



Dade Commissioners Advance Animal Ordinance, Opioid Grant, SPLOST Projects in December 4th Meeting Summary

Posted on December 4, 2025 by Carey Fauscett-Anderson

TRENTON, Ga. (Dec. 4, 2025) — The Dade County Board of Commissioners held its final regular meeting of the year Thursday night, completing a full workshop and regular session that included updates to the county's animal ordinance, appointments to several local boards and authorities, approval of special-purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) projects, and a targeted grant from opioid settlement funds to a local recovery ministry. As usual, this article provides a summary of actions taken; more detailed articles will follow, in the days to come, for each agenda item.



Chairman Don Townsend called the regular meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. following the workshop session. Pastor Rex Mayo of A Hand Up Ministry offered the invocation, and Commissioner Bob Woods led the Pledge of Allegiance. All commissioners were present.

PERSONNEL AND BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The personnel status report reflected no changes in county staffing this month.

Commissioners then turned to a series of appointments and reappointments to county boards and regional authorities, including a proclamation recognizing National Influenza Vaccination Week.

Actions included:

Bobby Allen Walters and Jeff Poston were reappointed to the Board of Assessors for three-year terms beginning January 1, 2026 and expiring Dec. 31, 2028.

Katie Kasch Bien was reappointed to a four-year term on the Special Use Permit Board through January 2029.

Susan Talbott was appointed to fill an unexpired term on the Special Use Permit Board in District 3, running through Dec. 31, 2027.

Sandra Heming was appointed to an unexpired term on the Special Use Permit Board in District 4, through Dec. 31, 2028.

Stacey Prater was reappointed to the Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority for another four-year term, with her service continuing through Dec. 31, 2029.

John Case was reappointed to the Limestone Valley RC&D Board for another two-year term through Dec. 31, 2027.

Commissioners thanked each appointee for a willingness to serve and noted the importance of continuity on key boards that support planning, development and economic growth.

SPLOST PROJECTS: AG CENTER, ANIMAL SHELTER AND FIRE TANKER

Under SPLOST capital equipment, commissioners approved several projects aimed at improving community facilities and public safety.

Agricultural center upgrades: UGA Extension agent Laura Beth Cunningham presented a request to replace the worn indoor-outdoor carpet at the Dade County Agricultural Center and to install three new toilets and a new water fountain. Bids for flooring replacement ranged from approximately \$18,840 to \$24,890. With an available grant of \$6,467.88, the county's SPLOST contribution is anticipated to be about \$13,500. Commissioners praised Cunningham for securing grant funding and approved the project with a not-to-exceed amount of \$15,000.



Bid Opening for the Trenton-Dade Animal Center Building

Trenton-Dade Animal Center building package: After reviewing competitive bids and discussing design details such as insulation, window placement and building dimensions, commissioners approved a total of \$182,521 for Chazler Inc. of Chattanooga to construct the 50-by-100-foot metal building shell with a lean-to. The building will be located near the transfer station off Sunset Drive.



Used pumper tanker for Stations 1 and 4: Assistant Fire Chief Ansel Smith and Chief Jerry Kyzer requested authorization to secure a used pumper tanker in the 2,000–3,000-gallon range, not to exceed \$300,000. The board discussed various funding strategies, including use of SPLOST balances and the general fund, as well as the county's long-term goal of developing a fire training center to improve ISO ratings. Commissioners unanimously authorized the acquisition.

Assistant Fire Chief Ansel Smith addresses the Board of Commissioners

Regional mapping project: Commissioners approved a letter of intent with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission to participate in a LIDAR mapping project, refreshing elevation and terrain data across Dade County's 174 square miles to support E-911, the assessor's office and planning functions.

SURPLUS PROPERTY

Commissioners declared the following surplus for sale on GovDeals:

- A 2002 Ford F-150 pickup truck.
- Engine 41, a 1993 International fire engine.

ANIMAL ORDINANCE UPDATE ADOPTED

Following months of review with County Attorney Robin Rogers, the board adopted updates to Chapter 14 – Animals of the county code.

Revisions include:

- Aligning the county's definition of "dangerous dog" with state law.
- Clarifying that dangerous dog classification hearings will be conducted through Probate Court.
- Improving clarity and enforceability throughout the ordinance.



Thanking the Board of Commissioners, County Attorney Robin Rogers, and the TDAC Committee, Commissioner Melissa Bradford (*pictured left*) called the adoption "a celebration," noting the substantial effort involved and encouraging continued refinement to best serve citizens and protect public safety.

UPDATED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH UGA EXTENSION

The board unanimously approved an updated memorandum of understanding with UGA Cooperative Extension, which had been tabled for further review last month.

The new agreement includes a more detailed technology and internet connectivity addendum and updated equal opportunity employment language, both of which were provided at UGA's request to reflect current statewide standards.

The county also secured the ability for a Dade County representative to participate in Extension interview committees and collaborate on hiring recommendations.

Commissioners expressed ongoing appreciation for the work of Extension and 4-H in the community.

EMS AGREEMENT UPDATE: NEGOTIATIONS BEGINNING

Townsend briefed the board on the status of the county's Emergency Medical Services agreement with CHI Memorial. The county is nearing the five-year point of a six-year contract that ends Jan. 31, 2027. Because EMS contracts typically require extensive review, Townsend noted that negotiations will likely take the full year ahead.

Discussions with CHI Memorial include pricing for Dade County's current service model as well as an alternative proposal in which the provider would supply all equipment.

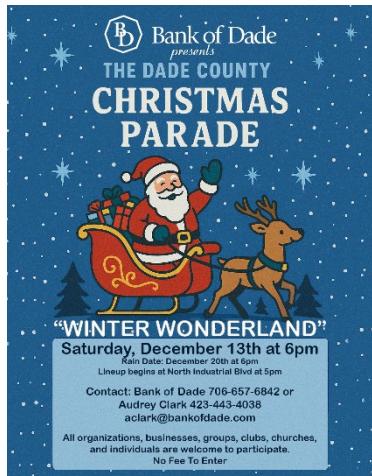
No decisions were made, and commissioners will revisit the matter once proposals, costs and potential options are fully outlined.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS: GRANT TO A HAND UP MINISTRY

Commissioners reviewed a request from A Hand Up Ministry for \$74,300 in opioid settlement funds to support its free 90-day Phase 1 residential recovery program. The ministry currently serves 28 men and women and frequently receives referrals from the jail.

After discussion about sustainability, program screening and long-term outcomes, commissioners unanimously approved \$37,150, supporting approximately 10 participants initially. The board requested future updates while maintaining necessary confidentiality and commended the ministry for its work with Dade County residents.

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY REPORTS



During citizens participation:

- Stephen Bontekoe with NRCS reminded agricultural producers of the Jan. 15, 2026, application deadline for conservation programs.
- Audrey Clark shared details about the Bank of Dade Winter Wonderland Lighted Parade on Dec. 13 at 6 p.m., which will be livestreamed by the county.
- Monda Wooten expressed appreciation to commissioners and staff for their extensive work on the animal ordinance.

COMMISSIONERS THEN PRESENTED DISTRICT AND EXECUTIVE REPORTS, HIGHLIGHTING:

- Progress on the Squirrel Town Creek bridge, SPLOST paving on Newsome Gap Road and Quail Run Road, and site preparation for the new elections building.
- Tree City memorial plantings, Light Up Trenton / Christmas at the Courthouse, and preparations for additional ceremonies next week.
- Recognition of the Forester family as recipients of the Georgia Centennial Farm Award.
- More than \$460,000 in grant awards to the county for public safety, preservation and community services.
- Upcoming UGA Extension and 4-H programs, including AgVentures, homeschool programming, library presentations and agricultural education events.

During his report, Townsend paused to profusely thank retiring Elections Supervisor Lawanna Vaughan for her 20 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Dade County.

He noted the reliability, professionalism and steadiness she has brought to county elections for two decades, and reminded residents that the job posting for the elections supervisor position may be found on the county website, where the county is currently accepting applications.

JANUARY MEETING DATE CHANGE

As a reminder to the public, the January 2026 Commission Meeting has been moved to Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026, due to New Year's Day falling on the first Thursday of the month, when regular meetings are normally held.

FINAL ACTIONS, EXECUTIVE SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

In new business, the board approved all items from the workshop agenda, including SPLOST projects, surplus property designations, the updated animal ordinance, the UGA Extension memorandum of understanding and the opioid settlement allocation. All motions passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 8:55 p.m. to discuss personnel and real estate matters and returned at 9:43 p.m. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

From the Dade County Board of Commissioners and county staff: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all residents, businesses and community partners.



2025 Holiday Hours

OFFICE HOURS

Thursday, December 25, 2025 - CLOSED
Friday, December 26, 2025 - CLOSED
Thursday, January 1, 2026 - CLOSED

TRANSFER STATION HOURS

Wed, December 24, 2025 - CLOSED at NOON
Thurs, December 25, 2025 - CLOSED
Thurs, January 1, 2026 - CLOSED

DADE COUNTY Georgia

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS



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