



ECHOLS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

February 19, 2026

6:00 PM

The Echols County Board of Commissioners held a Workshop Meeting on February 19, 2026, at 6:00 PM. Chairman Justin Staten called the meeting to order. The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Attendees

Chairman Justin Staten
Vice-Chairman Stanley Corbett
Commissioner Kenneth Petty
Commissioner Bobbi Pohlman Rodgers
Commissioner Bobby Walker
County Manager Alan Levesque
Victoria Staten

Water System

The Commissioners discussed several aspects of the county water system, including critical infrastructure stabilization. The County is pursuing a \$1,000,000 CDBG grant request currently in development to assist with the replacement of aging water system pipes.

The County has also been approved for a GEFA loan in the amount of \$2,500,000. At this time, the loan forgiveness rate is 50%; however, during the second round, forgiveness may increase to 80–90%.

Health Benefits Renewal

The County's insurance renewal increased by 5.8%, compared to the current market trend of 10–20%. The impact to employee paychecks would be approximately \$5.00 per month.

Current employee cost: \$191.77 per month
Renewal rate: \$202.98 per month

Payroll Alignment

The Commission discussed payroll bridge alignment to synchronize payroll timing with GASB and GAAP standards. There will be no reduction in annual employee compensation.

The alignment process includes paying three weeks, followed by one week, and then another one-week pay period. This adjustment does not increase annual compensation but aligns payroll reporting standards.

EV Charging Opportunity

The County was approached regarding the installation of two EV charging stations in front of the library. The project would be 100% funded by Georgia Power and would require a 10-year installation commitment.

At this time, Commissioners did not see a need to proceed due to limited parking availability in the area.

MPOHV / Local Registration

A resident suggested that Echols County establish a local registration program to allow qualified vehicles on designated county roads. This would include a possible decal and registration system to provide safety inspections, compliance, accountability, and modest revenue for ATVs or other qualifying vehicles operating on county roads.

AARP Grant – Senior Resilience

The County is preparing an AARP Community Challenge-style grant initiative focused on backup generator capability and strengthening the County's role as a cooling center during extreme heat events.

Eligible projects must benefit residents, especially those age 50 and older. There is no required county match for this grant.

Historical Society Request

The Historical Society requested a reduction or waiver of water fees, noting they only meet once per quarter and have water service turned off during non-meeting periods.

Nuisance Law Rewrite

The Commission discussed rewriting the nuisance ordinance to align directly with Georgia Code Title 41. The proposed revision would:

- Establish clear nuisance definitions
- Create an enforceable abatement process
- Strengthen junk-vehicle authority

This item will be placed on the agenda for a vote at the next Commissioners meeting scheduled for March 5, 2026.

RV Ordinance Framework

The proposed ordinance will address health and housing standards related to unsafe long-term RV habitation. It will:

- Allow temporary RV use during construction
 - Protect lawful farm-labor housing
 - Establish enforceable sanitation standards
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Code Enforcement Direction

The Commission discussed strengthening code enforcement efforts to protect community health and property. This would include:

- Enforcing county permitting requirements
 - Addressing blight and unsafe structures
 - Responding to sanitation and nuisance hazards
 - Ensuring consistent, court-defensible enforcement
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Zoning Alignment

The Commission discussed zoning alignment to promote orderly growth and land-use stability. The goals include:

- Aligning zones with infrastructure capacity
- Preventing incompatible land-use conflicts
- Protecting property rights and community character
- Guiding long-term county development

Adjournment

At 7:30 PM, Chairman Justin Staten requested a motion to close the workshop. Vice-Chairman Stanley Corbett made the motion. Commissioner Bobbi Pohlman Rodgers seconded. Motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk:

Shana Carter

Date:

March 5, 2026

Approved this 5th day of March, 2026

Justin Staten, Chairman
Echols County Board of Commissioners

Date:

March 5, 2026