



UGA Extension Agreement Under Review for County Input

Posted on November 12, 2025 by Carey Fauscett-Anderson

TRENTON, Ga. (Nov. 6, 2025) — The Dade County Board of Commissioners reviewed a proposed update to its long-standing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension during the November workshop. The discussion centered on ensuring that the county maintains a defined role in future personnel selection and oversight of local Extension programs.

Chairman Don Townsend explained that the agreement has historically been reviewed every four years, though the last update occurred roughly a decade ago. “About four years ago, we were approached to update the MOU between UGA, Extension, and Dade County,” Mr. Townsend said. “Before that, our MOU was held in place for about ten years. They really need to be done every four years.”

Chairman Townsend noted that the proposed MOU included administrative updates but lacked sufficient language specifying the county’s involvement when UGA hires or transfers personnel who will serve locally. “We changed a while back where UGA pays their employees directly and bills the county for our portion quarterly,” he said. “There was an opportunity this past year where an employee applied for another position, and the county was not invited to be part of that decision. In the past, we’ve always had that option.”

Commissioner Bob Woods expressed support for revising the language to restore local input, saying, “We definitely need to be a part of that process.”

Chairman Townsend clarified that the county’s intent is not to oppose UGA’s staffing decisions but to ensure that future hires are a good fit for Dade County. “We simply want to make sure the process goes smoothly in the future,” he said.

Commissioner Phillip Hartline asked whether the county would retain the right to reject candidates under the proposed changes. County Attorney Robin Rogers responded that the current draft did not make that authority explicit but could be reworded using stronger, more optimal language.



Chairman Townsend suggested that the County Attorney make the revisions and bring the document back to the Board for further review. “Let’s get it right,” Townsend said. Then, addressing the board, he asked, “Do you want to bring it back to the next meeting after the revision or let Robin change it now?”

Commissioner Hartline recommended allowing additional time to ensure the language is clear. “Let’s bring it back to the next meeting,” he said.

Commissioner Woods emphasized that the county’s concern was procedural, not personal. “We’re talking about *modus operandi*,” Woods said. “We’re not against the person who’s been assigned here — we just need to have a voice in the process.”

Commissioner Melissa Bradford agreed, adding that while the current Extension agent is well qualified, the county must have input in future appointments. “The current agent has good qualifications,” Bradford said. “We just need to make sure future people are a good fit.”

Following discussion, the Board voted to table the proposed MOU until December to allow the County Attorney time to strengthen the language regarding the county’s participation in hiring and personnel matters.

