurance companies handle their claims. She noted that advances in the internet and artificial intelligence have made it easier for self-represented litigants to prepare legal documents and conduct research. She observed that insurance companies are more frequently disputing or refusing to pay claims, requiring them to file lawsuits to recover damages. She also added that the court also experienced an increase in criminal cases, although she did not have those statistics at the meeting.

- Sheriff Lenn Wood addressed the Board stating that his department has remained effective by reducing staff positions and increasing the number of deputies on patrol, while emphasizing that obtaining additional vehicles remains a key need. He noted that staffing and traffic volumes have increased, arrests and case filings have risen, which is placing a greater demand for the judicial system. Sheriff Wood expressed his appreciation for the work that the courts and county officials do. He also thanked the Commissioners and staff for their communication and support and recognized their willingness to respond whenever he and his team needed assistance.

County Administrator Fouts advised the Board that he had identified errors in his presentation slides. He clarified that the Superior Court Public Defender had requested an additional administrative assistant and that staff was recommending approval of that position. He also noted that a personnel request from the Magistrate Court had been recommended for approval. He explained that both positions were included in the proposed budget but were omitted from presentation slides, and that the omissions did not affect the budget recommendations.

- Superior Court Public Defender Rick Samper thanked the County Administrator, Finance team and Administration staff for their assistance during the budget process. He explained that his budget requests included an additional administrative position, a $300 increase for office supplies, an increase so that he may pay professional dues, and a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for County-funded employees. He also proposed implementing the *My Justice Portal* software, explaining that it would allow attorneys to securely share documents with clients and conduct virtual meetings with inmates, which would reduce delays caused by limited meeting space in the jail and improve the case process.

- Coweta County Coroner Richard Hawk addressed the Board and requested adjustments to his office's compensation and fee structure, explaining that no cost-of-living or fee increases have been made in more than twelve (12) years despite operational costs, increased workloads, and greater legal responsibilities. He emphasized that the request was intended to support the continued operation of the office rather than for personal benefit. He specifically requested increasing the standard death investigation fee from $200 to $325, establishing a $425 fee for complex death investigations, increasing transport fees, establishing a $100 daily on-call stipend for the deputy coroners, and establishing a $1,000 monthly stipend as compensation for his administrative responsibilities. He stated that these adjustments are reasonable and necessary to maintain professional, reliable and legal-sound death investigation services for Coweta County.

Administrator Fouts explained that in 2019, the Board approved a resolution requesting that the General Assembly enact local legislation to convert the Coroner's position from fee-based to a salaried position. However, the proposal did not advance after concerns were raised during the legislative review process, despite similar legislation having been approved in other counties. He further noted that state law establishes the base compensation for death investigations, with the statutory fee set at $175 per case.

- Fire Chief Robby Flanagan thanked the Board for their continued support and highlighted Fire Rescue's effort to keep operating costs low over the past years. He mentioned that two (2) new fire stations are on their way to being ready in late summer. He noted that SPLOST funding has allowed Fire Rescue to purchase fire trucks, ambulances, and other equipment without increasing operating expenses/budget. He also requested funding for the Coweta Cares program after its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding expires and emphasized the importance of remaining competitive with salaries, benefits, and cost-of-living adjustments to improve employee retention and recruitment. In closing, he noted that the new recruit school is planned to help meet the county's growing service needs.

At Administrator Fouts' request, Chief Flanagan provided an update regarding the Coweta Cares program. He explained that although he does not have supporting statistics with him, he would be happy to send them to the Board. He explained that based upon data reviewed to date, maintaining daytime coverage remains the programs' highest priority, as call volume decreases significantly after midnight, with the lowest activity generally between approximately 1:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. He emphasized that when a Coweta Cares unit is not in service, the program's functions do not cease. Instead, EMS crews continue to respond to those calls as needed. When the Coweta Cares unit is operating, however, it is able to handle those responses, allowing EMS crews to remain available for higher-acuity emergency calls and improving overall efficiency. He reiterated the importance of continuing the Coweta Cares program and committed to providing additional operational and call volume data to assist the Board. He noted that given Coweta's 441 square mile service area and current call patterns, maintaining the two (2) Coweta Cares vehicles during the daytime and evening hours through approximately midnight appears to provide the greatest operational benefit, while overnight coverage from midnight until 7:00 a.m. has not demonstrated sufficient call volume to justify 24-hour staffing at this time.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie, Chief Flanagan explained that the need to have a Pathways counselor available as part of the response team is one of the primary reasons that the County has not pursued a 24-hour operation.

Administrator Fouts added that the low call volume during the overnight hours also makes it difficult to justify expanding the program to 24-hour coverage at this time.

In response to a comment from Chairman McKenzie, Chief Flanagan explained that the call volume does not begin to decline significantly until approximately 1:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Chairman McKenzie questioned whether the program's operating hours could be adjusted to extend coverage through midnight, noting that he had spoken with several Sheriff's deputies who spoke favorably about the Coweta Cares program and expressed interest in having its services available later into the evening.

Chief Flanagan responded that rather than having both units operate the same 12-hour shift, one unit begins at approximately 8:00 a.m., while the second unit starts later in the day and remains in service until approximately midnight or 1:00 a.m. This staggered schedule provides overlapping coverage during the busiest periods identified by the data while extending service later into the evening. He added that scheduling heavily depends on ensuring that Pathways counselors are available to staff the program.

Chairman McKenzie asked for clarification on the staffing schedule, asking how two vehicles could provide 12-hour coverage given that personnel do not work seven days per week.

Chief Flanagan explained that the Coweta Cares staff operate on a rotating shift schedule similar to that of the County's paramedics, ambulance crews, and fire personnel, allowing the program to maintain consistent coverage despite individual employees' scheduled time off.

Chief Flanagan further explained the Coweta Cares staffing model, noting that one vehicle currently operates a 12-hour shift from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a Pathways counselor assigned each day. When an additional counselor became available, the program was able to staff a second vehicle. Rather than operating both units on identical schedules, the second vehicle's shift was staggered to begin later in the day and continue until approximately midnight, extending service into the evening while creating overlap during the periods of highest call volume. This staggered approach allowed both vehicles to be available during the busiest times of day while providing coverage over a longer portion of the day. He clarified that this model differs from true 24-hour coverage, which would require maintaining two fully staffed vehicles around the clock.

Administrator Fouts explained that staff has discussed a proposed schedule adjustment with Pathways and Pathways has expressed a willingness to participate. He noted that the remaining challenge is determining the most effective staffing model and work schedule to support the expanded hours. He added that the Coweta Cares program is funded through the EMS Fund and noted that the program's future funding and staffing needs remain an ongoing topic of discussion as the County evaluates options following the expiration of ARPA funding.

- Water and Sewerage Authority Chief Executive Officer Jay Boren addressed the Board and provided an overview of the Water and Sewerage Authority's long-term strategic planning efforts and infrastructure investments to accommodate the county's continued growth. He thanked Administrator Fouts and Commissioner Reidelbach for participating in a recent planning session and noted that the Authority faces many of the same growth-related challenges as the County. He explained that the Water and Sewerage Authority has continued investing in water and wastewater to remain ahead of future growth. He reported that the Shenandoah Wastewater Treatment Plant has been expanded from the capacity of two (2) million gallons per day to six (6) million gallons per day and noted that the Authority is approaching the next phase of growth for that facility. He also mentioned the completion of a new pump station on the Chattahoochee River and explained that they obtained the first water withdrawal permit for that section of the river in 100 years. He stated that the permit, which required twelve (12) years of planning and development, was based on projected population growth over the next fifty (50) years and positions for the county to meet future water demands. He further advised that the Water and Sewerage Authority's next major project will be the expansion of the B.T. Brown Water Treatment Plant from six (6) million gallons per day to ten (10) million gallons per day. He acknowledged that growth presents ongoing challenges but emphasized that the Water and Sewerage Authority has taken a proactive approach to planning to ensure sufficient capacity for the county's future needs.

In response to a question from Commissioner Blackburn regarding the Griffin contract, Mr. Boren explained that it is a take-or-pay agreement inherited by the Water and Sewerage Authority with a 50-year term. Under the terms of the contract, the Water and Sewerage Authority is obligated to pay for up to five (5) million gallons per day regardless of actual usage. He emphasized that the Water and Sewerage Authority is financially responsible for that capacity whether it is fully utilized or not.

- Warden Jeff Rogers addressed the Board requesting funding for five (5) additional Correctional Officer positions, with two (2) to be filled immediately, and the remaining positions phased in throughout the fiscal year to help manage budget impacts. He explained that the request is needed to address the county's growth and the increasing complexity of the offender population. He also highlighted a recent milestone, noting that eight (8) inmates earned their GED and twenty-two (22) graduated from a small business program. He described that graduation ceremony as one of the most rewarding aspects of the job.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie, Warden Rogers explained that the prison does not have a welding program because they do not have an instructor to teach those classes, but he is actively working on finding one. He also mentioned that he would like to add other programs like plumbing and electrical.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding staffing changes resulting from the phase-out of the Work Release Program, Warden Rogers explained that staff had already begun reallocating to meet operational needs. He stated that people previously assigned to the Work Release Center have been assisting with inmate transport and other duties as needed. He noted that recent increases in disciplinary issues and inmate transfers have required additional staff resources. He explained that the Work Release Center, which had operated as a one-officer post, currently houses one work release participant that will be transitioned into an Honor Dorm for carefully selected inmates. He added that one officer position has been reassigned for other operational needs, with additional staffing to be evaluated as the program expands.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie regarding the reassignment of the major, lieutenant, and administrative clerk positions, Warden Rogers explained that those responsibilities have been reorganized. He stated that one lieutenant now oversees the western portion of the county outside work details while another lieutenant oversees the eastern portion. He further advised that the administrative clerk had assumed additional payroll and overtime coordination duties, and that the major's position had been relocated to strengthen the prison security and staff training.

Administrator Fouts noted that the proposed budget includes several capital requests submitted by the Warden to support the transition from the Work Release Program and to maintain security at the prison. He stated that staff would work with the Warden to evaluate those requests and expressed the hope that the County could use the State's mobile inmate construction crew to assist with the project and help reduce construction costs.

Administrator Fouts advised the Board that staff plans to schedule a future Work Session to review the SPLOST projects in greater detail. He explained that the purpose of the Work Session would be to provide the Board with more detailed discussion of the proposed projects.

- Public Works Administrator Handley addressed the Board and requested three (3) additional positions, including two (2) traffic control officers for the Road Division and one (1) fleet maintenance position. He explained that traffic control officers are needed to improve safety for road crews working along busy county roads by providing traffic control around work zones. He further explained that the additional fleet maintenance positions were requested to help maintain the county's growing number of vehicles and equipment, and confirmed that inmates will still be used for traffic control. He also mentioned that Public Works has certification classes that would teach the inmates how to perform the traffic control that it uses on the roadways.

Chairman McKenzie commented on the County's traffic control operations, stating that the traffic control measures performed by the County's staff were of a higher quality than those he had observed on some contractor and state-managed projects.

Public Works Administrator Handley explained that County traffic control operations included onsite supervision to ensure the inmates are properly performing their assigned duties. He noted that, on contractor and state projects, flaggers are stationed at each end of the work zone, but there is not always a supervisor present to monitor their performance and ensure traffic control measures are being carried out appropriately.

Public Works Administrator Handley presented an overview of the Public Works department responsibilities, roadway maintenance program, and major transportation projects. He explained that Coweta County maintains nearly 1,000 miles of paved roads, noting that the County's roadway system is one of its most frequently used public assets and is heavily relied on by residents. He stated that Public Works remains committed to maintaining and preserving the County's transportation infrastructure. He explained that asphalt pavement is classified as a flexible pavement that gradually deteriorates over time as repeated traffic loads cause the pavement to flex. He compared the process to repeatedly bending a paper clip or rubber band, noting that continuous flexing eventually causes the pavement to become brittle, crack, and require maintenance. He further explained that pavement life expectancy varies depending on traffic volumes and vehicle weights, with neighborhood streets generally lasting longer than heavily traveled roadways such as Poplar Road, Lower Fayetteville Road, and Happy Valley Circle because they experience fewer heavy axle loads. Based on the County's inventory of approximately 1,000 miles of paved roads, he stated that maintaining an average 20-year resurfacing cycle would require resurfacing 50-miles of roadways each year. He advised that the County is currently unable to maintain that level of annual resurfacing, resulting in a growing backlog of roadway maintenance needs. He emphasized the importance of timely resurfacing to extend life and reduce the need for more costly roadway reconstruction in the future.

Public Works Administrator Handley reviewed several major transportation improvement projects funded through SPLOST. He explained that the project costs presented reflect construction costs only and do not include engineering and design services, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation expenses, or other project-related costs. He noted that he would send the Board the total project costs, including those additional expenses. Using the Madras Connector Phase I project as an example, he explained that the County was responsible for paying utility relocation costs because several utility providers held prior rights. He noted that the County was required to reimburse Georgia Power for relocating its facilities and was also responsible for relocating two (2) privately owned communication lines located with the CSX railroad right-of-way because those utilities predated the roadway improvements.

Public Works Administrator Handley reported that the Southwest Connector project, including the new roundabout at the intersection of Corinth Road and Fischer Road, had recently been opened to traffic. He stated that the intersection was functioning well based on initial observation, although final paving, removal of existing pavement, and other finishing work remained before the project would be complete. He invited the Board to provide feedback if they observed any issues requiring attention. He also advised that the Shaw Connector project, which will construct a new roadway connecting Fischer Road and Shaw Road, had recently been awarded for construction.

Public Works Administrator Handley reported that the County is currently completing a sight-distance improvement project at the intersection of Tommy Lee Cook Road and Cedar Ridge Road. He advised that the Gordon Road project is expected to be advertised for bids next month and explained that the project will realign Gordon Road at its intersection with State Route 16 by shifting the intersection farther east, improving sight distance, and constructing a roundabout. He also noted that the County will move forward with its 2026 roadway rehabilitation and resurfacing program. He also provided updates on several projects that remain in the planning and right-of-way acquisition stages. He reported that construction plans for the Fischer Road/Andrew Bailey Road project have been completed, and that staff has begun meeting with property owners to acquire the necessary right-of-way in preparation for future construction. He further explained that work on the International Connector project has been temporarily delayed because of nearby development activity affecting the alignment of Hollz Parkway. Staff elected to postpone construction until the roadway alignment is finalized to avoid unnecessary construction and future modifications. He also discussed the Lower Fayetteville Road widening project, a joint project between Coweta County and the City of Newnan that includes state and federal funding. He noted that the costs presented only reflect the County's share of the design expenses. He also discussed the Amlajack Boulevard reconstruction project, explaining that the roadway has been resurfaced numerous times over the years, resulting in the asphalt being level with the existing curb and gutter and contributing to ongoing drainage issues. He stated that the proposed reconstruction will shift the travel lanes towards the median to avoid conflicts with existing utilities while reconstructing the roadway and improving drainage.

Public Works Administrator Handley also updated the Board on the Cannongate Road/Collinsworth Road project, explaining that staff had temporarily suspended additional design work because of proposed development activity in the area. He stated that the project was placed on hold to avoid completing a design that might later require substantial revisions because of future development. He concluded by reporting that the County continues to advance the East Aviation Way extension project, which will extend the roadway to improve access to additional property near the Newnan-Coweta County Airport and support future economic development opportunities.

Commissioner Blackburn expressed his appreciation for Mr. Handley's attention to the Amlajack Boulevard reconstruction project and noted that, in his opinion, the roadway will require full-depth reclamation as part of the reconstruction efforts. He further commented that Amlajack Boulevard and State Route 154 would be among his list of highest transportation priorities if additional funding were available.

In response, Public Works Administrator Handley emphasized the importance of improving Amlajack Boulevard, noting that the roadway provides one of the first impressions of the community for many visitors. He stated that the roadway has been in need of significant improvements and expressed his opinion that reconstruction of Amlajack Boulevard, along with State Route 154, would be among his top transportation priorities.

Public Works Administrator Handley reviewed several future transportation projects that remain in various stages of planning and preliminary engineering. He explained that, while some engineering and design work had begun on several projects, the majority do not yet have dedicated construction funding. He emphasized that these projects represent future transportation needs that will require additional funding before they can advance to construction. He also identified several intersections and roadway improvement projects currently under consideration, including improvements at State Route 34 and Pete Davis Road, Witcher Road and Glover Road at State Route 16, Fischer Road and Minix Road, Hal Jones Road and Greentop at U.S. Highway 29, Greentop Road at Herring Road and State Route 34. He advised that engineering work has begun on some of those projects as staff continues planning for future transportation improvements throughout the county.

In addition, Public Works Administrator Handley discussed the proposed extension of the Southwest Connector, explaining that the project would construct a bridge over CSX Railroad and extend the roadway to connect with State Route 16 and U.S. Highway 29.

Public Works Administrator Handley also explained that several ongoing and planned roadway projects are intended to support future phases of the Madras Connector Project. He stated that completion of the current phase of the project, together with development occurring within the Del Webb community, the construction of the Hollz Parkway, the extension of Coweta Industrial Parkway, and Amlajack Boulevard, will create the roadway network necessary to advance the next phase of the Madras Connector. He noted that the future phase is expected to provide improved regional connectivity and ultimately support the design and construction of the new interchange on Interstate 85.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding the project schedule, Mr. Handley advised that Phase I of the Madras Connector is anticipated to be completed by September of 2027. He explained that completion of the current phase will provide the foundation for advancing future transportation improvements identified in the County's long-range roadway planning efforts. He further explained that future phases will require coordination with GDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) because of the proposed Interstate 85 interchange. He noted that the timing of their improvements would depend on the scheduling and coordination of those agencies' projects. He added that, if the interchange could be constructed without the involvement of GDOT and the FHWA, the project could be completed more quickly. However, because the interchange is part of the state and federal highway system, coordination is required.

Public Works Administrator Handley concluded his presentation by discussing a future improvement to Coweta Industrial Parkway at State Route 154. He explained that the long term plan is to realign Coweta Industrial Parkway with Elzie Johnson Road to create a properly aligned intersection and allow for the installation of a traffic signal, thereby improving traffic operations and safety at the intersection.

In response to a question from Commissioner Smith, Mr. Handley explained that the proposed roundabout at the intersection of U.S. Highway 29, Country Club Road and Lake Hills entrance is a GDOT project. He advised that the project was originally included in GDOT's Safety Program based on safety analysis, crash data, and other evaluation criteria. However, because of increased construction costs and funding constraints affecting several GDOT projects, GDOT re-evaluated the intersection and determined that the cost/benefit ratio was not favorable for funding through the Safety program. He stated that GDOT now intends to seek funding for the project through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program when the next funding cycle becomes available. He advised that the project remains on GDOT's list of planned projects and noted that Coweta County is expected to participate in the project as it moves forward.

In response to a question from Commissioner Blackburn regarding the timeline for widening State Route 154 from U.S. Highway 29 to Thomas Crossroads from two (2) lanes to four (4) lanes, Public Works Administrator Handley advised that GDOT is continuing to hold planning meetings for the project. He explained that, as the project has progressed, GDOT has determined that it is more complex than originally anticipated. As a result, the estimated construction start date has been pushed back, with construction now projected to begin in 2036.

Commissioner Blackburn expressed his appreciation for GDOT's continued partnership with Coweta County and acknowledged the department's contributions to the County's transportation efforts.

Public Works Administrator Handley reviewed the County's asphalt resurfacing program and discussed the impact of rising construction costs on roadway maintenance. He presented a five-year comparison of contracted resurfacing projects, illustrating the number of roadway miles resurfaced each year and the associated construction costs. He noted that in 2021, the County resurfaced 27.86± miles of roadway at a cost of $7 million. In 2022, the County resurfaced only about 1.8 additional miles, yet the project cost increased by more than $2.5 million. He further explained that, although the County resurfaced nearly the same number of miles in 2024 as it did in 2021, the overall construction cost had increased by $4 million. He further stated that the increasing cost of asphalt and transportation construction has significantly affected the County's resurfacing program, noting that inflation has impacted roadway projects in much the same way it has affected everyday consumer goods and services. He explained that Public Works staff works closely with the Finance department to evaluate anticipated SPLOST revenues and projected construction costs in order to maintain a balanced capital program. He advised that, as roadway and intersection improvement projects become more expensive, the County has had to redirect available SPLOST funding to cover those increased construction costs. As a result, fewer resources have been available for roadway resurfacing, requiring the County to reduce the number of miles resurfaced each year in order to keep the overall SPLOST program financially balanced. He added that this is why Public Works has requested General Fund support for the upcoming fiscal year to supplement the funding and provide additional resources for roadway projects.

In response to a question from Commissioner Blackburn, Public Works Administrator Handley explained that when a roadway remains in relatively good condition, the County can extend its service life by applying a resurfacing treatment with a crack-relief interlayer. He stated that this preservation method can add five to seven years to the life of the pavement. He further explained that if a roadway is allowed to deteriorate to the point of base failure, a simple resurfacing is no longer sufficient, and the roadway must undergo full-depth reclamation, which involves reconstructing the roadway base. He advised that the average cost to resurface a road is $295,000 per mile, whereas full depth reclamation projects exceed $500,000 per mile. He emphasized that preserving roadways through timely resurfacing and preventive maintenance is significantly more cost-effective than allowing them to deteriorate to the point where complete reconstruction is required.

Commissioner Blackburn remarked that, while the County maintains 1,000 miles of roadway, Public Works is also responsible for maintaining roadway shoulders, increasing the amount of required maintenance.

Public Works Administrator Handley commented that the roadway shoulder maintenance significantly increases the Public Works department's workload, particularly during mowing operations. He noted that while the County maintains approximately 1,000 miles of roads, not all roadway shoulders require County maintenance because property owners in many subdivisions maintain the rights-of-way adjacent to their homes. However, he emphasized that maintaining the County's roadway system and associated rights-of-way remains a substantial responsibility. He then reviewed historical roadway resurfacing funding, noting that, through 2010, the General Fund contributed funding toward contracted roadway resurfacing projects. In conclusion, he referenced historical funding levels to illustrate how General Fund support had previously supplemented roadway maintenance efforts.

County Administrator Fouts reminded the Board that the Public Hearing regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget is scheduled for July 21, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Discussion Regarding Proposed Data Center Ordinance and Authority**

Administrator Fouts explained that at the Commission meeting held on May 5, 2026, the Board directed staff to place this item on today's agenda.

Chairman McKenzie clarified that Commissioner Smith made the request, and he seconded so that this topic would be approved for discussion at today's Work Session.

Administrator Fouts explained that the document that was previously distributed was a proposed ordinance template from the National Association of Data Center Readiness (NADCR). He stated that the purpose of presenting the template was to receive comments and feedback from the Board before any further action is taken.

At Commissioner Reidelbach's request, Administrator Fouts confirmed that he would attach the initial email he sent to NADCR that relates to the responses included in the agenda packet.

Commissioner Reidelbach stated that, following the May 5, 2026, Commission meeting, he spoke to Commissioner Smith and advised him that he would contact Ms. Vivian Thompson (NADCR) to review the document and ask several questions. He explained that after reviewing the document, he compiled notes that were used to draft the initial email to Ms. Thompson containing his questions. He then reviewed portions of his notes, requesting clarification on references to transparent planning, independent monitoring and operational performance. He also noted that infrastructure readiness and environmental sustainability were already addressed in the proposed ordinance.

Commissioner Smith commented that the proposed ordinance is intended to serve as a framework for establishing regulations governing data center operations, particularly as artifical intelligence technology continues to evolve. He emphasized that, like other industries, data centers should be subject to appropriate rules, oversight, and performance standards. He acknowledged that additional research would be necessary to develop those standards and noted that the current document is intended to serve as a template for future revisions. He also stated that questions remain regarding the proposed ordinance and expressed his belief that the Board should establish an ordinance governing data center operations before moving forward with licensing additional data center operations in Coweta County.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding whether the County could request information from the Water and Sewerage Authority about a customer's water usage, Coweta County Water and Sewerage Authority Chief Executive Officer Jay Boren explained that customer account information cannot be disclosed without the consent of the account holder. He noted that this policy applies to all customers, including residential accounts, and that no account information can be discussed unless authorization has been provided.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding whether an established Authority (i.e. Board of Directors) would have the legal right to obtain customer account information, Attorney Lee stated that he could not answer the question without first knowing the legal authority under which the proposed entity would be created. He noted that Authorities are established pursuant to state law.

Commissioner Reidelbach referenced the questions he had submitted regarding the proposed document and the responses he received from Ms. Thompson. He noted that he had requested the identities and references of the entities responsible for conducting independent monitoring and reporting. According to the response, Ms. Thompson stated that the assessment was performed by qualified professionals but declined to disclose the identities of its employees, contractors, or assessors. He expressed his concern that the requested information was not provided for reference verification and stated that, based on the responses he received, he did not believe the proposed model was appropriate.

Commissioner Smith stated that the question before the Board was whether there is consensus to pursue an amendment to the County's data center ordinance that would apply to data center operators. He acknowledged that technology is still evolving and that not all aspects of such an amendment have been determined. He stated that, if the Board agreed to pursue the amendment, staff could further develop the proposed requirements and determine which provisions should be included to strengthen the ordinance and benefit the county.

County Attorney Lee stated that the Board would first need to determine the intended scope and purpose of any proposed ordinance. He noted that, in his opinion, the draft ordinance was less restrictive than the County's current data center ordinance and contained provisions that were too vague to be enforceable. He further explained that certain operational and proprietary information maintained by the data center operators could not be subject to County inspection or regulation under existing law. He stated that additional clarification would be needed to determine what the proposed ordinance was intended to accomplish and what provisions could be legally enforced.

Commissioner Smith commented that there are different categories of data, generally including standard public/general data and medical data, and noted that AI-related data is still an evolving area without fully defined or standardized classification.

Attorney Lee explained that Counties are limited in the types of regulations they may impose and must respect the legal rights of citizens and property owners. He noted that the County cannot regulate matters that are under the jurisdiction of state agencies or other authorities, such as the Public Service Commission, explaining that such authority is governed by the doctrine of preemption, which means that state or higher-level regulation supersedes local authority.

Commissioner Smith expressed his belief that the current *Data Center Ordinance* should be amended to include additional parameters to regulate data center operators.

Chairman McKenzie noted that at this time the County does not know who those operators are.

Attorney Lee advised that his role was to provide legal guidance regarding what actions the Board could lawfully take, while policy decisions remained with the Board. He explained that any amendments to the County's *Data Center Ordinance* would depend on the specific provisions proposed. However, he noted that previously approved data center projects were vested and, therefore, future amendments to the *Zoning Ordinance* could not be applied to the previously approved projects. He further stated that the County's regulations are limited to land use and that the Board could not impose additional land use regulations on projects that had already received approval.

Administrator Fouts noted that properties already zoned *M* (*Industrial*) with by-right development would be governed under the current ordinance and would be considered vested under existing approvals.

Attorney Lee noted that local government actions must operate within the bounds of state and federal law. While the County can regulate land use and ensure adequate infrastructure capacity, it cannot regulate how private utilities or companies operate internally. He further noted that utilities such as Georgia Power operate under their own regulatory framework, and the County’s role is limited to planning for and ensuring sufficient infrastructure capacity rather than controlling usage or business operations.

Attorney Lee explained that he is willing to assist the Board with ordinance development but reiterated his concerns that the document being discussed today is not enforceable in his opinion. The County's current *Data Center Ordinance* is more protective and legally enforceable than the document being discussed.

Following the discussion, Chairman McKenzie suggested moving on from this discussion to the other items on the agenda.

Commissioner Fisher stated that he agreed no action should be taken at that time. He also expressed concern about expanding government regulation into the internal operations of private businesses and indicated that he did not support the aspect of the proposed ordinance.

Attorney Lee reiterated that his primary concern was whether the proposed regulations could be legally adopted. He explained that the County's authority is limited by state law and noted that local regulations cannot conflict with or regulate matters that have been preempted by the State. He emphasized that his role was to advise the Board on what could be lawfully regulated.

Commissioner Fisher also stated that he was unable to obtain financial information or organizational details for NADCR, including balance sheets or information regarding the number of employees, and noted this as an additional concern.

Commissioner Reidelbach stated that, to his knowledge, the organization (NADCR) was not registered with the state.

3. **Discussion Regarding Potential Data Center Moratorium**

Commissioner Reidelbach explained that Coweta has experienced an increasing number of proposed data center projects and expressed his opinion that the Board should consider establishing a limit on the number of data centers permitted within the county. He also noted that additional research was being conducted regarding onsite power generation as a potential alternative to new transmission infrastructure. He further stated that there were several aspects of the County's current *Data Center Ordinance* that could be revisited and amended but reiterated his support for considering a cap on future data center developments.

Chairman McKenzie expressed his agreement with considering a cap on future data center developments. He also expressed his belief that pending data center projects should remain within designated industrial areas and that future development should continue to be located in appropriate industrial zoning districts.

Administrator Fouts discussed the possibility of placing a proposed moratorium on a future agenda for consideration and noted that any moratorium would require a stated purpose and a defined duration, which he believed could be up to 180 days. He explained that the purpose could be to allow the Board time to consider amendments to the existing *Data Center Ordinance*. He also suggested that one potential amendment could require all future data center applications to be reviewed by the Board on a case-by-case basis. He noted that the legality of establishing a numerical cap on data centers would require legal review and deferred that question to Attorney Lee.

In response to questions from Chairman McKenzie and Commissioner Reidelbach, Attorney Lee stated that there is no specific legal standard establishing the number of data centers that may be permitted. He indicated that the County may have the authority to establish a cap if it could be supported by considerations related to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. However, he noted that additional legal research would be necessary before determining whether such a limitation would be permissible.

Commissioner Fisher expressed that he did not believe a moratorium would achieve the Board's intended objectives. He reiterated his support for establishing a cap on future data center developments and stated that such a limitation could potentially be based on factors such as available resources or geographic considerations.

Attorney Lee explained that any zoning regulations must not be arbitrary or capricious and must be supported by considerations related to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. He noted that zoning decisions are determined on a case-by-case basis and that there are few absolute standards in zoning law.

Administrator Fouts noted that, from a practical standpoint, if the Board wished to amend the existing *Data Center Ordinance*, a temporary moratorium could provide time to consider those amendments. He explained that, without a moratorium, additional applications could continue to be submitted and potentially become vested under the current ordinance.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts explained that, in his opinion, properties currently zoned for data centers, applications that had already been filed, and projects currently in the permitting process would likely be considered vested under the existing ordinance.

Attorney Lee added that vested rights are determined based on whether a property owner has made a substantial change in position in reliance on the existing ordinance. He noted that the application of vested rights depends on the specific facts and circumstances of each case.

In response to a question from Commissioner Smith, Attorney Lee explained that while there is no absolute legal standard, a 180-day moratorium has traditionally withstood legal challenges when supported by a valid purpose, such as allowing the County time to review and amend its *Data Center Ordinance*. He noted that, in effect, staff may decline to accept new applications subject to the moratorium but otherwise do not have discretion to refuse applications.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding whether a moratorium would be required before amending the existing *Data Center Ordinance*, Administrator Fouts and Attorney Lee explained that the Board could amend the ordinance without first adopting a moratorium. Attorney Lee noted that a moratorium would only be necessary if the Board wished to prevent additional applications from being submitted while amendments were under consideration. He further explained that amendments to the ordinance must follow the procedures set forth in the zoning procedure law. Administrator Fouts added that the amendment process requires public advertisement and a Public Hearing, and Attorney Lee clarified that notice must be published no fewer than 15 days and no more than 45 days prior to the Public Hearing.

Administrator Fouts stated that staff was seeking direction from the Board and explained that, if the Board reached a consensus to proceed, staff would prepare a moratorium resolution for consideration at a future regular meeting.

Chairman McKenzie expressed support for placing the matter on the next Board meeting agenda for further consideration.

Commissioner Reidelbach agreed to move forward with the discussion, and Commissioner Smith indicated his support for considering a moratorium.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Commissioner Fisher expressed his concerns about adopting another moratorium and stated that the last moratorium ended up lasting a full six (6) months instead of the 60 days originally discussed.

Commissioner Reidelbach explained that the Board does not have to adhere to the full 180 days if the ordinance is amended in a shorter timeframe.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie, Administrator Fouts explained that the original moratorium was extended because of additional Public Hearings (see May 6, 2025 minutes and October 21, 2025 minutes).

Chairman McKenzie explained that the extended timeframe was needed in order to address items in the ordinance. He also noted that the Board spent a significant amount of time discussing the issue with the public.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts confirmed that the Board has two possible approaches. Firstly, the Board can enact a moratorium to place a temporary pause on any new data center applications while changes to the ordinance are developed, or secondly the Board may proceed with scheduling and conducting a Public Hearing to consider amendments to the existing ordinance (without a moratorium). He explained that prior to any Public Hearing staff would need to know specific changes to the ordinance that the Board desires.

Commissioner Fisher stated that his preference would be to conduct a Public Hearing to directly amend the ordinance. However, if staff requires additional time to develop any changes desired by the Board, he would be open to considering a moratorium.

Commissioner Reidelbach pointed out that any modification to the ordinance would require a Public Hearing and proper public notice, which would take a minimum of 45 days to complete.

Attorney Lee explained that in addition to the required public notice and Public Hearing period, staff would need the Board to sufficiently identify proposed changes to the ordinance so an amendment can be drafted for consideration.

Commissioner Reidelbach noted that because the required public notice and Public Hearing process would take 45-60 days, no immediate changes would occur during that period regardless of the approach the Board chooses to take.

Administrator Fouts explained that currently there are approximately five (5) data center projects in the queue with Community Development that may be zoned or considered vested, subject to legal review. He further explained that a moratorium would temporarily pause new applications while the Board determines appropriate limits to the number of data centers in the county or amends the Data Center Ordinance. This would prevent the number of pending or eligible projects from continuing to change during the ordinance review process.

It was the consensus of the Board to instruct staff to place consideration of a temporary moratorium regarding new data center applications on a future agenda.

4. **Discussion Regarding an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Coweta County Water and Sewer Authority Associated with Sharpsburg Sewer**

Administrator Fouts presented a proposed amendment to an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the County and the Coweta County Water and Sewerage Authority, as directed by the Board at the January 22, 2026, Commission meeting. He explained that the original IGA, established when the County's water department was transferred to a Water and Sewerage Authority, prohibits the Authority from providing residential sewer unless authorized by the Board through the *Code of Ordinances* or an amendment to the IGA.. He noted that certain exceptions already exist, including *Residential Retirement Community and Care* (*RRCC*) developments, but that residential properties outside those exceptions are not eligible to receive sewer under the current agreement.

Administrator Fouts reviewed information contained in the wastewater master plan prepared by Krebs Engineering on behalf of the Town of Sharpsburg. He stated that the plan encompasses 573± acres within the town limits. According to the study, Sharpsburg's current population is 327 residents and is projected to increase to approximately 493 by 2050, excluding any future annexations. He further noted that the master plan projects a potential peak wastewater flow of 709,000 gallons per day which could support a population of 2,900 residents. He further explained that, based on the U.S. Censes average household size of approximately 2.62 to 2.64 persons per household, 500 residential permits would accommodate an estimated 1,300 to 1,320 additional residents beyond the Town's current population. He noted that allowing the full wastewater capacity identified in the master plan (709,000 gallons per day) could support substantially greater growth and, based on staff's analysis, would result in a population density exceeding that of the City of Newnan. He stated that the proposed permit cap of 500 residential permits was intended to provide a mechanism for managing future residential growth while protecting the County's interests.

Administrator Fouts also advised the Board that, unlike larger municipalities such as Newnan, Senoia, and Grantville, several of the county's smaller towns and cities rely heavily on Coweta County for service delivery. He explained that significant residential growth within those jurisdictions could increase demand for the County's services, and result in cost increases for service delivery or tax revenue that would ultimately require action by the Board. He further cautioned that, if the proposed amendment were approved, the other towns and cities, including the City of Grantville, could seek similar amendments from the IGA. In closing, he reminded the Board that the proposed amendment applies only to residential sewer, because the Water and Sewerage Authority is already authorized to provide commercial and industrial sewer services without approval from the Board.

Commissioner Reidelbach recalled the Board's discussion of the matter in April and noted that, after discussions with members of the Sharsburg Town Council and Mayor, concerns had been raised regarding aging and failing septic systems within the town. He explained that some properties have soils that do not adequately support septic systems, making it difficult or impossible for homeowners to replace failing systems. As a result, he noted that some property owners have been unable to sell their homes because adequate wastewater service is unavailable. He further stated that addressing those residential wastewater concerns was one of the reasons the proposed amendment to the IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) was being considered. He also referenced the historical expansion of sewer service in the county, noting that annexation had previously been used as a means of extending sewer infrastructure into developing areas.

Administrator Fouts acknowledged that this was one of staff's primary concerns. He explained that, if cities and towns were granted broader authority to provide residential sewer service, developers who were unable to achieve the desired residential density under the County's development regulations could instead seek annexation into a municipality where residential sewer services are available. He noted that, under the current annexation laws, the County has limited authority to prevent such annexations, which could reduce the County's ability to manage future residential growth.

Commissioner Reidelbach responded that developers already pursue annexation under the current system when it is necessary to obtain municipal sewer service or achieve their desired development.

In response, Administrator Fouts explained that those towns are not currently authorized to provide residential sewer service, and Attorney Lee added that the municipalities do not own or operate their own water and sewer systems, which limits their ability to provide such services.

Commissioner Reidelbach noted that the City of Grantville currently provides sewer service.

Attorney Lee responded that expanding residential sewer service could result in an increase in annexations and encouraged the Board to consider that potential impact.

Commissioner Reidelbach commented that he believed recent changes to the annexation objection could help address those concerns and referenced the possibility of using capacity limitations as a means of managing future growth.

Commissioner Fisher stated that he believed the proposed amendment could be structured to allow the County to maintain appropriate oversight while addressing issues related to the health, safety and general welfare of the county residents, including those living within the towns. He noted that, although residents of incorporated areas live within municipal boundaries, they also remain residents of Coweta County and could benefit from the proposed changes. He suggested that if the Board wished to impose additional safeguards, the IGA could require any property receiving residential sewer service through the Water and Sewerage Authority to also receive water service from the Authority. He explained that requiring water service would allow water usage to be metered, providing the County with a practical means of monitoring and regulating sewer capacity. He also expressed concern that the proposed wastewater capacity of 790,000 gallons per day was excessive and recommended reducing the allowable capacity to between 150,000 and 200,000 gallons per day. He further stated that, in his opinion, a lower capacity would provide sufficient sewer service to accommodate growth for approximately 12 to 15 years while allowing the County to retain greater oversight of future development. He expressed his opinion that such an approach would lessen concerns regarding annexation by proving a controlled mechanism for residential sewer service.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding a potential annexation proposal, Commissioner Fisher explained that the proposed sewer infrastructure would be financed by the developer or entity requesting the service, noting that the estimated cost was approximately $4.5 million, and that the Town of Sharsburg would not be able to fund the project independently. He expressed his opinion that the County should not regulate the Town's internal affairs but should instead establish appropriate conditions through the IGA. He reiterated his recommendation that any development receiving residential sewer service also be required to obtain water services from the Authority, stating that doing so would allow the County to monitor water usage, maintain oversight of sewer capacity, and protect the County's long-term interests while providing a benefit to both the Town and residents.

In response to Chairman McKenzie's question regarding whether a draft amendment to the IGA (Intergovernment Agreement) had been prepared, Administrator Fouts explained that a draft had previously been provided to the Board. He noted that the draft included provisions related to wastewater capacity; however, the Board had not reached a consensus on how capacity should be addressed.

In response to a question from Chairman McKenzie regarding who currently provides water service to the Town of Sharpsburg and whether the Town could terminate its existing water service agreement and obtain services from another provider, Commissioner Fisher referenced the City of Turin during the discussion, and Commissioner Reidelbach noted that there were issues related to that matter that had been reported publicly.

Attorney Lee explained that he had not reviewed the Town's existing water service contract and could not comment on its provisions or whether the agreement would permit the Town to obtain water services from another provider.

Chairman McKenzie expressed his support for proceeding with the approach proposed by Commissioner Fisher.

In response to this discussion, Attorney Lee stated that he believed the proposed IGA could include provisions intended to protect the County against future annexation-related concerns. He also noted that additional residential growth could increase demand for County services, raising questions about whether future tax revenues would be sufficient to offset those costs.

Administrator Fouts added that the current draft of the IGA limits the authorized sewer capacity or permits to 500 residential developments located within the Town of Sharpsburg's existing municipal boundaries.

In response to a reference from Commissioner Reidelbach regarding a previously discussed annexation proposal involving a large development, Commissioner Fisher noted that any residential development associated with the project would still be required to proceed through the standard annexation without having sufficient infrastructure or public services to support the resulting growth. He explained that such growth could place additional demands on utilities, public safety, transportation infrastructure, and other essential County services.

County Coweta Water and Sewerage Authority Chief Executive Officer Jay Boren advised the Board that the Water and Sewerage Authority has been in communication with the Town of Sharpsburg regarding the proposed residential sewer service and does not anticipate any operational issues with providing service once the outstanding contractual and governance matters are resolved. He stated that the Water and Sewerage Authority's role is limited to providing water and sewer services and that it is not involved in the political aspects of the discussions. He explained that the Water and Sewerage Authority is currently constructing a water line through the town that would be capable of serving the proposed development. He further stated that the Water and Sewerage Authority has the capacity to provide the proposed wastewater flow of 700,000 gallons per day and would be able to accommodate whatever level of service is ultimately authorized by the Board through the IGA. He noted that the Town's intent is to transfer its water and sewer systems to the Water and Sewerage Authority once ongoing discussion with the City of Turin have been resolved. He added that the Water and Sewerage Authority remains willing to work with the Town to provide the requested services and stated that he and Administrator Fouts had been attempting to coordinate a meeting with the Authority's legal counsel to continue discussions regarding the proposed agreement.

Administrator Fouts noted that the draft amendment had been included in the Board's meeting packet. He explained that the amendment would revise Paragraph 6(A) to authorize residential sewer service within the Town of Sharpsburg under two (2) specific conditions. First, residential sewer service would be limited to no more than 500 residential units located within the Town's existing municipal boundaries as of the effective date of the agreement. Second, the amendment would clarify that the authorization would not extend to properties annexed into the Town after that date.

Attorney Lee clarified that the proposed amendment would not prevent the Town from annexing additional property, because the County does not have the legal authority to prohibit annexations. He explained that the purpose of the amendment was to make it clear that residential sewer services authorized under the IGA would apply only to properties located within the current existing municipal boundaries of Sharpsburg and would not extend to future annexed properties.

Administrator Fouts added that the proposed language was intended to address concerns regarding future annexations. He explained that, under current annexation laws, if the County is unable to satisfy the statutory grounds for objecting to an annexation, then the annexation may proceed. He further noted that, while the County may have limited ability to prevent annexations, the Board would remain responsible for addressing the increased demand for County services and any associated tax implications resulting from future residential growth. He cautioned the Board that approving the proposed amendment could establish a precedent for other cities and towns that currently do not have access to residential sewer service. He stated that, if the amendment were approved by the Town of Sharsburg, the county could receive similar requests from other municipalities seeking the same authorization. Administrator Fouts emphasized that the Board should consider the countywide implications of the proposal rather than focusing solely on the Town of Sharpsburg.

Adjournment

Motion to: Adjourn

The Board voted to Adjourn.

RESULT: Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER: Bob Blackburn
SECONDER: Jeff Fisher
AYES: Bill McKenzie, John Reidelbach, Jeff Fisher, Bob Blackburn, Alphonso Smith