



Dade County Commission Addresses Public Safety, Capital Projects, and Community Priorities at January Meeting.

Posted on January 8, 2026 by Carey Faussett-Anderson

TRENTON, Ga. (Jan. 8, 2026) — The Dade County Board of Commissioners conducted a workshop followed by its regularly scheduled January meeting to address county business, capital projects, departmental updates, financial matters and citizen participation.

Workshop

During the workshop, commissioners approved the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting and reviewed the personnel status report.

The commission addressed board appointments and proclamations, including approval of a proclamation recognizing January as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month in Dade County and the reappointment of Dorayne Stephens to the Dade County Alcohol Beverage Control Board for a four-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2026. Chairman Don Townsend also reviewed the ordinance adopted in December establishing the Trenton-Dade Animal Center Advisory Board and outlined its advisory purpose.



A significant portion of the workshop focused on SPLOST-funded capital equipment requests aimed at strengthening county public safety operations. Chief Deputy Tommy Bradford presented proposals for the purchase of two new police vehicles, noting that five bids were received through a competitive process. Commissioners approved the selection of Prater Ford, whose proposal included a five-year, 100,000-mile bumper-to-bumper warranty at a cost of \$48,994 per vehicle.

Commissioners also approved the purchase of a replacement jail transport van following a request from Capt. Chad Payne. The selected vehicle, a 2020 Ford Transit 350 with approximately 7,000 miles, will replace a nearly 20-year-old vehicle with more than 200,000 miles. Payne emphasized the vehicle's condition, noting it had been garage-kept and thoroughly inspected. The commission approved the purchase with an extended six-year, 100,000-mile warranty, bringing the total cost to \$55,937.



Emergency Services Director Alex Case presented proposals for a new EMS response vehicle designed to safely transport emergency equipment and personnel. Commissioners approved the bid from Prater Ford, which included a platinum warranty and full emergency outfitting, at a total cost of \$55,915.72.



Chairman Townsend and Mr. Case also provided an update on the Election Building project, reporting progress on coordination with local subcontractors and minor plan revisions. Dirt work for the project is being completed in-house to reduce costs. An update was also provided on the future animal control facility, with survey work complete and preliminary building plans expected soon.

Commissioners approved the purchase of a replacement administrative copier through Chattanooga Office Supply at a cost of \$13,700 following an extended testing period.

The workshop also included discussion of the Indigent Care Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Survey, qualifying fees for the upcoming election cycle, a tax anticipation note, a memorandum of understanding with the Family Crisis Center of Walker, Dade, Catoosa and Chattooga counties, and solar



power generation. Resolution R-05-26, the Georgia Indigent Defense Services Agreement with the Public Defender's Office, was presented by Public Defender Mr. Jad Johnson.

The workshop recessed for a five-minute break.

Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Chairman Don Townsend called the regularly scheduled meeting to order at 7 p.m. An invocation was delivered by County Chaplain Jerry Atkins, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Commissioner Bob Woods. A statement confirming proper notice of the meeting was made.

Roll Call

The roll was called by the county clerk. Commissioners Don Townsend, Bill Pullen and Bob Woods were present. Commissioners Phillip Hartline and Melissa Bradford were absent due to illness. A quorum was declared.

Citizen Participation

During citizen participation, Audrey Clark thanked organizers, volunteers and sponsors involved in the

Christmas Parade and invited the public to attend the Bank of Dade's 70th anniversary celebration Monday, Jan. 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Jane Dixon, Sandy White, Leisa Cagle and Rita Lawson, speaking on behalf of the Optimist Club, promoted a pickleball clinic scheduled for March 21 and discussed interest in expanded pickleball facilities. Several

speakers referenced SPLOST as a potential funding source for future recreation improvements, including additional courts and a possible enclosed court space.

Stephen Bontekoe provided an update on a USDA-supported regenerative agriculture program and noted the application deadline is Jan. 15.



Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Bill Pullen provided updates on projects on the north end of the county, including the nearly completed Squirrel Town Creek bridge project, a Dollar General store coming soon to the Slygo area and the installation of an 8-inch water line along Highway 299. He also reviewed monthly and annual public safety statistics, reporting that EMS, fire agencies, Georgia Forestry and law enforcement responded to 30,955 calls in 2025 — an average of about 85 calls per day — and said the volume reflects continued growth and increased service demands.

Chairman Don Townsend provided updates on behalf of Commissioner Phillip Hartline, followed by his own report. Townsend reviewed recent activity at the historic courthouse and train depot, highlighted countywide efforts to address food insecurity through blessing boxes and recapped the success of the Christmas Parade, thanking volunteers and sponsors, including the Bank of Dade. He discussed SPLOST as a funding mechanism for capital projects and noted plans to seek voter approval for a future SPLOST referendum. Townsend also recognized Human Resources Manager Patty Murphy for earning her Level I human resources certification and promoted an upcoming NPDES Level 1A dirt certification class scheduled for Jan. 22 at a cost of \$50.

Townsend also reviewed election dates for the special election to fill the vacant 14th Congressional District seat. He said the election will be held March 10, 2026, with advance voting beginning Feb. 16.

Commissioner Bob Woods provided updates related to the Trenton-Dade Animal Center and Senior Center operations.

Library Report



Library Director Lydia Soucy presented a report on Dade County Public Library operations. Soucy reported a door count of 1,485 from Nov. 23 through Dec. 20. During that period, computer use totaled 156 sessions, printer use totaled 606, and the study room was used by 113 people.

Soucy reported the library's Time with Teachers program is serving 38 students and said November circulation totaled 4,072 items. Residents with questions were encouraged to contact the library at 706-657-7857.

Soucy also announced the library's book club will meet Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. and will read *The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife* by Anna Johnston.

Online reports were also provided from UGA Extension and the Alliance for Dade.

Financial Report

Chief Financial Officer Rebecca Jones presented the county's financial report, reviewing account balances, budget variances and revenue trends. Jones reported revenues were slightly above projections while expenditures remained under budget.

Legal Matters

No legal matters were presented.

Consent Agenda

County Clerk Gidget Knight presented items on the consent agenda, which were approved by the commission.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned. This summary reflects key actions and discussion from the workshop and regular meeting. Additional articles with expanded detail on agenda items and departmental reports will be published at a later date.



For questions, please contact Carey Fauscett-Anderson, Director of Communications for Dade County, Georgia, at canderson@dadecounty-ga.gov or at 423-290-6655.