

The Turner County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Turner County Agricultural Center for a combined Work Session and Called Meeting with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe E. Burgess, Brad Calhoun, Nick Denham, and Dana L. Whiddon present. Staff present were Latrice Wilson, County Clerk, and J. Edward Shipp, County Attorney. Others present were Mr. Chris Efaw, VP of Marketing and Communication with Southwell, Bonnie Kelly, Grant writer, Mrs. Ruth Raines, Ben Baker, Editor of the Wiregrass Farmer, Jonathan Perry, Ashley Miller, Janet Winter, Charles Dean, Jim Lumpkin, Edyth Washington, Blake Christian, and others.

Chairman James Burgess called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Ben Baker gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Commissioner Whiddon seconded by Commissioner Joe Burgess to adopt the agenda as presented, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Calhoun, Denham and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion.

Public Comments: None

Speakers:

Commissioner Denham gave an update on the Mercer Project. Dr. Bonnie Kelly gave a brief update on a grant that is available for the County to help with the Mercer Project.

Chris Efaw, VP of Marketing and Communication, gave an update on Southwell.

Mrs. Ruth Raines spoke asking the Board to support the Mercer Project because she thinks it will be a great win for the County.

Commissioners discussed property tax revenue increase.

Commissioners discussed departmental budget adjustments for:

- Fire Department - \$580,937.00
- Clerk of Superior Court - \$509,753.00
- Tax Commissioner - \$361,572.00
- District Court - \$118,294.00
- Magistrate Court - \$106,152.00
- Building Maintenance - \$139,777.00
- Sheriff's Office - \$2,110,126.00
- Board of Equalization - \$5,739.00

Commissioners discussed general pay adjustment totaling \$57,000.00, effective January 1, 2026.

Commissioners discussed Jail Fund adjustment to reduce proposed transfers from Jail Fund to General Fund to \$235,000.00.

Commissioners discussed Special Projects Fund creation to set aside \$100,000.00 in the Parks Department (new department created) budget for projects at the Hwy 41 complex, including:

- Children's playground

- Senior walking trail
- Pickleball courts

Commissioners discussed proposed revisions and updates to Turner County's Liquor Ordinance.

Commissioners discussed proposed General Fund Budget for FY 2025-2026 totaling \$12,324,800.00.

Commissioners discussed proposed Special Revenue Funds for FY 25-26.

Motion by Commissioner James Burgess seconded by Commissioner Whiddon to hire Dr. Bonnie Kelly as the Grant Writer on the Mercer Project for Turner County, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Calhoun, Denham and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion.

Motion by Commissioner Whiddon seconded by Commissioner Calhoun to approve the increase of property tax revenue to \$3,700,000.00, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Calhoun, Denham and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion.

Motion by Commissioner Whiddon seconded by Commissioner Denham to approve the departmental budget allocations, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Denham, and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion. Commissioners Joe Burgess and Calhoun opposed the motion.

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- Tax Commissioner - \$361,572.00
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- Building Maintenance - \$139,777.00
- Sheriff's Office - \$2,110,126.00
- Board of Equalization - \$5,739.00

Motion by Commissioner Whiddon seconded by Commissioner James Burgess to approve general pay increase of \$57,000.00 effective January 1, 2026, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Calhoun, Denham and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion.

Motion by Commissioner Whiddon seconded by Commissioner James Burgess to approve reduction of Jail Fund transfer to General Fund to \$235,000.00, motion did not pass. Commissioners Joe Burgess, Calhoun and Denham opposed the motion.

Motion by Commissioner James Burgess seconded by Commissioner Whiddon to approve the establishment of a \$100,000.00 Special Projects Fund in the Parks Department (new department created) budget for Hwy 41 complex improvements, motion did not pass. Commissioners Joe Burgess, Calhoun and Denham opposed the motion.

Motion by Commissioner James Burgess seconded by Commissioner Calhoun to approve a Continuing Budget Resolution to continue the operations of Turner County at the levels authorized by the County's Fiscal Year 2024/2025 operating budget pending the adoption of Fiscal

Year 2025/2026 Budgets and authorize the Chairman to sign resolution on behalf of the County, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Calhoun, and Denham voting in favor of the motion. Commissioner Whiddon opposed the motion.

Motion by Commissioner James Burgess seconded by Commissioner Whiddon to approve updates to the Turner County Liquor Ordinance as discussed, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Denham and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion. Commissioner Calhoun opposed the motion.

Public Comments: Ashley Miller spoke asking the Board to get microphones because it is hard to hear in the back.

Sarah Cook spoke stating her concerns to the Commissioners about the budget process.

Motion by Commissioner Whiddon seconded by Commissioner James Burgess to go into Executive Session at 7:11 p.m. to discuss litigation, motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Calhoun, Denham and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion.

Motion by Commissioner James Burgess seconded by Commissioner Whiddon to end the closed session and go back to the regular session at 7:23 p.m., motion passed with Commissioners James Burgess, Joe Burgess, Calhoun, Denham and Whiddon voting in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

James Burgess, Chairman

Attest: _____
Latrice L. Wilson, County Clerk