

Dodge County Board of Commissioners
Monday, March 16, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.
Work Session Minutes



Commissioners Present: Chairman Dan McCranie, Sharon Cobb Flanagan – District 1, Leigh Ann Greene – District 2, Vice-Chair Brian Watkins - District 3, Jeffrey Jones – District 4

Also Present: Manager Conner Bearden, Clerk Kimberly Smith-Parkerson

Call to Order

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners held a work session at the Dodge County Pearl Bates Courthouse Annex Monday, March 16, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. with Chairman McCranie presiding. He called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

A. Data Center Ordinance

The board reviewed potential data center ordinances, concluding that nuisance factors like noise and light pollution are similar to solar developments and decided to mirror the existing solar ordinance for the draft while incorporating stringent site lighting and definitions from the Coweta County ordinance.

B. Sanitation Discussion

Mr. John from Ryland Environmental presented a proposal for leasing and operating the county's transfer station, suggesting the county would receive a host fee per ton while citizens would retain free trash drop-off up to 300 pounds.

C. County Roads and Utilities

The board discussed formally requesting that the City of Eastman take ownership and maintenance of all roads that have city water or sewer lines running underneath them. The primary justification is that the city controls the maintenance of its infrastructure and is responsible for road cuts and subsequent repairs, which are currently being done without county control. The county manager was tasked with obtaining information as to how many roads fall into this category.

D. Courthouse

The board discussed the courthouse annex project, confirming a formal vote is needed at the next regular meeting to decide between Option One (including magistrate and probate courts) and Option Two, and considered various funding options, including ACCG loans and USDA direct loans, for the project cost.

Commissioner Watkins proposed a cost-effective plan for the courthouse campus, suggesting that superior court and juvenile court be located in the new building, with juvenile court using the grand jury room primarily. He suggested placing magistrate and probate judges in the existing annex, allowing all court-related functions to be consolidated on that campus and everything tax-related on Pearl Bates campus. The plan was estimated to cost around \$10 million, including demolition of other buildings, and would allow the secure, climate-controlled storage of voting equipment.

E. Land Use/Planning

The board discussed the options for limiting solar farms within the county borders, which would require

zoning, but some were against zoning.

F. Regional Commissioner Grants

The board discussed regional commission grants, noting that hurricane relief grants were limited to inclement weather alert systems, such as a cell phone alert system at 911.

G. Commissioner Goals

The board reviewed the commissioner goals, with the following items marked green:

- annual, walk-throughs, inspections
- maintaining positive audit reports
- reducing polling sites
- leveraging a work-order system for road repairs/maintenance
- animal control for aggressive animals
- recycling opportunities to reduce landfill costs
- broadband initiatives

Manager Bearden stated he would follow-up with the technical college for a motor grader program.

Adjourn

With no other business to come before the board, the work session ended at 10:18 a.m.

Attested:

Approved:

Kimberly Smith-Parkerson, County Clerk

Dan McCranie, Chairman