



Walker County Governmental Authority
101 South Duke Street, P.O. Box 445
LaFayette, GA 30728
706-638-1437

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
February 6, 2025 - 6:00 PM

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Angie Teems called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners held at Courthouse Annex III, 201 S. Main Street, LaFayette, Georgia at 6:00 PM on February 6, 2025.

II. Attendees:

The following were present: Chairwoman Teems, Commissioner Robert Blakemore, Commissioner Mark Askew, Commissioner Brian Hart, Commissioner Gene Wilson, County Clerk Lisa Richardson, Communications & Community Development Director Joe Legge, Compliance Officer Aleks Jagiella-Litts, Planning and Zoning Director Jon Pursley, Director of E911 and EMA Curtis Creekmur, Director of Solid Waste and Environmental Management Paine Gily, Fire & Rescue Chief Blake Hodge, and Public Works Director Carlen Bowers. Other guests signed in at the meeting as well. Please see the attached sign in sheet.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Askew. 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried. Agenda approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Scheduled Meeting held on January 9th at 6:30pm. Seconded by Commissioner Askew. 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried. Minutes approved.

Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Called Meeting held on January 23rd at 3:00pm. Seconded by Commissioner Wilson. 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried. Minutes were approved.

V. Public Hearing (Planning and Zoning):

A. Susan Carroll requested a variance for less than five acres in an A-1 (Agricultural) zone for property located at 1967 Kemp Road, Lafayette, GA 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-508-010.

1. Susan Gail Carroll stated wants to subdivide for family members.

B. Justin Keener requested a variance for less than five acres in an A-1 (Agricultural) zone for property located at 219 Furnace Creek Road, Lafayette, GA 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-589-006D.

1. Justin Keener was not in attendance

2. Melissa Hulsey spoke on the 2022 Comprehensive Plan and unwanted growth for A-1 designated areas.

C. Joseph Bales requested a variance for property located at 1178 Camp Road, Chickamauga, GA 30707. Tax map & parcel number 0-293-004.

1. Joseph Bales spoke asking to divide the property in half, stating that the back portion was a flood zone.

2. Phillip Warren opposed the variance stating it was already out of compliance with the zoning ordinance. He asked the board to not approve.

3. Mike Sims spoke opposing the variance. He wants to preserve A-1 and does not want mobile homes/rentals on the property.

4. Jim Pope wants to protect farmers and the agricultural countryside. He's in favor of retaining the A-1 rating.

5. Amanda Birch spoke against allowing the variance due to multiple police reports at

the property. She also mentioned a trash issue with the current property owner.

D. Amber Doty requested a conditional use variance to divide off less than five acres in an A-1 (Agricultural) zone for property located at 368 McIntire Road, Rock Spring, GA 30739. Tax map & parcel 0-356-002.

1. Robert Doty (husband of Amber Doty) spoke on behalf of his spouse. They are requesting to split 2.4 acres for a family member (brother of Amber). Acreage backs up to Timber Ridge Subdivision.
2. Chairwoman Teems asked why they did not request to be rezoned due to proximity to the subdivision? The applicant stated they were instructed to seek a conditional use variance.

E. Trevor Taylor requested a rezone from A-1 (Agricultural) to R-2 (Residential) for property located at 222 Allgood Road, Flintstone, GA 30725. Tax map & parcel number 0-049-067A.

1. Trevor Taylor spoke and stated this is already a residential neighborhood and he would like the rezone to be approved.

VII. Ceremonial

Chairwoman Teems issued a Proclamation designating February as Spay/Neuter Awareness Month in Walker County and encouraged residents to learn about spay/neuter options in our community for their pets.

VIII. Public Comment:

- A. Jim Pope spoke on multiple budget questions and issues. He questioned county debt and requested reporting to give public transparency on what the County has in bank and what the current debt ratio is.
 1. Chairwoman Teems advised the new CFO is looking at putting a quarterly report in place.
 2. Commissioner Askew spoke of the 2024 finance report on SPLOST.
 3. Commissioner Wilson questioned finance reporting in 2024.
- B. Melissa Hulsey spoke of SPLOST items and said the 2022 and 2023 audit showed an infraction and she wanted reconciliation confirmation. She stated she would like to wait on vehicle purchase votes until after reconciliation is confirmed. Hulsey approved of Quarterly Financial reports being made available and suggested the county create a financial dashboard.
 1. Chairwoman Teems stated she agrees on SPLOST dollars not totalling correctly and will look into it.
 2. Chairwoman Teems also discussed what SPLOST is and how the funds are accrued, spent, etc.
- C. Ned Yates spoke against spay and neuter funding, stating euthanasia would be a less expensive option for the County. He also wanted to see County owned buildings updated and repurposed and wanted monthly, instead of quarterly financial reports.
 1. Chairwoman Teems addressed the SPLOST question in regards to the 2024 report and future spending. A new spay/neuter voucher program will utilize the \$65K of donations that are earmarked for animal care. She also confirmed financial reports would be coming from the new CFO.
- D. Randy Pittman spoke about a Vietnam Veterans wall made by inmates at Walker State Prison. They are planning to transport the wall on February 21 to the Rossville Gym for a drop-in exhibit that weekend.
- E. David O'Neal addressed the trash issue in the Marble Top/Garretts Chapel Road area. He also spoke of increased taxes and would like to see more accountability from the county government.
 1. Chairwoman Teems expressed a desire to meet with O'Neal and the Tax Commissioner to discuss his tax questions.
 2. Commissioner Askew spoke on trash problems and efforts to address the issue. He added the County has contracted an outside company to clean up the roadside trash.
 3. Commissioner Hart spoke on the tax issue and cited how the County millage rate has been lowered in recent years.

IX. Presentation

Robert Grant, Pike Legal Group, addressed the Board concerning an application for Construction of a Wireless Communications Facility. He said the application met all of the requirements of the zoning and planning ordinance and aligns with the goals of Walker County's comprehensive plan. It will also improve the 911 infrastructure and provide 5G technology to the area.

- a. Chairwoman Teems verified the tower will be in the Chickamauga area on Herman Buck Road.
- b. Commissioner Hart asked if AT&T would be part of the added service
- c. Commissioner Wilson asked what the building timeframe would be for the

- tower.
- d. Commissioner Askew addressed zoning through Jon Pursley and the Planning Department.
- e. Jon Pursley spoke on the zoning/planning process and gave out physical information packets pertaining to the location of the tower and criteria that needed to be met.

X. Unfinished Business

2. Resolution R-005-25 to Appoint Legal Counsel.
 - a. Commissioner Askew made a motion to approve Jarred & Davis, LLP as Legal Counsel. It was seconded by Commissioner Blakemore.
 - b. Chairwoman Teems advised this item was tabled at the January 9th meeting and the Board can terminate the contract at any time if they are dissatisfied with Legal Counsel
 - c. 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried. Resolution approved.

XI. New Business

1. Resolution R-013-25 to establish a meeting calendar for 2025.
 - a. Commissioner Blakemore motioned to approve the resolution to set the Regular Meeting Calendar to be the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:00 P.M. when in conflict with a County holiday. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion.
 - b. Commissioner Hart verified this would move the July 2025 and January 2026 meetings to the following week.
 - c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion approved.
2. Resolution R-014-25 to Appoint members to the Limestone Valley Resource Conservation & Development Council.
 - a. Commissioner Askew made a motion to reappoint Brian Hart and David Matteson for another term. Commissioner Blakemore seconded the motion.
 - b. Commissioner Hart explained what this council does for the community.
 - c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion approved.
3. Resolution R-015-025 to Appoint a Representative to the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Metropolitan Planning Organization.
 - a. Commissioner Blakemore motioned to appoint Joe Legge to serve on the MPO and appoint Aleks Jagiella-Litts as the alternate for the term. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wilson.
 - b. Chairwoman Teems commented this is for projects such as safe routes for schools, transportation, street lighting, sidewalks, etc.
 - c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion approved.
4. Resolution R-016-25 to Appoint Members of the Walker County Planning Commission.
 - a. Motion to re-appoint Stan Porter and Cindy Askew was made by Commissioner Hart and seconded by Commissioner Askew.
 - b. Commissioner Hart commended both individuals for outstanding service.
 - c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Appointments approved.
5. Resolution R-017-25 to Appoint Members of the Walker County Animal Control Board.
 - a. Chairwoman Teems made a motion to amend the current resolution to include alternate Janice Williams and to re-appoint John Conley, Shannon Beesley and Mike Nowlin for another term. Motion seconded by Commissioner Askew.
 - b. 4 ayes, 0 nays, Resolution and re-appointment approved.
6. Resolution R-018-25 to Expend 2020 SPLOST Funds.
 - a. Chairwoman Teems made a motion to have a PO in place for purchase of 3 vehicles for Walker County.
 - b. Commissioner Hart seconded the motion for the sake of discussion.
 - c. Commissioner Hart asked for clarification on the \$150,000 request and where the vehicles were needed.
 - d. Chairwoman Teems said one would be for her, one for the Coroner and one for codes. This would allow her to move quicker.
 - e. Commissioner Hart noted we would be adding vehicles to the county fleet, so there will be additional expense in maintenance.
 - f. Chairwoman Teems said she would be trading in a vehicle, so only two additional vehicles would be added to the fleet.
 - g. Commissioner Askew says it's hard to find the vehicles we need and when we do, we need to be able to act to get them before they are sold to someone else.
 - h. Chairwoman Teems withdrew her motion to allow the Board to make a decision
 - i. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve the resolution.

- Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion.
 - j. Commissioner Hart requested the Chair keep the Board informed on what she purchases.
 - k. Chairwoman Teems volunteered to contact the Vice Chair when she finds the vehicles, so he can share the information with the other Board members.
 - l. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion approved.
7. Approval of Office of the Governor Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Subgrant Award. Project Name: Behavioral Health Deflection Grant, Subgrant Number: B75-8-009.
- a. Aleks Jagiella-Litts spoke on the mental health issue in the jail. The Walker County Sheriff's Office program is a behavioral and re-entry program to help inmates become a constructive citizen. The grant would pay for a full time counselor and case manager at no cost to jail.
 - b. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve the grant. Commissioner Hart seconded the motion.
 - c. Chairwoman Teems stated the county is the judiciary party for any grants for disbursement.
 - d. Commissioner Hart was pleased with the zero cost.
 - e. Commissioner Wilson verified this covered two full-time salaries.
 - f. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion approved
8. Georgia Indigent Defense Services Agreement.
- a. Jad Johnson, Circuit Court Public Defender for Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit, which includes Dade, Walker, Catoosa and Chattooga Counties, presented a service agreement between the State and counties to provide legal services to indigent defendants on judicial cases.
 - b. Commissioner Hart motioned to approve the service contract for the Georgia Indigent Defense. Commissioner Blakemore seconded the motion.
 - c. There was no discussion.
 - d. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Contract approved
9. Consider Application for Construction of a Wireless Communications Facility.
- a. Chairwoman Teems motioned to approve the permit, Commissioner Askew seconded the motion.
 - b. Chairwoman Teems reminded the Board of the Community Connectivity Plan and how 13% of Walker County residents access the internet using cell service only.
 - c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Permit approved.
10. Purchase Order 2025-00000913 for \$107,406.37 to Sunny Communications for 45 Mobile Radios for the Walker County Sheriff's Office (Funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. Curtis Creekmur, EMA director, requested funding for 45 radios to replace and upgrade radios for the Sheriff's office fleet.
 - b. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Wilson.
 - c. Commissioner Hart asked a question to verify the invoice number is 45 units vs 1 unit.
 - d. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved.
11. Purchase Order 2025-00000909 for \$84,162.24 to Motorola Solutions for 5 Mobile Radios, 8 Portable Radios and 10 Batteries for Walker county Fire Rescue (Funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. Curtis Creekmur, EMA director, requested funding for the radio's and batteries for Walker County Fire and Rescue.
 - b. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Askew.
 - c. There was no discussion.
 - d. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved.
12. Purchase Order 2025-00000905 for \$59,870.00 to Jenkins Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep for a vehicle for the Facilities/Maintenance Department (funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. This vehicle will be for Stacey Higdon and is a 4 door utility vehicle to transport crew and tools to worksites.
 - b. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Blakemore.
 - c. There was no discussion.
 - d. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved
13. Purchase Order 2025-00000920 for \$47,510.16 to Prater Ford for a vehicle for the Planning & Codes Department (funding from 2020 SPLOST).

- a. Jon Pursley, Director of Planning and Zoning remarked that they are rebuilding the code enforcement department and vehicles are needed for staff. He will assume the new vehicle and an older vehicle will rotate to staff
 - b. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Hart.
 - c. Commissioner Hart asked if this is an addition to the fleet
 - d. Jon Pursley confirmed fleet addition, stating that prior cars were farmed out to other departments by previous administration..
 - e. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved.
14. Purchase Order 2025-00000916 for \$63,805.40 to Prater Ford for a vehicle for Emergency Management (Funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. Chairwoman Teems commented that the new IT position was a position approved over 2 years ago but never filled.
 - b. Curtis Creekmur, EMA Director, under his new role under EMA, will acquire the new vehicle, his current vehicle will rotate to a field position.
 - c. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Askew.
 - d. Chairwoman Teems commented that this IT position was a budgeted position from 2 years ago previously approved but not posted.
 - e. Commissioner Hart asked a question to verify that this vehicle will be part of the Emergency Management Fleet.
 - f. Commissioner Wilson asked for verification that the new IT role was previously approved in the budget. Chairwoman Teems confirmed.
 - g. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved
15. Purchase Order 2025-00000918 for \$46,533.00 to Prater Ford for a vehicle for the Landfill (Funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. Paine Gily will utilize the new vehicle since his new role will consist of driving county wide. His current vehicle will rotate to be used at the landfill site.
 - b. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Askew.
 - c. Chairwoman Teems commented that Gily is taking on a new, extended role as Director of Environmental & Solid Waste Management which will have him Commuting Countywide to address compliance and coding issues.
 - d. Commissioner Hart asked to confirm if this was added to the fleet or replaced fleet.
 - e. Gily confirmed new role duties and brought up cost savings by utilizing an older vehicle going to auction.
 - f. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved.
16. Purchase Order 2025-00000917 for \$44,519.00 to Prater Ford for a vehicle for the Landfill (Funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. Director Payne stated that this vehicle will be used at landfill and will replace an older vehicle.
 - b. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Blakemore.
 - c. Commissioner Hart questioned the number of vehicles at landfill vs. employees.
 - d. Commissioner Askew stated older vehicles would stay on site and be untagged for site use only.
 - f. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved.
17. Purchase Order 2025-00000921 for \$29,969.00 to Jacky Jones Automobile for a vehicle for the Walker County Sheriff's Office (Funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. Captain Anderson stated that this vehicle will replace a totaled vehicle. Insurance funds will partially pay for the replacement vehicle, but an additional amount of \$29,969.00 is balance towards purchase.
 - b. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Askew.
 - c. There was no discussion.
 - c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Purchase approved.
18. Purchase Order 2025-00000923 for \$99,998.00 to Estes Equipment for a Fuel System Upgrade for the County Public Works Department (Funding from 2020 SPLOST).
- a. Ric Carr asked to replace the 20+ year old system with a newer system. Carlen Bowers added that Estes Equipment is compatible with the current underground system. The current system has an outdated monitoring system and needs to be up to date on current technology.
 - b. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by

Commissioner Blakemore.

- c. Commissioner Askew questioned if this was above ground only or if a tank or underground system was involved. Under canopy only per Carr.
- d. Commissioner Hart stated he would like cost comparisons due to the high quote.
- e. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve purchase, seconded by Commissioner Blakemore.
- f. Chairwoman Teems added the original cost was \$113,000.00 and cost was negotiated down to \$99,998.00.
- g. Commissioner Hart asked for comps for transparency, since it involved tax payer funds. He further stated he would like to delay approval and have a special called meeting in 2 weeks.
- h. Commissioner Wilson asked for the policy for procurement.
- i. Commissioner Blakemore seconded motion to table.
- j. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion to Table was approved.

19. Susan Carroll requested a variance for less than five acres in an A-1 (Agricultural) zone for property located at 1967 Kemp Road, Lafayette, GA 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-508-010.

- a. Chairwoman Teems stated that this request complies with the comprehensive plan for future use as County suburban.
- b. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve variance due to the approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission, seconded by Commissioner Wilson.
- c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Variance approved.

20. Justin Keener requested a variance for less than five acres in an A-1 (Agricultural) zone for property located at 219 Furnace Creek Road, Lafayette, GA 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-589-006D.

- a. Chairwoman Teems stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission denied this request as it does not comply with the comprehensive plan for future use as Agriculture/Forestry.
- b. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to deny the variance due to the Planning and Zoning recommendation seconded by Commissioner Hart.
- c. Chairwoman Teems advised in her research Mr. Keener would need to divide 5 acres in order to comply with planning/zoning.
- d. 4 ayes, 0 nays to deny variance.

21. Joseph Bales requested a variance for property located at 1178 Camp Road, Chickamauga, GA 30707. Tax map & parcel number 0-293-004.

- a. Chairwoman Teems stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission denied this request as it does not comply with the comprehensive plan for future use as Agriculture/Forestry.
- b. Commissioner Hart made a motion to deny the variance due to the Planning and Zoning recommendation seconded by Commissioner Wilson.
- c. 4 ayes, 0 nays to deny the variance.

22. Amber Doty requested a conditional use variance to divide less than five acres in an A-1 (Agricultural) zone for property located at 368 McIntire Road, Rock Spring, GA 30739. Tax map & parcel number 0-356-002.

- a. Chairwoman Teems stated that this request complies with the comprehensive plan for future use as County suburban.
- b. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve variance due to the approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission, seconded by Commissioner Wilson.
- c. Chairwoman Teems brought up earlier rezoning.
- d. Commissioner Wilson verified it is located near Timber Ridge Subdivision.
- e. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Variance approved.

23. Trevor Taylor requested a rezone from A-1 (Agricultural) to R-2 (Residential) for property located at 222 Allgood Road, Flintstone, GA 30725. Tax map & parcel number 0-049-067A.

- a. Chairwoman Teems stated that this request complies with the comprehensive plan for future use as a County suburban.
- b. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve variance due to the approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission, seconded by Commissioner Askew.
- c. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Variance approved.

XII. Chairwoman's Report:

Chairwoman Teems spoke of being in office 30 days and the significant improvements she has put in place. She expanded duties to elevate our organization to better service the Walker County tax payers. She has a proactive platform and restructured titles within the office to continue to build a workforce that can make solid decisions and strengthen leadership. She has a long term strategy in place and will continue to identify priorities within the County. This is a new day and myself along with my Board of Commissioners will make decisions that will better our entire County.

Commissioner Comments:

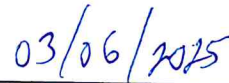
1. Commissioner Blakemore stated he appreciates everyone coming out to the meeting and thanks all of our hard working employees and First Responders. Reach out directly to me if you need anything.
2. Commissioner Askew participation is always welcomed. He remarked that we spent a lot of money but it was funds that needed to be spent to provide services the public pays for. Chairwoman Teems made a good point about releasing funds in a timely manner or you get behind. Very proud of the first 30 days and the two new seats. Appreciate the employees, department heads and citizens. Thank you for coming out.
3. Commissioner Hart liked the idea of a quarterly report as it will help everyone. He kept bringing up fleet vehicles as we added 7 new vehicles and wants us to be aware of upkeep costs as we get ready for the budget for next year. He is very excited about the Life Safety Plan that has been worked on since last term. Also met with people at the Agricultural Center last week to discuss SPLOST dollars and possible ways to spend funds.
4. Commissioner Wilson thanked everyone for coming out, and thanked First Responders. He receives emails daily and is discussing it, but it's something that will not be resolved in 30 days but it is being worked on.
5. Chairwoman Teems stated there was no need for an Executive Session. She ended by thanking everyone for coming out. Commissioner Hart made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Askew seconded the motion.

XII. Adjournment:

With no further business on the agenda, Chairwoman Teems adjourned the meeting at 8:23 P.M.



Angela Teems
Chairwoman/CEO
Walker County Georgia



Date

Minutes prepared by: Walker County Clerk, Lisa Richardson

Regular Scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting

Walker County Annex III

February 06, 2025

6:00 PM

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Present/Absent</u>
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Commissioner Blakemore	Present
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Commissioner Askew	Present
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Chairwoman Teems	Present
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Commissioner Hart	Present
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Commissioner Wilson	Present
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Sign In Sheet

Regular Scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting

February 06, 2025

6:00 PM

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Michelle Marsh	Chickamauga
Payton Allen	Walker
Robert Doty	Walker
Abi Kasper	
Trevor Taylor	Walker
Bobby V. Snider	Road Dept
Charles Steele	Camp Rd
Amanda Burtch	Camp Rd
Michelle	Hwy 341
Cash Evers	Road
Alexis Little	Walker Co.
Gus	
Franklin	Chickamauga Tn.
Shawn Brown	1534 Bond Rd
SCOTT CONNER	Hwy 157
Judie Conner	Hwy 157
PAINE GILY	LANDFILL
Scott Teems	Chickamauga
David O'Neal	Chickamauga



Sign In Sheet

Regular Scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting

February 06, 2025

6:00 PM

Name

Address

Randall Pittman

WCHPC

Ja Purdy

Plaming

Curtis Graykaur

WALKER COUNTY

Billy A.

WALKER Co. coroner

Travis R. Middleton

Flintstone

Ruby Austin

Brian Rh

Kevin Hale

Emily Hale

Calvin Hale

Chris Anderson

WALKER Co. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Scott McWebb

Mark Ma

La Grange, GA

Brian U

Hazard Neece

Flintstone Walker County

Rich Carr

Jim Pope

Village

Chris Sims

CHICKAMAUGH

Cynthia Sims

CHICKAMAUGH

Phyllis Warten

Chickamaugh