

**FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FIRST REGULAR MEETING**

March 04, 2026  
10:00 AM



Fulton County Government Center  
Assembly Hall  
141 Pryor Street SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303



---

**MINUTES-RATIFIED**

---

**This document has been ratified or approved by the Board of Commissioners, and is not binding on the County or any officer.**

**Ratification Date: April 1, 2026**

---

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Robert L. Pitts **10:01 a.m.**

**ROLL CALL:** Tonya R. Grier, Clerk to the Commission

Robert L. Pitts, Chairman (At-Large)	<b>PRESENT</b>
Bridget Thorne, Commissioner (District 1)	<b>PRESENT</b>
Bob Ellis, Commissioner (District 2)	<b>PRESENT</b>
Dana Barrett, Commissioner (District 3)	<b>PRESENT</b>
Mo Ivory, Commissioner (District 4)	<b>PRESENT</b>
Marvin S. Arrington, Jr., Commissioner (District 5)	<b>PRESENT</b>
Khadijah Abdur-Rahman, Vice Chair (District 6)	<b>PRESENT</b>

**INVOCATION:** Reverend Donald Bolton, Jr., County Chaplain

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recite in unison

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

PLEASE SWITCH ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (CELL PHONES, PAGERS, PDAs, ETC.) TO THE SILENT POSITION DURING THIS MEETING TO AVOID INTERRUPTIONS.

IF YOU NEED REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS DUE TO A DISABILITY, INCLUDING COMMUNICATIONS IN AN ALTERNATE FORMAT PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO THE COMMISSION. FOR TDD/TTY OR GEORGIA RELAY SERVICE ACCESS DIAL 711.

**CONSENT AGENDA****26-0106 Board of Commissioners**

Adoption of the Consent Agenda - All matters listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the County Commission and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion will take place on these items. If discussion of any Consent Agenda item is desired, the item will be moved to the First Regular Meeting Agenda for separate consideration. **(ADOPTED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Commissioner Ivory, to adopt the Consent Agenda. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and  
Abdur-Rahman

**26-0107 Board of Commissioners**

Proclamations for Spreading on the Minutes. **(SPREAD ON THE MINUTES UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

Proclamation recognizing "Georgia School of Orthodontics Appreciation Day."  
**(Pitts)**  
February 17, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Heart of Success Appreciation Day." **(Arrington)**  
February 21, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Ben Crump Appreciation Day." **(Arrington)**  
February 22, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Reverend Dr. Carl H. Moncrieff, Sr. Appreciation Day."  
**(Abdur-Rahman/Arrington)**  
February 22, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Tayari Jones Appreciation Day." **(Ivory)**  
February 22, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Representative Tyrone Brooks Appreciation Day."  
**(Abdur-Rahman)**  
February 22, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Reverend Sam Mosteller Appreciation Day."  
**(Abdur-Rahman)**  
February 22, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Larry Johnson Appreciation Day." **(Abdur-Rahman)**  
February 22, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Judge Charles Mays Appreciation Day."  
**(Abdur-Rahman)**  
February 22, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "David Banner Appreciation Day." **(Arrington)**  
February 25, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "St. James LIVE Appreciation Day." **(Arrington)**  
February 26, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Leadership North Appreciation Day." **(Thorne)**  
February 26, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Black Cowboy Heritage Festival Appreciation Day."  
**(Arrington)**  
February 28, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Matthew Thompson Appreciation Day." **(Arrington)**  
March 1, 2026

Proclamation recognizing "Dr. James E. Woods Remembrance Day." **(Arrington)**  
March 2, 2026

### **Open & Responsible Government**

#### **26-0108 Real Estate and Asset Management**

Request approval of a change order less than 10% - Department of Real Estate and Asset Management, #24ITB100324K-JA, Renovation of Airport Administration Air Rescue Firefighting Station in an amount not to exceed \$85,446.00 with Sovereign Cooper, Inc. (Cumming, GA), to modify existing contract to allow the execution of eight (8) additional services for the completion of the construction/renovation project to the upper and lower floors of the west apparatus bay (approximately 7,275 gross square footage) for the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Station (ARFF) located at the Fulton County Executive Airport, 3965 Aero Drive, Atlanta, GA 30336. Effective upon BOC approval. **(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

### **Arts and Libraries**

#### **26-0109 Library**

Request approval of the lowest responsible bidder - Fulton County Library System, 25ITB1484401B-PS, E-Rate Eligible Internet Access & WAN Connectivity in an amount not to exceed \$133,029.48 with AT&T Corporation (Atlanta, GA) to supply broadband Internet access and wide area network (WAN) connectivity between primary and secondary datacenters and a number of individual public libraries located within the metropolitan Atlanta Georgia area. Effective July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027 with three renewal options. This item is 100% grant funded. **(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

---

**Health and Human Services****26-0110 Community Development**

Request approval to enter into Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) contracts with the following: College Park (\$120,000.00), East Point (\$150,000.00), Fairburn (\$180,000.00), Hapeville (\$120,000.00), Palmetto (\$70,000.00), Union City (\$180,000.00) to deliver community development activities. Total amount being awarded is \$820,000.00. Authorize the Chairman to disburse funds, execute and administer the CDBG contracts and related documents consistent with the federal program regulations and this Board action. Effective upon BOC approval. 100% grant funded. **(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

**26-0111 Community Development**

Request approval to amend the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) contract agreement with City of Alpharetta (\$110,000.00) to conform its terms and conditions with the January 21, 2025 revocation of Executive Order 11246 by Executive Order 14173; and authorize the Chairman to execute the Amendment and related documents; authorizing the County Attorney to approve the Amendment and related documents as to form and to make modifications thereto prior to execution; and for other purposes. **(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

**Justice and Safety****26-0112 Emergency Management**

Request approval of the Atlanta Region Commission's Metro Atlanta Urban Area Security Initiative Memorandum of Understanding regarding Department of Homeland Security grant funding awarded to the Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency - (Grant Year 2023). **(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

**FIRST REGULAR MEETING AGENDA****26-0113 Board of Commissioners**

Adoption of the First Regular Meeting Agenda. **(ADOPTED AS AMENDED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to adopt as amended by removing items #26-0117 as requested by the County Manager, #26-0075, #26-0125 as requested by Commissioner Ivory; revising item #26-0129 as requested by Chairman Pitts; and moving up item #26-0129 as requested by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**26-0114 Clerk to the Commission**Ratification of Minutes. **(RATIFIED)**

First Regular Meeting Minutes, February 4, 2026

Second Regular Meeting Post Agenda Minutes, February 18, 2026

A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne to ratify the meeting minutes. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and  
Abdur-Rahman

**26-0115 Board of Commissioners**Presentation of Proclamations and Certificates. **(PRESENTED)**

Proclamation recognizing "EmpowerHER Appreciation Day."  
**(Abdur-Rahman/BOC)**

Proclamation recognizing "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month."  
**(Ellis/BOC)**

Proclamation recognizing "Theatre In Our Schools Month." **(Ellis/BOC)**

Proclamation recognizing "WellSpring Living Appreciation Day." **(Barrett/BOC)**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS****26-0116 Board of Commissioners**

Public Comment - Citizens are allowed to voice County related opinions, concerns, requests, etc. during the Public Comment portion of the Commission meeting. **Priority for public comment will be given to Fulton County citizens and those individuals representing businesses or organizations located within Fulton County, including their employees, whether such persons are commenting in-person, via emails or via Zoom or other electronic media (i.e., phone call). Non-Fulton County citizens will only be heard after all in-person Fulton County citizens, representatives of business and organizations located within Fulton County, including their employees, have been heard and the time allotted for public comment has not expired, except as otherwise provided in this code section. County staff shall verify the residency of each public speaker prior to such person being heard by the board. Speakers will be granted up to two minutes each. Members of the public will not be allowed to yield or donate time to other speakers. The Public Comment portion of the meeting will not exceed sixty (60) minutes at the First Regular Meeting, nor will this portion exceed sixty (60) minutes at the Second Regular Meeting.** In the event the 60-minute time limit is reached prior to public comments being completed, public comment will be suspended and the business portion of the BOC meeting will commence. Public comment will resume at the end of the meeting. For more information or to arrange a speaking date, contact the Clerk's Office.  
**(CONDUCTED)**

**12 Speakers: Linda H. Williams (Detention Center Advocacy for Women); Michael Collins (Diversion); Helen D. Williams (Deed Fraud); Moki Macias (Diversion); LA Pink (Voter Fraud); Latrece Williams (Incarceration/Dwanye Lamar High Jr); Tanya Wright (Techie Homes Developer); Devin Franklin (Diversion); Maria Gaudio (BRE Appointment); Steven Imle (Diversion); S. Kennedy (Homeless Encampments); Denise Ruben (Diversion)**

**4 Zoom Speakers: Robby Caban (Lifeline/Animal Services); Janet Hill (Deed Fraud); Kirt Beasley (Sheriff's Budget); Jason Toweh (FBI Raid/Elections)**

**COUNTY MANAGER'S ITEMS****Open & Responsible Government****26-0117 Registration & Elections**

Request approval of a statewide contract - Registration & Elections, Georgia Secretary of State, PE-47800-SS-2024-000000006, SoleSource - KNOWiNK in an amount not to exceed \$262,667.78 with KNOWiNK, LLC (St. Louis, MO)) to adhere to Secretary of State mandated mail for NGE mail notices. Effective upon approval through June 11, 2026. **(REMOVED)**

**ITEM REMOVED FROM THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING AGENDA AS REQUESTED BY THE COUNTY MANAGER**

**26-0118 Real Estate and Asset Management**

Request approval to utilize cooperative purchasing - Department of Real Estate and Asset Management, GSA MAS Contract #GS-02F-028AA, Management and Financial Consulting, Acquisition and Grants Management Support, and Business Program and Project Management Services, in the amount not to exceed \$536,868.20 with Emergency Management Services International, Inc. (Culpeper, VA), to provide consulting services related to planning and logistical support for the Fulton County Jail DOJ Consent Decree response. Effective dates: January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. **(APPROVED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**Health and Human Services****26-0119 Public Works**

Request approval of a Contract Item Agreement (CIA) between Fulton County and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for water main relocations associated with the widening and improvements to Abbotts Bridge Road (SR 120) -Promise Parkway to Boles Road, Project P.I. No. 721000, in Johns Creek, Georgia, in an estimated amount of \$2,426,610.00. **(APPROVED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**COMMISSIONERS' ACTION ITEMS**

**Commissioners' District Board Appointments**

**26-0074 Board of Commissioners  
FULTON COUNTY REPARATIONS TASK FORCE (FILED)**

Term below expired: 12/31/2025  
Karcheik Sims-Alvarado (Hall)

**Commissioner Ivory has nominated Karcheik Sims-Alvarado for a District reappointment to a term ending December 31, 2026.**

a. A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to approve. **(NO VOTE TAKEN)**

b. A substitute motion was made by Chairman Pitts and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to file. The motion passed by the following vote:

- Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman
- Nay:** Ivory
- Did Not Vote:** Barrett, and Arrington

**26-0075 Board of Commissioners  
FULTON COUNTY REPARATIONS TASK FORCE (HELD ON 2/18/26)  
(REMOVED)**

Term below expired: 12/31/2025  
Ann Hill-Bond (Ivory)

**Commissioner Ivory has nominated Ann Hill-Bond for a District reappointment to a term ending December 31, 2026.**

**ITEM REMOVED FROM THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING AGENDA AS REQUESTED BY COMMISSIONER IVORY**

**26-0079 Board of Commissioners**  
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS (HELD ON 2/18/26) (MOTION TO FILE FAILED)

Term below expired: 12/31/2025  
Michael Hopkins (Ivory)

**Commissioner Ivory has nominated Michael Hopkins for a District reappointment to a term ending December 31, 2027.**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Thorne, to file. The motion failed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman

**Nay:** Ivory

**Did Not Vote:** Thorne, Barrett, and Arrington

**26-0063 Board of Commissioners**  
Request approval of a Resolution affirming the protection of Constitutional Rights at Fulton County facilities and limiting ICE enforcement activities. (Arrington) (APPROVED AS AMENDED)

A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Ivory, to approve as amended. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**Abstain:** Thorne

**Did Not Vote:** Ellis

**26-0101 Board of Commissioners**  
Request approval of a Resolution to support affordable housing in partnership with Cosmopolitan AME Church, Good Place, and Collaborative Housing Solutions by approving a grant from funds previously set aside to aid in the construction of a 70-unit new construction multifamily development in Vine City that includes 63 affordable units and 7 market rate units, and for other purposes. (Barrett/Abdur-Rahman) (APPROVED)

A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**26-0120 Board of Commissioners**  
Request approval of a Resolution to promote Public Education regarding how to obtain voter identification; and for other purposes. (Thorne) (HELD)

**ITEM HELD AS REQUESTED BY COMMISSIONER THORNE**

**26-0121 Board of Commissioners**

Request approval of a Resolution of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners to establish standing committees; and for other purposes. **(Ivory) (FILED)**

a. A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to approve. **(NO VOTE TAKEN)**

b. A substitute motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Ellis, to file. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**Nay:** Barrett, and Ivory

**26-0122 Board of Commissioners**

Request approval of a Resolution of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners directing the County Manager to procure a third-party independent contractor to complete a comprehensive audit of the Fulton County budget for 2026; and for other purposes. **(Ivory) (MOTION TO APPROVE FAILED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to approve. The motion failed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Ivory

**Nay:** Pitts, Ellis, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**Did Not Vote:** Thorne, and Barrett

**26-0123 Board of Commissioners**

Request approval of a Resolution to reallocate at least two percent of the fiscal year 2026 budget towards expenditures related to the establishment of new hospital facilities in Atlanta and South Fulton; and for other purposes. **(Ivory) (FILED)**

a. A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Arrington, to approve. **(NO VOTE TAKEN)**

b. A substitute motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Thorne, to file. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman

**Nay:** Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

**26-0124 Board of Commissioners**

Request approval of an urging Resolution urging the Georgia General Assembly not to enact legislation eliminating property taxes as a source of local government revenue; and for other purposes. **(Ivory) (MOTION TO APPROVE FAILED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Arrington, to approve. The motion failed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

**Nay:** Abdur-Rahman

**Abstain:** Thorne

**Did Not Vote:** Pitts, and Ellis

**26-0125 Board of Commissioners**

Request approval of a Resolution to direct the County Manager and the Department of Finance to coordinate with the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and the Office of the Solicitor-General to develop a plan for intake level diversion screening at the Rice Street Jail; and for other purposes. **(Ivory) (REMOVED)**

**ITEM REMOVED FROM THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING AGENDA AS REQUESTED BY COMMISSIONER IVORY**

**26-0126 Board of Commissioners**

Request approval of a Resolution authorizing Fulton County, Georgia to appropriate funds received by the County to the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority for capital purposes at Zoo Atlanta; and for other related purposes. **(Ivory) (HELD)**

a. A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to approve. **(NO VOTE TAKEN)**

b. A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Ellis and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to hold. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**Nay:** Barrett, and Ivory

**Commissioners' Full Board Appointments**

**26-0127 Board of Commissioners**

**REGION III EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COUNCIL (APPROVED)**

The Bylaws of the Region III Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council requires that its members be appointed by County Commissioners and must constitute a minimum of two thirds of the voting membership. Council members serve terms of appointment of three (3) years. The Council year will be from July 1 to June 30. The term of each appointment shall be for three years with one-third of the Council to be appointed each year. In order to have one-third of the Council appointed each year some appointments may be made for 1 or 2 years until such balances achieved. Members may be reappointed to the EMS Council with no limit on terms. (See EMS Advisory Council Bylaws updated on 5/13/2021).

Term = 3 Years

Term below expires: June 30, 2027

Vacant (**BOC/Position 3**)

**Commissioner Arrington nominated Joe Maddox for a Full Board appointment to an unexpired term ending June 30, 2027.**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Thorne, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**COUNTY MANAGER'S PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Open & Responsible Government**

**26-0128 External Affairs**

Presentation: 2026 Legislative Session Update. (**PRESENTED**)

A motion was made by Chairman Pitts and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to oppose SB 568. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Barrett, Ivory, and Abdur-Rahman

**Absent:** Arrington

**Abstain:** Thorne

**Did Not Vote:** Ellis

**COMMISSIONERS' PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**26-0129 Board of Commissioners**

Discussion and request approval of a Jail Population Reduction Initiative  
**(Pitts/Abdur-Rahman) (APPROVED)**

a. A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Thorne, to approve a five point plan. The motion passed by the following vote:

Commissioner Barrett offered a friendly amendment to request the County Manager work with the justice partners to develop a plan.  
Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman did not accept the friendly amendment

Commissioner Arrington offered a friendly amendment to request the County Manager to develop a plan and bring back to the Board.  
Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman did not accept the friendly amendment

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman

**Nay:** Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

b. A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Arrington, to hold. The motion failed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

**Nay:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman

c. A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Chairman Pitts, to call the question. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, and Abdur-Rahman

**Nay:** Arrington

d. A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to call the question. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**26-0130 Board of Commissioners**

Executive (**CLOSED**) Sessions regarding litigation (**County Attorney**), real estate (**County Manager**), and personnel (**Pitts**). (**APPROVED**)

**PRESENT IN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION REGARDING LITIGATION, REAL ESTATE, AND PERSONNEL: Chairman Pitts, Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, Commissioners: Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington; County Manager Dick Anderson; County Attorney Y. Soo Jo; and Clerk to the Commission Tonya R. Grier.**

a. A motion was made by Commissioner Barrett and seconded by Commissioner Ivory, to enter into Executive Session. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Thorne, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

**Did Not Vote:** Pitts, and Ellis

b. A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to approve the request for representation in item #2 as discussed in Executive Session. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, and Abdur-Rahman

**Did Not Vote:** Arrington

c. A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Thorne, to approve the settlement in the matter of 72 Marietta Street tax parcel ID #14-0078-0011-064-1 to resolve the claims of Lien Transferee Investa Services by paying \$286,136.62 in interest in conjunction with the Tax Commissioner's refund of \$1,102,528.56 for the purchase of invalid tax liens. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Yea:** Pitts, Thorne, Barrett, Ivory, and Abdur-Rahman

**Nay:** Ellis

**Did Not Vote:** Arrington

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'  
FIRST REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 4, 2026  
10:00 A.M.

Alexander Solution, LLC  
4132 Williamsburg Drive, College Park, Georgia 30337

(Whereupon, the meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.)

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, good morning, everyone, and welcome to the First Regular Meeting of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners of the month of March. Today is March 4th, it's 10:01 a.m. Madam Clerk, please call the roll."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Chairman Robb Pitts."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Present."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Commissioner Bridget Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Present."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Commissioner Bob Ellis."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Present."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Commissioner Dana Barrett."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Present."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Commissioner Mo Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Present."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Commissioner Marvin Arrington, Jr."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Present."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Vice Chair Khadijah Abdur-Rahman."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Present."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Mr. Chairman, you have a quorum."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Thank you. Please rise for the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance."

(Whereupon, the invocation was given by Reverend Donald Bolton followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Madam Clerk, continue."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "On page 2, Consent Agenda, **26-0106**, Adoption of the Consent Agenda. All matters listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the County Commission, and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion will take place on these items. If discussion of any Consent Agenda item is desired, the item will be moved to the First Regular Meeting Agenda for separate consideration."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Any items on the Consent Agenda, Madam Clerk?"

**CLERK GRIER:** "I don't have any."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioners?"

**COMMISSIONERS:** (No response.)

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, motion to adopt the Consent Agenda, motion to approve by Commissioner Thorne, seconded by Commissioner Ivory. Please vote."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "Bottom of page 4, First Regular Meeting Agenda, **26-0113**, Adoption of the First Regular Meeting Agenda. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, I have one item to be removed from today's agenda on the bottom of page 5, under County Manager's Items, 26-0117, Registration and Elections, request approval for statewide contract for mail notices. This item will be brought back at a later meeting. Also on page 9, the Chairman has requested to revise his item. 26-0129, his discussion and request approval, Jail Population Reduction Initiative."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Any other items? All right, Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you, Chairman. I'd like to remove item 26-0075 from the --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "What page, what page?"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "It is on page 6."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Page 6."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "0075, it is the removal of Anne Hill-Bonds, the Reparations Task Force, she no longer wants to serve. Okay?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "You got that? And then I'd also like to remove item 26-0125 on the top of page 8. My original intent with this resolution was to create a last-resort

diversion so people who don't need to be incarcerated wouldn't end up in jail. That is my top priority, and I would never want that to be misinterpreted. So after discussions with community stakeholders, I'm pulling that from the agenda today for further conversation."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Anyone else? Commissioner -- Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Thank you, Chairman. I'm going to ask that item 26-0129 --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "What page?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "-- on page 9, Board of Commissioners Discussion, Jail Population Reduction Initiative. We've got a lot of stakeholders here this morning, and because of the seriousness of the issue, the timeliness of the issue, I would like for it to be moved up to after public comments, please."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** All right. Anything else?

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** That's it.

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Entertain a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Motion to approve by Commissioner Ivory, seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0114**, Ratification of Minutes. First Regular Meeting Minutes, February 4th, Second Regular Meeting Post Agenda Minutes, February 18th, 2026."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** All right. Motion to -- is there a motion?

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "That's the wrong heading for it, Chairman. What's going on with the heading?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Motion to ratify. Motion to ratify the minutes by Commissioner Thorne."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "I'll second it."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "On page 5, **26-0115**, Presentation of Proclamations and Certificates. The first proclamation is recognizing EmpowerHER Appreciation Day sponsored by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, with Full-Board support."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Good morning. Can you all come down and join us, lovely ladies, and men, the Cane, the Cane, that's the Cane. It's a wonderful group of -- wonderful group of men and women representing a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful proclamation today. A lot of these individuals, I know personally. They're great individuals, especially the Cane. This proclamation: WHEREAS, EmpowerHER is a Fulton County Arts and Culture initiative, established in 2024, dedicated to honoring and uplifting women artists across a wide range of creative disciplines, promoting inclusion, visibility, and equity, and bringing together emerging, mid-career, and established artists who work reflects the cultural, social, and artistic impact of women in contemporary art and culture; and WHEREAS, EmpowerHER has grown into the largest exhibition women artists in Fulton County and the state of Georgia. You can clap for that. Featuring the work of more than 140 artists, this remarkable growth underscores Fulton County's leadership in Arts and Culture and its continued commitment to investing in creative expression as a vital component of civic life and community well-being; and WHEREAS, EmpowerHER programming will expand in 2026 to include three artists residencies to feature artists and a robust schedule of exhibitions and public programming, designed to foster professional development, creative exchange, and meaningful engagement between arts -- between artists and the communities they serve; and WHEREAS, EmpowerHER 2026 will be presented across multiple Fulton County facilities, including the Fulton County Government Center, the Central Library, and the Emma Darnell Aviation Museum and Conference Center, an approach that ensures broad public access to the exhibition, while highlighting the County's culture assets and commitment to inclusive, countywide arts programming. And on a personal note, I was able to be at their inaugural event. And if you were there, the roof almost blew off with all these artists that were in. And I thank all of you. We had some beautiful artists and wonderful dialogue. And I was honored to be a part of the inaugural event. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fulton County Board of Commissioners recognizes EmpowerHER as a powerful platform for representation, dialogue and cultural enrichment and an essential resource for building a more inclusive and vibrant community; and does hereby proclaim Wednesday, March 4th, 2026 as EmpowerHER Appreciation Day in Fulton County, Georgia. Please put your hands together for this talented group. Now, who's going to come speak. Tish, you got the mic."

**TISHA SMITH, RECIPIENT:** "Wow, I didn't expect this part. I want to say thank you to everyone that came out today, thank you to the team that helped cultivate EmpowerHER. This started as just, hey, I want to do an exhibition for Women's History Month, and I didn't see it to be this today. I'm very proud of it. I'm very proud of everyone. I'm proud of -- thank you so much, David and Dr. Fowler, for allowing this to transform from just an exhibition to an initiative. Thank you to the Board of Commissioners for acknowledging it as an appreciation today, as Appreciation Day for EmpowerHER. We look forward to the exhibition opening on March the 13th at 6:00 p.m. Please join us on that day, where you can see all the artwork, enjoy the artwork

here at Peachtree Gallery. Come in with us on March the 14th, we're doing a little bus tour. I don't know if all of us be able to get on it. But we are touring the exhibition from Emma Darnell, going to, coming here and then down to the Central Library. So I just want to say thank you to everyone. We really appreciate you. Thank you, Tay. Thank you, the staff at Emma Darnell, the team, Ms. Strong. Thank you, Ms. Nancy, where's Nancy? Thank you, Nancy. This couldn't have been done without Ms. Vicky. Oh yeah, Ms. Vicky and everyone that was involved with pulling this together, it couldn't have happen without a strong team like such. Thank you."

**CLERK GRIER:** "The next proclamation is recognizing Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month sponsored by Commissioner Ellis with Full-Board support."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "I want to invite our team to come down from our Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Department as well as some of our clients. They're very inconspicuous, so you may not notice them."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "In their orange."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "In that bright orange. Come on down, spread out."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Hello, hello, welcome, welcome."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Good morning, good morning. As folks continue to come on down, March is Developmental Disabilities and Awareness Month. And you may not know that more than a quarter of a million people live with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the state of Georgia, with up to 33,000 of them here in Fulton County. Fortunately, Georgia ranks among the top ten states for providing services to people with disabilities. In Fulton County, at Fulton County, we're also seeking to do our part, and you will see a number of our dedicated staff at work every day with our clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Recently, we opened a new South Training Center earlier this year, in about a month -- it's good, right? Yep, it's a great looking spot, and in about a month, I'm happy to say we will open a new Health and Human Services Campus in Alpharetta, which will house a North Fulton Training Center. So we're super excited about the opening of the South Training Center and the soon-to-be opening of the North Training Center. And we're committed to doing all we can to provide services to allow individuals to thrive and contribute to our community. And with that, I'm going to share this proclamation. WHEREAS, in 1987 President Ronald Reagan proclaimed the month of March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to increase public awareness of the needs and exceptional potential of Americans with intellectual developmental disabilities; and WHEREAS, Intellectual Developmental Disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language or behavior areas that began during the developmental period, and may impact day-to-day functioning that usually lasts throughout a person's lifetime; and WHEREAS, the Fulton County's Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities IDDS, what they sometimes you'll hear that acronym, Centers have expanded programs to welcome new participants, reflecting growth and community trust in our services through strength in partnerships with organizations like the Chattahoochee Nature Center, Kirkwood

Library, the Centers provide inclusive, community-based experiences, enriching activities such as educational workshops and community outings foster learning, independence, and a sense of belonging for individuals with IDD; and WHEREAS, Fulton's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities has served IDD individuals through its day services programs for the past 51 years. The program is committed to bringing awareness and acceptance of people for every ability, and providing opportunities to become more independent, economically self-sufficient, and contributing members of their communities. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County recognizes the intellectual developmentally disabled as valuable members of the Fulton County community, encourages their inclusion in every facet of life in metro Atlanta, and does hereby proclaim March 2026 as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Fulton County, Georgia. All right, with this big of group, we got to have somebody that's going to get up here and speak. All right, all right. Take as long as you like. Don't worry about Chairman Pitts."

**VERONICA ROOKS, RECIPIENT:** "Good morning. First, I would like to thank the Board for awarding us this proclamation. I'm Veronica Rooks, Program Manager at Fulton County Central Training Center. This year's theme nationally for IDD Awareness Month is We're Here, Then, Now and Always. This year marks our program's 51st year of service, which shows just how deep our legacy runs. Back then, there were babies who came to learn skills to help them reach milestones of success. Now, we support adults in living their best lives, incorporating socialization, lifelong learning, and community integration. Our goal is always to have a lasting impact in our communities, and to support individuals in fulfilling their wildest dreams while sharing their different abilities with all people. Please join me in saluting all of the amazing individuals, caregivers, and the support team who brings awareness to disabilities, not only in the month of March, but every single day. Thank you."

**CLERK GRIER:** "The next proclamation is recognizing Theater In Our Schools Month sponsored by Commissioner Ellis with Full-Board support."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "I'd like to invite Matthew and Brooke from Milton High School to come down. All right, Ms. Ankiel, you don't want to come down too? All right, all right. You know, in Fulton County and in the state of Georgia, we know that we have had -- we have a very rich film culture, theater culture, arts culture. And what I'm going to share with today is sort of where that emanates from. Where -- what are the roots of that, and where are the performers that we see develop their skills and build up, build up the confidence to perform. And it starts in our middle schools and our high schools, and we've got two, two folks. I'm a little bit biased, because my children went to this high school, and -- at Milton, and my daughter this -- this theater program took my daughter out to California. So I know how good it is, and how much talent they have, and they're just representative of some of the great programs and the great talent that we have in Fulton County. So the International Thespian Society supports theater programs in middle schools and high schools, and has inducted more than 2.4 million students into that society since 1929. And I want to share with you this proclamation that will, you know, get into kind of the importance of these programs and what they

mean. You know, so oftentimes, we talk about things like athletics and so that in the -- and what that brings, and so forth. But it also happens in the theater world. It's not only about entertainment, it's about education, it's about teamwork. It's about learning responsibility, and delivering quality and inspiring confidence in our young people that they can carry out throughout the rest of their life, regardless of whether that's up on stage or out in the workforce or working in our community. So without further ado, I want to share this proclamation. WHEREAS, the importance and the value of theater education in the lives of students all across Fulton County cannot be overstated, preparing students for careers, both inside and out of the arts; and WHEREAS, the arts are essential and help to bolster the economy and vitalize and connect communities; and WHEREAS, theater programs across the state provide students with personal and professional opportunities for self-expression, creativity, and career exploration, while enhancing students self-confidence and ability to engage and emphasize with the surrounding community; and WHEREAS, we also recognize and support the important work of organization like Georgia Thespians that helps support students from all backgrounds by providing various educational, financial, and performance opportunities; and WHEREAS, theater educators, administrators, and parents have an immeasurable impact on the lives of their students, and work tirelessly on the front lines of theater advocacy to ensure the arts continue to be an integral part of a student's education; and WHEREAS, Fulton County recognizes and celebrates the invaluable work of theater educators, students, and community members whose passions serve as safeguards to this art form, noting that their commitment to the arts has been and will continue to be felt for generations to come. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fulton County Board of Commissioners recognize the importance of arts and culture in our education systems, and does hereby proclaim the month of March 2026, as Theater In Our Schools Month in Fulton County, Georgia. All right, who's going to -- who's going to speak?"

**MATTHEW BOYS, RECIPIENT:** "I am."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "All right."

**MATTHEW BOYS, RECIPIENT:** "First off, I would like to thank Commissioner Ellis and the rest of the Fulton County Commissioners for recognizing the importance of the timeless art form that is theater in our schools. Now, many of my peers and sometimes myself don't take much pride in saying that we are theater kids. Why is that, you might ask? Well, for context, in January of this year, the New York Times posted an article saying that theater kid is this century's derogatory term, and it is used to call people weak and unmotivated. However, let it be widely known that there are absolutely no research studies that find that theater kids are weaker, in any way, than their peers or less motivated. However, what is statistically proven is that theater kids are more emotionally intelligent than their peers. We are creative thinkers, collaborative leaders, and we are academically strong. The formation and advancement of these traits is exactly why theater in our schools is so important. The impact of theater kids is measurable and almost more importantly, our stories are undeniable. Simply put, theater in schools changes lives. So it is my hope that this month and every month past, current, and prospective theater kids take pride in their art. And I hope

communities and schools continue to foster the development of theater in our schools for generations to come. Thank you."

**CLERK GRIER:** "The last proclamation is recognizing Wellspring Living Appreciation Day sponsored by Commissioner Barrett with Full-Board support."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I'd like to welcome the folks from Wellspring living to come down and join us. And while they do, I'll just make a quick note that this coming Sunday is International Women's Day. And we thought, what better way to acknowledge International Women's Day than to acknowledge the work and to celebrate the work of Wellspring Living, who play a vital role in women's lives. Thank you guys for being here. I think we all know that sex trafficking and sexual exploitation is still a terrible problem for women and girls all across the world, all across this country, and in Georgia in particular. And I think it's worth noting that one of the times where sex trafficking is on the rise is during major sporting events, and we have World Cup coming to Atlanta. And so I know that awareness and being, you know, if you see something, say something sort of mentality, is really helpful to those who are most vulnerable. So with that, we are here to celebrate this organization today. And I would like to read the proclamation, which says, WHEREAS, International Women's Day, observed on March 8th, celebrates the strength, leadership, and achievements of women and girls, while recognizing that many still face health and economic disparities; and WHEREAS, Fulton County is committed to advancing the health and wellbeing of women and girls, promoting economic opportunity, and preventing gender-based violence in our communities; and WHEREAS, since 2001 Wellspring Living has served survivors and those at risk of sexual exploitation through trauma-informed care that restores dignity, rebuilds confidence, and breaks cycles of abuse; and WHEREAS, Wellspring Living provides safe housing, mental health counseling, and education programs in Fulton County to women and adolescent girls so they can heal and achieve long-term stability. They are a lifeline, y'all. And WHEREAS, Wellspring Living is a leader in the anti-trafficking movement, and has shared its survivor-centered model with organizations around the country and around the world, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fulton County Board of Commissioners commends Wellspring Living for its 25 years of service to women and girls. And in honor of International Women's Day, does hereby proclaim March 4th, 2026 as Wellspring Living Appreciation Day in Fulton County, Georgia. Heather, would you like to?"

**HEATHER LIVELY, RECIPIENT:** "Chairman Pitts, Commissioner Barrett, Board of Commissioners, thank you for this honor. This proclamation is a powerful signal to the survivors we serve that for Fulton County sees them, values them, and stands with them. As Commissioner Barrett referenced, Wellspring Living celebrates 25 years of walking alongside women and girls as they rebuild their lives after trafficking and exploitation. When our founder, Mary Frances Bowley, opened Wellspring Living in 2001, she wanted to serve marginalized women by providing a safe home and supportive resources. As our team began to know the first women we served, we realized they were survivors of sexual trafficking and exploitation. Since then, Wellspring Living has continued to grow to include serving children. In 2008, Mayor Shirley Franklin approached our founder, realizing that trafficking wasn't only impacting

adults, and would Wellspring Living create a place where girls could also find safety and healing. In response, our Girls Residential Program was established. Over the past two decades, we have learned much about the reality of trafficking. Georgia ranks among the highest states in the nation for human trafficking, and Atlanta has long been identified as a major hub for this crime. The average age a child is first trafficked in our state is between 12 and 14 years old. These realities remind us that trafficking is not a distant issue. It's happening in our own neighborhoods. Through housing, healing and education, Wellspring Living provides a continuum of care that supports women and youth as they rebuild their lives and move towards a healthy and thriving future of their choosing. Fulton County, thank you. You have been an ongoing funding and advocacy partner, and we are deeply grateful for your investment in the survivors in this work. Since 2016, you have provided over \$700,000 to directly impact our programs and the women and girls. You've also allocated \$500,000 to help us finish our Village of Hope Campus here in Fulton County that will expand our impact in housing services for survivors. On International Women's Day, we honor the thousands of women and girls who have walked through the doors of Wellspring Living over the past 25 years. This proclamation is for them, for their steadfastness, their courage to rebuild, determination to rediscover, hope, joy and to trust again. We're inspired and continually in awe of them. This work takes a village, and the people surrounding me today represent that community. Our dedicated staff, our board of directors, our volunteers and the generous donors who make this work possible. For 25 years, Wellspring Living has been filled with stories of hope, healing, and transformation, lives changed, and futures restored. Thank you for being a part of Wellspring Living."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, continue, Madam Clerk."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "Continuing on page 5, Public Hearings, **26-0116**, Public Comment. Citizens wishing to participate in public comment will be allowed to appear in person, or may choose to participate virtually via Zoom videoconferencing by registering on the county website, [www.fultoncountyga.gov](http://www.fultoncountyga.gov). Priority for public comment will be given to Fulton County citizens and those individuals representing businesses or organizations located within Fulton County. Speakers will be granted up to two minutes each. The public will not be allowed to yield or donate time to other speakers. The public comment portion of the meeting will not exceed 60 minutes. In the event the 60-minute time limit is reached prior to public comments being completed, public comment will be suspended, and the business portion of BOC meeting will commence. Public comment will resume at the end of the meeting. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, we'll start with speakers here in Assembly Hall. We have received 14 speaker cards. Will the first seven speakers, please come forward. Linda H. Williams, Michael Collins, Helen D. Williams, Moki Macias, LA Pink, Tanya Wright and Latrece Williams."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, speakers, so you have 15 seconds, I'll say 15 seconds. That's your key to begin to conclude your remarks."

**LINDA WILLIAMS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning. My name is Linda Williams, and I am the founder and CEO of a nonprofit called Beginning Today, Inc. We provide mentoring services to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women here in Fulton County. I have submitted a proposal to become an advocate for these women that are currently housed at the Atlanta Detention Center. A lot of these women don't have anyone to advocate for them. They are in there, and they don't have family members. A lot of their family members are taking care of their children, which is why we have a growing population of grandparents raising grandchildren. And so I come before you with a proposal for me to become an advocate, to speak on behalf of these women, to provide initial contact with the inmates, to identify their needs, to communicate with their families, to provide assistance, to promote educational rehabilitation programs, to be a liaison between them and the Fulton County Advisory Unit. Program benefits, obviously, will reduce overcrowding at the Fulton County Jail. We also have resources to help the ladies once they get out, which will reduce recidivism, which is that cycle of getting out and going back, and getting out and going back. It reduces the workload for the Advocacy Unit in the Sheriff's Department, and it provides one on one. I meet with these women twice a week every week. We've got some women that are in there, they don't even know what their terms and what their conditions of release are. They're sitting there and they're just waiting for someone to help them."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds, ma'am."

**LINDA WILLIAMS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "So my proposal is for me to be able to work with them and for these women to help them to reduce the overcrowding. Thank you for your time."

**MICHAEL COLLINS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Hello, Commissioners, it's been a while. My name is Michael Collins, I'm speaking today on behalf of Playfair ATL, an Atlanta-based coalition working to ensure the 2026 World Cup upholds labor, housing, and human rights, while leaving a positive local legacy. I want to highlight the recently report -- recently released path to 1000 report from the Community Over Cages Coalition. This report lays out a clear and practical roadmap to safely reduce the Fulton County Jail population to around 1000 people through diversion, bail reform, and smarter pretrial practices. There is a lot of blame to go around for the current mess we are in, but there are also clear solutions. Solicitor General Keith Gammage, we need you to immediately expand diversion and dismiss low-level misdemeanor cases that are clogging the jail, particularly competency cases, where people are waiting months or even years in jail for treatment bed -- beds. District Attorney Fani Willis, we need you to prioritize cases involving people who are sitting in jail pretrial, and expand the use of accusation and other tools that resolve cases faster and reduce unnecessary detention. This matters because Fulton County is under a federal consent decree that now requires the jail population to be reduced. The question in front of this Body is not whether the population must come down. The Consent Decree Monitor has already answered that. The real question is whether the county will implement the solution, solutions expert and community leaders have been identifying for years, and that solution is not and never has been a 1 billion or \$2 billion jail. Right now, the County

does not even have enough staff to safely operate the jail we already have with staff hovering around 50 percent."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds."

**MICHAEL COLLINS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "If we cannot staff the current jail, how are we going to staff an even larger one. With the World Cup 100 days away, Fulton County will be on the global stage. Millions of people from around the world will be paying attention. Do we want Fulton County to be known for overcrowding dangerous jails or for solving the crisis through diversion, fairness, and smart public policy? Thank you."

**HELEN WILLIAMS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning. Mr. Pitts, Mr. Arrington, Ms. Ivory, and Mama. My name is Helen Delilah Williams. I am from the Vine City community, and I stand before you in the reference of identity theft and deed fraud. The reason I'm stating -- making this known is because we as seniors are going through identity theft through all means, and we're unable to recoup and come to the county to affix this situation on your own. Mr. Arrington, three years ago, I came to you and cited and sat with you and asked you to be my lawyer. I told you that I was going through identity fraud, and that the bank was using my name through all these loans within the community of Vine City. I gave you \$600, and I had an opportunity to speak with you and Carmen, so therefore I did not get any assistance from you. I found out there was credit fraud within my address and within my community. My tag was stolen from my 740 BMW, which interfered with my entire life, my insurance, my health, my MARTA pension, and the ATU has locked my -- locked my name up in identity fraud. Through the DMV, I have tried several times to sit before the office and to correct this information, but yet and still, they kept giving me false names. They're telling me I have to bring my -- bring my birth certificate just to clear my issue. I told them that that should not be. With that being done, I was incarcerated with this, through this identity fraud from Walmart. They arrested me, and they told me that I missed a failure to report, which I never received. So I was surrounded by all these black vehicles. At that point, I thought it was the city of Atlanta, but no, it actually turned to be ICE. So they --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds."

**HELEN WILLIAMS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "-- they took me to the jail, and when I went through the jail, I had to go through the -- ewe, the impersonal situations of being patted down and showing your body naked and all, all this situation, which is impeded on me. Also, I'm part of the seniors within the Vice City, and we are having problems with --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Thank you, ma'am."

**MOKI MACIAS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning, Moki, Macias, Executive Director of PAD. I'm here today because over the weekend, we became aware of legislation that appeared to request the collaboration of the Sheriff, DA and Solicitor in ensuring full utilization of pre-arrest diversion. The legislation caused some concern because it left out key stakeholders and disregarded the ongoing planning of the Justice Policy Board,

of which PAD is a part. So I appreciate Commissioner Ivory pulling today's resolution in favor of ongoing collaboration with the existing planning efforts, so thank you for that. But we do agree that the -- there are significant opportunities for the Sheriff and the prosecutors to ensure utilization of pre-arrest diversion. And we think there's some steps that can be taken immediately to do that. So I wanted to share that with you today. And I just spoke with the Sheriff outside the door here and had the same conversation with him. We know that what has been done in many other places around the country, particularly when it comes to health and safety in jails, is that the Sheriff has the authority to immediately decline bookings for misdemeanor offenses for those that are eligible for diversion, he has the immediate authority to tell our law enforcement partners, you can either issue a copy of charges or we have a 24-hour Diversion Center. We have the infrastructure now to be able to make a bold choice like that that would immediately reduce our jail population. Now on a prosecutor's side, the prosecutors have existing resources that they could utilize more. Right now, today, we have 16 people at Fulton County Jail that are still in jail and not connected to services through PAD because we are waiting for the prosecutor to dismiss and divert the charges, 16 people that we could pick up. When we get diverted charges from Fulton County Jail or ACDC, we go pick the person up, we offer them housing, we provide long-term support for as long as they need it. So I just wanted to share that with you today. Thank you."

**LA PINK, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "All righty. Good morning, political gang bankers. I would like to give a special thank you to Ms. King, the state election, she's on the State Election Board, for speaking truth to power, for her really speaking up for the corruption that's going on here. So as Fulton County turns, we open up the Fulton County steam -- Fulton steam files, and as we open it up, we discovered that there is Black corruption, is our new Black history, sad, but true. They say that the Black vote is up under attack. That's by Democrats. And the reason why I say that is job because if you guys all remember Charles Rambo, Khadijah Abdur-Rahman, our state, our former State Representative, Mesha Mainor, our City Council, our former city, City Council, Keisha Waits, and also me, was attacked, not by Republicans, by -- but by Democrats. So when you say that our vote, our community, is under attack, you're right. It's by Democrats. We also know that Helen Willis is applying for Marvin, Marvin Arrington's seat after she's taken \$5,000 out of the inmate well fare funding given by the sheriff that we can know -- we can't find. I put in an open records request for a check, check not here. So when you say that our communities and our people are under attack, that \$5,000 could have went to our inmates, that Mo Ivory claim, that she's just so involved with and wanting to bring truth to power and fight for."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds."

**LA PINK, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "We know that this is a stage, because Mo, you came here giving out proclamations like you're running a marathon and in money like you were in a strip club. Get it together."

**LATRECE WILLIAMS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning. My name is Latrece Williams. I'm here to advocate for my son, Dwayne Lamar High, Jr. His critical medical -- Good morning, my name is Latrece Williams, I'm here to advocate on behalf of my

son, Dwayne Lamar High, Jr. He has critical medical condition, severe seizure disorder, posing life threatening risk, post state following seizures, causing confusion and impaired judgment, type 1 diabetic diagnosis, requiring continuous monitoring, medical instability, increased vulnerability during incarceration. His mental health diagnosis is bipolar disorder with psychic features, schizophrenic spectrum syndrome, affecting condition and perceptions, mental Health instability, worsen doing post seizure episodes, requires structured medical and psychiatric supervision. Competent and functional impairment, recently found competent, however, conditions remain medically fragile. Post procedure states, temporary, impaired reason and communication. Competency status should consider ongoing neurology and psychiatric factors, court acknowledgement of medical relates is essential. Me, Latrece Williams, as his mother, his advocate, and power of attorney, advocate for humane treatment and medical appropriate decision, request coordination between medical providers, defense counsel and court --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, 15 seconds, ma'am."

**LATRECE WILLIAMS, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "-- emphasize on prevention of life, health stability, and rehabilitation, recognition of documented medical and mental health condition, consideration during plea negotiation or proceedings, ensure medical accommodation and criteria of --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Thank you, ma'am, thank you."

**TANYA WRIGHT, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Tanya Wright and I return before you with deep concern regarding the recent appointment of Booker T. Washington to the Planning and Zoning Commission under the appointment of Union City Mayor Vince Williams. Just weeks ago, I stood before this Body on February 4th, detailing the construction failures, the financial theft, the questionable permits and questionable -- questionable certificates of occupancy committed against South Park Cottages. This same developer was sworn into a position that directly influences land use, development, approvals, and zoning decisions. This is deeply troubling. How can an individual who left a trail of liens, lawsuits, and construction destruction be strategically tasked with overseeing the future of our county's development? I'm here today to ask who's protecting the underserved communities? If the very people who violate building codes are the ones appointed to write and enforce them, the system isn't just broken, it's rigged. I urge commissions to investigate the motives behind this appointment and to intervene in the oversight of the city of College Park and Union City. Our communities deserve leadership rooted in integrity, transparency, and proven accountability, not calculated corruption. Please do not allow Booker T. Washington, operating as Techie Homes to use his position on the Planning and Zoning Commission as a shield for private development interests or as protection from accountability. Thank you for your commitment to protecting the people you serve."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Next seven speakers, please come down, Devin Franklin, Janet Hill, Maria Gaudio, Steven Imle, Denise Ruben, DeMarco Lord and S. Kennedy."

**DEVIN FRANKLIN, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning Commissioners, my name is Devin Franklin. I am Senior Movement Policy Counsel with the Southern Center for Human Rights, for those watching and who don't know. On February 20th of this year, the federal monitor overseeing the Fulton County consent decree filed their second monitor's report. It's a 350-page document of findings and compliance statuses as it pertains to fixes for the numerous violations that were articulated in their original 2024 findings report. My two minutes today are not nearly sufficient to discuss the report in detail. However, I do want to recognize one particular passage in the executive summary regarding staffing that formally acknowledges the potential need for a court-ordered population cap. This idea is not new to myself. My 12 years as a public defender, whose first-hand experiences at the jail told me that the staffing levels and the nature of overturning staffing were unlikely to improve in the future, told me that. It is not the -- not surprising either, to the Southern Center for Human Rights who wrote the former request of the Department of Justice calling for the investigation into the Fulton County Jail. We knew that the staffing issue were problematic, nor is it news to the Community Over Cages Coalition, which recently published its path to 1000 report, which articulates a plan to reduce the Fulton County Jail population to 1000. Central to that plan is the increased use of diversion. We understand fundamentally that slowing the bringing of people into the jail impacts the overall jail population. And I understand on today's agenda is a discussion about that decrease. I want to be clear that we want to see diversion initiatives that prioritize making effective and efficient use of the diversion infrastructures that currently exist."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds."

**DEVIN FRANKLIN, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "We want to see usage that respects the expertise and the vision of experts and professionals who do the work of diversion, namely PAD, and community organizations, who long have led the call for increased pre-arrest diversion. We know what we're talking about, and we're excited that you --"

**MARIA GAUDIO, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning. Maria Gaudio. Well, the Board of Commissioners has missed another deadline, hence another opportunity to do the right thing, the legal thing, by you have abdicated your responsibility to not appoint Jason Frazier to the Board of Elections or reappoint Julie Adams to the BRE. Your fines have now accrued since August 29th at \$10,000 a day, it's over \$2.1 million. But I have a message for you from the taxpayers. That is not going to come out of our money. That is going to come out of your personal funds. You've been told by three judges, you are mishandling county affairs. And you think you can do it with our money, no, that's over. Just as in with the Fani Willis case. The \$17 million that's owed, that's not going to come out of our tax dollars either. She has to pay it. Additionally, last week we find out that there was another \$2 million that the Biden administration gave her through a grant that had no other bidders, no-bid contract they just gave her \$2 million in cash, well, the administrations want that money back too, and that's not going to come from our tax dollars either. That's going to be on her. We let -- and we're not going to let this go either. We still have Natalie Hall's \$1 million fine and \$1 million case, and that was paid by the taxpayers."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds."

**MARIA GAUDIO, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "And we're going to go after that too. This is why our home, our home, our property taxes keep going up, up, up, and you can't even afford a measly \$30,000 to feed the poor because of all this accrual. Thank you."

**STEVEN IMLE, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "My name is Steven Imle. I am a resident of Fulton County, and in light of the recent diversion legislation passed by the city of Atlanta, I'm here to ask you to do the same. I won't spend time retelling the same story that I told the Atlanta City Council. But in short, I spent a small amount of time in jail for speeding and was given leniency. Instead of being charged with a felony like I should have been, the officer lowered that charge with something far less serious. And I am able to stand here today because of that fact. But my first job nearly didn't hire me during a background check, you can be sure that if it was a felony that appeared on my record, I would not have had that job. I was privileged in that moment, and many would not have received the same treatment. Diversion would be a step towards extending this privilege to those who are simply too poor to exist in society. Crimes of poverty are a failure of policy and should be treated as such. Though there is no such item on the agenda today, I would ask that you all support a resolution to urge the officers of Fulton County to ensure that diversion is used where possible. Thank you."

**S. KENNEDY, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good day. This is not about -- my name is Shara Kennedy, I go by Kennedy. I want just schooling. Our company is Somebody's Got To Do It. It's not about Republicans, it's not about Democrats. We are thankful for Commissioner Mo Ivory and the team for your active engagement, for civil engagement. But we want to address a health concern, Chairman Robb Pitts, health hazard that continues to take place. I was here last time, and we implemented some initiatives that we would like to get immediately taking place, one being the health hazard that's taking place with GDOT on I-20 and Lawton, as you can see, I have a PowerPoint presentation that depicts all the pictures and the encampments that are taking place along I-20. As a result, this is a safety health hazard. We have the Boys and Girls Club there in that community, which is Heartland. These encampments often show people walking around in nudity, drug activity. We also see a lot of loitering. We would like to have fines in place for these businesses. We would like to also have GDOT immediately implement our solutions, which is on page 5, and we want to implement field teams who directly go without into the districts and work with neighborhood associations to identify the problem areas that we're targeting in 311 report calls. We want immediate action on I-20, running from West, from Ralph David Abernathy, from the fire station on Lee Street, all the way to Lawton street. There are people living underneath the -- underneath the bridges."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds."

**S. KENNEDY, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Understood. And we would need immediate removal designated land. We would like to have designated land so that people that don't want to move or leave, you can put them over there in tents city, is what we would like to call it. And all the public services, you can send over to them --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Thank you, ma'am. Thank you."

**DENISE RUBEN, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "My name is Denise Ruben. I am a community strategist. I am Director of Strategy and Development at Advocates of the South, and I'm also a justice-impacted person. A person going into ACDC that -- that's having mental health problems, I think it would be best to utilize the Diversion Center, because it's, like the young lady spoke, it, the system is a beast. So it takes about five hours to get processed in, five hours for intake, five hours for placement, five hours for a mental health assessment, and five hours to get released. That's like 25 hours. So we, we lose an hour going inside. And for a person that's never been incarcerated and having a mental health episode inside of there is not where it should be. I think it's -- it's great for you all to utilize the Diversion Center, and you know, invest in the people, care for the people in that manner. And we don't have an hour to lose, that's -- that could be a life lost, so support the diversion, all right? Thank you."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, we have ten speakers on Zoom."

**RICO DOLLAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Good morning Commissioners, the first person to speak is Robby Caban, Robby Caban. Robby Caban."

**ROBBY CABAN, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning. Fulton County continues to invest significant tax dollars into housing projects that primarily produce rental, rental, rental apartments. Housing is important, but rentals alone build wealth primarily for developers and landowners. If Fulton County is serious about economic stability and equity, equity, the county must also prioritize housing pathways, access to housing pathways, entry-level homes, so working residents have the opportunity to build generational wealth. At the same time, Fulton County must address the growing deed fraud and title theft crisis. Residents, especially seniors and longtime homeowners are losing their properties to fraudulent filings. This appears mostly on the south side. The county should allocate dedicated resources, as has been presented prior to prevent deed fraud, investigate cases, and protect homeowners. Second, justice reform including workforce opportunity, justice reform must include workforce opportunities, alternatives to incarceration must be paired with access to skilled trades and jobs, especially on the south side, so residents have real pathways to employment and stability. Third, and lastly, government accountability, for more than a decade, LifeLine Animal Project, the county contractor for Fulton County Animal Services and DeKalb County Animal Services, despite years of concerned raised by residents, staff and volunteers, there's never been a full independent forensic audit of this contract. There's currently a public Tiktok video posted by LifeLine volunteers with over 45,000 views in less than seven days, stating many volunteers want to come forward, but are afraid due to the confidentiality agreements and the allowing of van volunteers who have come forward. Those volunteers have spoken directly to you on public record. This video is visible to any member of the public --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Fifteen seconds."

**ROBBY CABAN, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "-- including this Board. Taxpayers deserve to know how contractor performance is measured and whether services paid for were fully delivered. How will taxpayers be compensated if services were not rendered. The last meeting County Manager Dick Anderson stated the Animal control concerns were addressed --"

**RICO DOLLAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "The next person to speak is Janet Hill. Janet Hill."

**JANET HILL, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Yes, good morning. This is Ms. Hill again. I'm speaking today on the issue of criminal activity reported to this Board of Commissioners and the Clerk of Court, Che Alexander. Research indicates there are at least three Board Members, three Board of Commission Members, that have personal knowledge or know about these deed fraud crimes. In fact, this issue of house stealing and its related crimes are both state and federal offenses. More importantly, research also indicates public officers are incentivized to be involved in these crimes for self-enrichment. We will continue the fight for deed fraud crimes that impact homelessness, voter fraud, false arrest, health issues, and related deaths. Seniors, women, veterans, disabled are disproportionately targeted to steal their homes and their equity. And we will not continue to stand for it. One example is my neighbor, a senior, her home was stolen, torn down. She was sued by the scammers. Later, the scammers admitted to the fraud to the courts, then after the admission of fraud, they collected insurance money as well. The worst of this situation is that Fulton County helped to bury the crime. Again, we respectfully demand return of our stolen properties and restitution. Thank you for your time."

**RICO DOLLAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** The next person to speak is David Garcia. David Garcia. Next person to speak is Denise Wells. Denise Wells. Next person to speak is Duke Virginia. Duke Virginia. Next person to speak is Jayson Toweh. Jayson Toweh. Next person to speak Kirt Beasley.

**KIRT BEASLEY, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Kirt Beasley, and I am calling to speak this morning on -- as a taxpayer of Fulton County, one in which I want to suggest that we follow the money. When we are granting funds as we granted funds to the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and this year we granted \$234 million, I know that I've been told you all this Commissioners, you cannot tell the Sheriff how to spend the money. But is there a way that we can create some form of check and balance system so that we can see how the funds are being spent so they are not wasted? That's all I have for today. Thank you all for your time."

**RICO DOLLAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Next person to speak is Jayson Toweh."

**JAYSON TOWEH, PUBLIC SPEAKER:** "Hi. Thank you, yeah, my name is Jayson Toweh, and I've just been interested in just -- just an update, and kind of some of the work that's been done related to the FBI raid, just off disclosure, I'm a candidate for the U.S. Congress District 7, and I'm just been really interested about how we will just work to make sure that for the upcoming elections, whatever that mean, whether it's in the

primaries or in the general that there is a full state and county control over them. So I've just been interested in understanding what -- what's the work doing for that. Thank you."

**RICO DOLLAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Next person to speak is a Randy Hubble. Randy Hubble. Next person speak is Robbie Huff. Robbie Huff. And this concludes our Zoom public comment."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Thank you. Continue, Madam Clerk."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "Item moved up at the beginning of the meeting today, on page 9, **26-0129**, Discussion and request approval of a Jail Population Reduction Initiative sponsored by Chairman Pitts and Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. I'll be pretty brief in my comments. This says the wrong caption is on the screen."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "It says jail population reduction initiative."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay, it's changed now. Okay, we've talked a lot about the jail population. The monitors address the jail population, and as many public speakers say, every, almost every meeting, there's some discussion about reducing the jail population. And Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman have been working behind the scenes for some, several months on this, and I think that what we have come up with makes sense, doesn't cost the taxpayers any money, if any, it's a very small amount of money. But I think it can be done just by those of us who have a role to play in the justice system, including this Board of Commissioners. If we just do our jobs, and this report that was presented, which you all have a copy of, I wasn't aware -- I wasn't aware of this report while we were working on the legislation. But it actually outlines what all of the players in the justice system, what each one's role is. But in addition to outlining and talking about a problem, it offers suggestions as to what each of us can do to help resolve the overcrowding at Rice Street. We all know that the Rice Street Jail, when it was constructed, was built to accommodate some 1500 single-bed inmates. Today, it's probably closer to 2,000 at Rice Street. And this plan that we've come up with, in my opinion, we can reduce that population significantly. And I would, just based upon back-of-the-envelope calculations, by at least 1,000 inmates, just by implementing what I want to talk about today, and what Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman wants to talk about today. But even if we were not -- cannot reduce it by a thousand, which I think we can, just 500, would free up 500 beds at that jail. So that's what I'd like to talk about today, and hopefully, get your approval of the plan, and have the players who are involved in it begin to work with us. Because this is a partnership, the Board of Commissioners, we don't arrest anybody. Once they arrested, we don't manage them once they're in the jail, we don't process them through the jail, and nor do we hear their cases when they come to court. Our role is to provide the funds for those other players, parties, as well

as take care of the physical structure at the jail. So come on up, Mr. Nawrocki. Vice Chair, you want to say anything at this point or wait?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "I'll wait, Chairman."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay. So first and foremost, you've heard about this last chance, diversion opportunity. That is not, let me be -- let me be clear about what that means. Its point number one, what that means is, currently, when an officer makes an arrest in the field, that's the first chance for the diversion. But it's my belief and the belief of others that they miss quite a few, and that last chance could take place at the jail. And we have a plan that I think is a workable plan, that they can be transported from the jail, if -- that those that we miss, rather, can be transported from the jail to the Diversion Center. And you heard a lot today about the Diversion Center. And this, this has worked in other areas, and I still don't understand why we have not implemented to date. It's been talked about, it's nothing new, but this will be a second chance at the diversion. We all know that we spend two and a half million dollars a year. City of Atlanta spends two and half million dollars a year on this Diversion Center. Initially, there were -- and it has -- it can accommodate up to 40 detainees for up to 24 hours each day. The record to date not been very good. Initially was three, and I guess the high has been eight or nine. Quite a ways to go. And whether that's a real number or not, the 40 per day, I don't know where that number came from, but that's the number that we're working with. But if that were used, that would go a long ways toward reducing the jail population. And I can give you some ideas as to how many we think are in the jail that could be -- that could be diverted, if you will, and that would be, probably would be about 150 inmates that are currently in that jail that could be diverted. Ankle monitors, number two, we had -- we've been very successful using ankle monitors, but we, at one point, there was a high of maybe 12, 1500 so I think implementing -- and this money is already in the budget, we're simply not using ankle monitors to the extent that -- that we can. And there, I believe that there's another four or 500 in the jail right now who could be released and placed on ankle monitors. And to the District Attorney's credit, when she found out about this, she immediately sent out a memo, and I'm just going to read one sentence from an asking all lawyers to evaluate your current caseload and see if there are defendants in custody that are appropriate for an ankle monitor. And she's very serious about this, and is consistent with what the -- what I'm advocating here today. And that's another four of -- four or 500 that could be released immediately. The money is already in the budget. The company that we contract with, they have the monitors, so it's no reason in the world why we should not be using them. Number three, what I'm calling text notifications of court appearances, and you'll know this, if you go to the doctor, that you're reminded frequently before your appointment by text that you have an upcoming appointment. But one of the problems we're notifying people by mail. Frequently, they move, frequently, they just don't get it for whatever reasons. But if we were to use a system that's already in place, we already have the capability, no additional funds required, just notify using text messages. And the estimate is, that's another 100 inmates that would not be in our jail. Then, of course, the low bonds would be the next one. We've talked about that, people in jail who are there because they can afford to pay their bonds. And we talk with our pretrial people, and they believe that there are about 150 such people in the jail, if they

would just be referred to and take advantage of pretrial, that would be another 150 that we could release from our jail. And lastly, we have inmates in our jail that I'm told that we at Fulton County, we have completed our review of them, but they're on hold in our jail when they should be transferred to other jurisdictions. They're there for a week, month, two months, three months, just sitting in our jail when they should be in Cobb, Gwinnett, even out of state. And the other thing about that, we don't charge those jurisdictions, while we're paying for them. So -- and that's just fine. But someone mentioned one earlier today that was for public speaking, I wrote it down, I don't know where I wrote it down, that would be a sixth one that we could implement. I'll find it. So that's what I'll like for us to talk about today. And Vice Chair, you want to address this, or you want to hear from Mr. Nawrocki?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Let's here from Mr. Nawrocki first. I'll reserve my time for my comments."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners. Steve Nawrocki, Strategy Office. I think today, Chairman, if there are, now that you've laid out your five-point plan, if there are certain questions --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "It was actually six, and I just forget what that other one is --"

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "All right."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "-- and thought about it. I'll find it."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "But we do have Judge McBurney here from Superior Court, who can speak to a lot of these initiatives, as a lot of them do run through Superior Court."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Oh, excuse me."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "Yes, sir."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "I know what it was. You mentioned that the Sheriff now has the authority to dismiss charges without talking to any -- and I don't know whether it's true or not true, but it's something that we can -- can address."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "Yes, sir."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "So there may be a sixth one."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "I think we do have that expertise in the room right now. But if there are certain questions that we have from the Board, I think we are happy to field that. We also, as I just said, do have experts within these various fields here in Assembly Hall with us that if we call upon can come speak. But if there are questions, we're happy to take them as part of this discussion item."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, Vice Chair."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Mr. Nawrocki, in your opinion, this is doable?"

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "Yes, ma'am. Each of these have been in play. As you know, sitting on the Justice Policy Board, a lot of these are running through this as well as your Co-chair, Judge McBurney, some of these are directly being addressed, other programs are set up, and we're just looking to optimize right now. But yes, ma'am."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Thank you for that. The reason I asked you is because I can look around this room and I see several advocates, and thank you for being here today. I've been sitting here for six years, and I have heard the same conversation over and over again. Chairman, I applaud you and your leadership. And even listening to me, I know sometimes you and I don't always agree. But on this, we agree. And we agree because to do nothing exasperates the problem. If we were to build a new jail, you're talking about six, seven, possibly eight to ten years, County Manager, if we were to build a new jail. We need diversion. We need no more finger pointing. Judge McBurney, we make sure we don't point fingers, because we point a finger, how many are back at us? No more finger pointing. Let's work together. Put the egos on the shelf, and do what we need to do to get these people out. The jail has been used as a prop for social media. It has been used for everything other than what it was supposed to be used for. If I had a magic wand to give the Sheriff the money that he needs, I would do it, but it still would not solve the problem. The city of Atlanta and Fulton County, we have too many inmates that their only crime is being poor. We don't want to say it, but the reality is, unless we implement this now, we're going to see even a bigger rise in the jail population with the coming of the World Cup. You know it, and I know it. Chairman, please, indulge me, because I have been saying the same thing for six years, and some of us up here have been saying it. The Justice Policy Board has been saying it. PAD has been saying it Color For Change has been saying it. Devin has been -- so many of us have been saying it, but not doing it. And today is the historic day, where I hope my colleagues would join me in doing something. Is it the answer to everything? No, it isn't. I will not kid you. But is a start to make sure that we have less people in the jail. It's a start to make sure that the services -- we have too many people sitting on that Justice and Policy Board for the number of years that I have, people are falling through the cracks. That's not their fault, Judge McBurney, that's our fault. The people who don't have a residence and are getting court dates and are missing court dates, failure to appear and are getting arrested, I just want you to think about the Sheriff, how many people are there because they are homeless or transitional or sleeping on somebody's couch? And they end up being the burden of the Fulton County taxpaying citizens. What about the ones who can't afford the bond? Judge McBurney, you and I have had this conversation a gazillion times, as well as the other members of the Justice Policy Board. Poverty should not mean imprisonment. Say it for the people in the back. Poverty should not mean imprisonment. And so I say to my colleagues today, and to you, respectfully, Chairman, this does not end everything. But it's a good starting point. It's a good-faith effort, and I promise you, based on sitting on a board six years, sitting on the Justice Policy Board, listening to all the stakeholders in

this building, listening to all of the individuals, whether they have had a loved one in jail, or whether they have been a victim of poverty or whether they had mental health issues, we cannot criminalize our way out of this issue. We must start somewhere. So I will ask today that my colleagues get behind this. Chairman, you and I have been looking at this for a long time. And to my credit, I know you'll never give it to me, I was the one pulled your arm. I was the one twisted your arm, because we got to do something. So to those of you stakeholders out there that are in support of this, thank you. It's not a complete answer to everything. But the quicker we can get more things done with less cost to the taxpaying citizens of Fulton County, the more that we can do to help PAD in what they're doing, the more that we can do to divert, the more we can do to catch the people at the jail. Okay, the officers may, based on a judgment call that see a business owner that's frustrated, that business -- the business owners I have talked to are frustrated because it keeps -- it's a vicious cycle going over and over again. They call the police, pick the person up, the person gets locked up, another person comes in this place. It's a vicious cycle. And I ask here again that these are things right now with limited amount of money that we can do today to fix. And I thank all, everyone who's here, the Sheriff, the Solicitor, PAD, not going to call everybody's name because I'm going to forget somebody's name. But I appreciate you all being here today. It is not in vain. Colleagues, please get behind this and let's support it. Thank you, Chairman."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I have absolutely no idea what y'all are talking about. The agenda item was listed as a discussion item. I'm looking, there's no attachments, there are no documents. So whatever these five or six ideas you're talking about, they were not included on the agenda. They were not provided to me, nor to my office. Let -- let's back up a little bit, because I've been practicing law in the court across the street for 30 years. So if you have some ideas about what you want to implement over there, it probably would make sense to come talk to the only person on this Commission that has been practicing over there for 30 years, or the person that flew out to Seattle and brought pre-arrest diversion back to Atlanta and Fulton County with Councilman Kwanza Hall in 2016. There is already a second chance or last chance diversion. First of all, there was already pretrial diversion. It was already pretrial diversion. We flew out to Seattle, and we brought back and implemented pre-arrest diversion. So it's already a second chance or at least two chances at diversion. And then y'all went and created a Diversion Center, the city of Atlanta, which as you said, has had underwhelming results, three, two or three people, 80 people, 100 people, and we spent \$5 million, and the city of Atlanta spent \$5 million. I have no idea what y'all are talking about, because I don't have any paperwork on it. Where are the five points? Where are the six points? Where -- where were they submitted to -- on the agenda by Friday? Were they submitted? Why is it -- I'm looking at what it says here documents. The documents for this agenda item, let me read it to you. It says it's -- it's one sentence, requested action, discussion, jail population reduction initiative, where? Where? Where is it? Where is it? Why was it not provided to me? Why was it not provided to the only practicing Commissioner who has been practicing law for 30 years? It makes no sense. It makes no sense. Support it? I'd love to support it if I knew what it was, if I had been provided a copy of it. How can I support something that I don't even

get a copy of? Second chance, last chance diversion. We already have at least -- we -- there's pretrial diversion, there's pre-arrest diversion. We got a Diversion Center. We -- I mean, what are we talking about? Texting people, so first of all, you have to do some legislation that would allow a text message to serve as formal notice to a defendant, right? I've been talking to the Chief Information Officer about us tracking and getting information. I've said this on at least ten occasions, so that we can have anyone that interacts with Fulton County, we need all of their information in a database, so that we can contact them. So as you said, this is -- this is nothing new. But I don't even know what you're talking about because I wasn't provided a copy. It was not attached to the agenda. It's not a part of the documents. So I mean, this makes no sense to me. We already have -- we already have ankle monitors. We started providing the ankle monitors. It went up to 1500, it got too expensive, people were staying on there, no one was monitoring it. The problem that we have is that we don't have anybody monitoring these stuff, right? It got up to 1500 we said, okay, we're going to cut that in half, we're going to limit the number of ankle monitors. Nobody want -- nobody wants to be in jail for a minute, let alone a day, a week, a year. Nobody wants to be in jail, right? So I mean, I don't understand. I saw this item as a discussion item, and I'm happy to have a discussion. But I assume that part of that discussion would be providing the documents to the people, so that we can have an informed discussion. But not only were the documents not provided in advance, they're not even provided today right now, so I can look at it. What is the five-point plan? What is the six-point plan? What are you proposing? I have no idea, because we were not providing any information."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I just wanted to ask our County Attorney if she has -- can weigh in on if the Sheriff can dismiss people and put them to PAD directly?"

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "There is some legal authority for the Sheriff to decline to take misdemeanor cases. But I would have to look at the specific application to whether he could direct them to PAD instant."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Because my understanding, Chatham County Sheriff implemented this during COVID, and actually turned people away, or declined admitting them into the jail. So yeah, if we could get some more expanded legal opinion on that, that would be great, because that would be easy thing for our Sheriff to implement with some of these jaywalking or whatever is in the jail. And then finally, I thought this was a discussion as well. I agree with Commissioner Arrington that if we could just get some specifics and kind of get the county moving forward, just approving them to move forward with these six steps and bring something back. So I think it's just a general approval that this is a direction we would like to go, and we can come back with more specifics. But talk with our justice partners, see what can be done. The text messaging, my understanding from yesterday was that we already do some form of text messaging, the Clerk does. I'm not sure if you could speak to that."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "I believe State Court has started that program. And we'd look to adopt it for Superior Court."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Is that something that we can -- we have the capability already, it's just a matter of turning on a module or utilizing a module?"

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "My understanding and I -- Judge McBurney might be better suited to speak this, but working with the Clerk's office, a lot of it is the notifications going out through Tyler, which has all the information on there in cases. So it's just making sure that it's configured so that it can send those notifications out to the individuals. Again, I think they're piloting State Court right now, and we'd look to broaden that."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Okay, that would -- that would be great. Yeah, I assume we would still have to send out the required written notice, and that the text message would just be a supplement to the official written notice."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "Yeah, that, that part I don't -- I can't speak to, but yes, at a bare minimum, it would be a supplement to the formal written notice."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Okay, thank you. That's all I have."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Barrett."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's a lot to unpack here. So I'll just start by saying I agree with Commissioner Arrington, and I think sort of half of what Commissioner Thorne said about thinking this was -- not thinking, we were presented with a discussion item with, you know, three words, four words, jail population reduction initiative, and not one single other shred of paper on this, not one single word typed, not one email, not nothing. My first hearing of a five-point plan was via a news clip from the Chairman on Friday, and I have asked multiple times since then, for -- and I walked into the Chairman's office several times and asked for a copy of the plan. I was not given anything. We sent emails to Judge McBurney, and we know you were busy yesterday, thank you, and he responded with an email at the end of the day yesterday. So that is the first time I even saw the points laid out. We heard through hearsay and rumor what some of the points of the five-point plan were leading up to that. But again, I, you know, I would argue that I still have no paper. And you know, just --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Just got it. Just got it, seconds ago."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Oh, okay. There we go, yes. This was just handed out, apparently. So -- so I want to say, first of all, you know, just for, you know, setting the table here of how we -- we would normally operate. I mean, we normally need to put things on the agenda, and have them in by the agenda deadline. We all make mistakes. Last two weeks ago, I my agenda item was late, I was late getting the supplementing documentation, and members of this Board said they were not prepared to vote on my item because I had not provided enough information. I had provided a resolution, a fully written resolution, but I did not provide it until the day before the meeting, and that was not enough time for people to review it, and then they had

additional questions. So that item just, again, to set the table, is back on the agenda this time, all the information has been provided. So I think at a minimum, there's no reason to take a vote on anything today. I think a discussion is welcome, but I think we need way more details about what these points are. And how they might work to even say if this is the right direction. I think it's safe to say that all of us want to reduce the jail population. We need to do that, we want to do that. And I think whatever tools we choose to do that, remain to be seen. Are there good ideas here? Sure. Are there some of them that are -- have already been tried? I think so. What is the real impact here? You rattled off some numbers, Mr. Chairman, and I apologize because I missed the first one. But I believe you said -- when you said, you -- that you thought that this last chance diversion trailer could reduce the population by how many was that?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "About 150."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "150."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "And I didn't pull that out of the air, by the way, I've been meeting, and Vice Chair, and I've been meeting with the appropriate departments and Personnel to come up with these numbers. So these are not pulled out of the air."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So your total reduction numbers, you had 150 for the trailer, 500 you said for the ankle monitors, another 100 for text, and then another 150 for people on low bonds; is that correct? So that's -- what does that get us to, 900; is that right? I'm not -- I'm not totaling it up if somebody wants to check my math, they can. I would love to have -- there's a lot of experts in the room right now. So if it's possible, I would like to ask the Sheriff to come down to speak to some of the numbers and some of the questions about what their department can or cannot do or what has already been tried, not tried, what have you --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "There's some other experts here too."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I see that, yes."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I believe --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Let's bring them all down."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I believe that the -- I saw the Solicitor General. Was he here? I thought he was here at some point. Stepped out. I know the Public Defender is here as well. So I'm happy to hear from anybody who has a stake in this. I think my first question, Sheriff, if you wouldn't mind coming up. I think my first question is on the trailer, and I'll put this question to you, Mr. Nawrocki, as well Judge McBurney, if you have input on this, or anybody up here, if you have input on this. But there was one comment that doing this trailer would have -- be at no cost. So I'm confused about that. Can you explain how this would be at no cost, please?"

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "I think we're early days, Commissioner, in trying to figure that out. What we would try to do is an expense-neutral structure, so that if there are other dollars available that could go to offset any costs for the trailer. But we -- we're still exploring what the trailer would even look like right now."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay. So I think I would need to understand before knowing if this works, what -- what the physical structure is, what the cost of that structure is, who will staff it, what hours will it be staffed, who will it be staffed by, what are the staffing costs, and where does that come from? There was a rumor or somewhere I saw out there that it was the Fulton County Police Department that was put forward as somebody who might staff that. I don't -- but I have -- I have -- this is all rumors and hearsay."

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "Yes, ma'am."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So I would like to know if -- is this going to be staffed by the Solicitor General? Is this going to be staffed by the Sheriff? Who's staffing this? The Public Defender, are they aware? I'm just curious who -- what the plan is here, and how many people need to be on staff?"

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "So I think those all the things that are being worked out right now. The Justice Policy Board, one of their committee's visioning committee, is looking at what the structure will be, and essentially, every question you just asked, Commissioner, are the tenets that they're hammering out right now. So we don't have those specifics. It's still just, we think it's, these are the stakeholders, we're exploring what the dimensions of the trailer will even be, who's staffing it. If someone's diverted, how are they then getting to the Diversion Center after that? All that's being considered right now. But the final --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah, I --"

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "-- plan will --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "-- appreciate that, and thank you, Mr. Nawrocki. And I appreciate that, but it does sound like everything you're saying has a cost. So what budget neutral means money has to come out of some other bucket. But these are -- if there's staff sitting there, they got to be paid. And I would love to ask the Sheriff to come forward, if possible, and maybe you could help me out, Sheriff, because I believe -- and you may know about this, Judge McBurney as well, feel free to jump in. But I believe we have tried some things like this in the past inside the -- at intake or just inside the jail, to do some last-minute diversion. Can you speak to that?"

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "So first of all, good morning. Good morning, and let me lead with, I was not contacted with respect to any plans, me, nor anyone in the office. To your point, we would have had a discussion that says early, a year and a half ago, two years ago, especially when we had additional funding through ORCA and

otherwise, we actually had a Solicitor at the back door. We actually had a Public Defender at the back door, PAD actually in the jail. And the program was working, and so we were diverting as many people as we absolutely could. And let it be known, I am pro-PAD. I just -- this needs to be done in a way that -- there are things, to the Chairman's point, we are already doing. But it -- you all deserve to know what that looks like. We already have a low bond program. As a matter of fact, both Commissioner Barrett and as late as yesterday, Commissioner Ivory came and got three people, bonded them out because their bond was \$85. When the bonds reach below \$100, we actually eliminate all Sheriff fees involved in that. We then take an extra step to put additional funds on that individual's books. So for instance, we had a couple early this year, bonds were \$10, so we'll put \$15 on their books, and they can choose to either make bond, or spend it on commissary, whatever that may look like. And to level set the conversation, just so I think it's valuable, we have currently 91 misdemeanors in jail. And we work closely with our Solicitor General, making sure that either those aren't domestic violence related and/or mental health related, so that we can get some additional services there. To also level set, we're, in our early release program we've started, we've released 233 individuals. We have right now in our custody, 83 people that have a bond of \$1,000 or less. Since instituting and -- we have an inmate advocacy program that we started in '23, meaning that we have two individuals whose constant job it is, is to communicate with the court, review the records, to your point, Mr. Chairman, and in that space, they reviewed over 50,000 records to determine, how can we best help people out of this situation. And then, as we go through court order production, what does that mean? That means the Judge has ordered this person from the state. When we first took over as administration, we had hundreds of people in jail. We've worked with both, all of our Chief Judges, those court order productions right now, have to come to court. You only get two weeks. You need to be prepared for trial. We have 36 individuals in that -- in that capacity. To your point, Commissioner Thorne, with Chatham County, they do accept misdemeanors. But to a more poignant point, is that ultimately, during COVID, we all stop with judge's orders, we stop taking certain charges in, et cetera. It is important to note that we have reached out to the County Attorney's Office. We're waiting on them to opine with respect to what can we not take. And so my proposal to add a seventh to yours, Mr. Chairman, would be to you stop taking criminal trespassing charges. Right now, it's a misdemeanor. If you have your own facility, i.e. East Point, Alpharetta, since it's open, city of Atlanta. Since taking on this, this program, we've had 604 people. I've met with Chief Schierbaum earlier this week, 604 people that we could send directly to Atlanta. They could then -- that is arrest since the beginning of the year. So there are opportunities, we continue to go through this process. We have to, much to your point, Commissioner Abdur-Rahman, set all the -- our personal feelings aside, and to figure out how we help people. It is also important to note, and Chief Schierbaum and I had a healthy discussion on this, and certainly Judge McBurney can expound upon it. If a victim wants a person charged, it doesn't matter what kind of diversion is going on, they can be given a citation in some instance, to hold -- to stand trial in court, or whatever that looks like. But if a victim of a crime does not want someone diverted, they have the right to -- to have that person prosecuted. So I hope that answers your question. And I have some more facts and figures if anyone needs them, we certainly can get them to you. But we have done, right, yeoman's work. We have, look, I continue to say I'm proud of women and men of

the Sheriff's Office. Our goal is equally to treat, not just treat people fairly, but get them back out, get them to services that we can possibly, you know, move beyond where we are right now. And some of that comes up, if you recall, even when we had several contracts being held up by those providing services in the jail which went beyond the walls of the jail, those were held up. And so now, we are asking for the same thing. I think we're all on the same page of how we reduce the population. It's going to take person power to make it happen and just a very thoughtful process from there. So I hope I answered your question."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah, I -- you did, and possibly some of the others too. Solicitor General is standing right behind you, so if you wouldn't mind stepping up, and up and joining the party, sir. You mentioned Sheriff, and I was alluding to this as well, that there was a process at one point where you had folks, I believe, from your office, correct, Mr. Solicitor?"

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "We work very closely together --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah."

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "-- I mean, when the ORCA funding ran out, those folks that my team had targeting the jail around the clock were eliminated."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah."

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "So we still got some pieces of that system that we created back in 2020, but much underperforming, to be quite honest. And I will tell you that is because we've got six of the ten lawyers that we need pursuant to ABA standards."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** Okay, so basically, you're -- you can't really -- you don't have the staff to have somebody there on a regular basis?

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** I do not. There'd be no way we could take people out of the already thinly stretched courtrooms, and assign them to either a Diversion Center or a trailer. The appetite and the desire to do it is here strongly --

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** Sure.

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** -- but we certainly need the resources to do it.

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** And so is it -- is it your office predominately that would need to be there to sort of help make this decision about who can to be diverted at that point?

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "In the early stages after an arrest or charging decision, informal charging decision by a law enforcement officer, if it's a misdemeanor, it would be a representative of the Solicitor's Office. I would also say that if it's a felony, some low-level, nonviolent felonies, think possession of crack cocaine, that would be something that we would need a representative of the DA's Office to address. And I think we could both, both of those teams could be helpful in expediting the second chance release program. And as everyone here knows, I'm always available and responsive, even in the brainstorming process, and do hope bring some expertise."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay. I'd like to ask, and I'm not quite sure who to direct this to you, but I'd like to ask about the ankle monitors as well. I know this is something that -- and there's like a lovely group forming here, so you're all here. But I -- we've seen, and we've talked about this through a lot of our operational reports over the last several months the numbers of people on ankle monitors have been going down. And I know there's some discussion about why that's been the case. And this might be a good one for you, Judge McBurney, to answer, so you don't just get to stand there and watch everybody else --"

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "You're doing great."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "But what is -- what is your take on how those numbers increase? And -- and I'm wanting, I think, overall -- and just this is to all of you and to everybody, to sort of quantify the impact of some of these things. Because we also heard from the Sheriff's Office. They invite us every other, you know, every time there's a meeting, to have update from their office. And they always give us sort of the breakdown of who is in the jail based on the type of crimes. And as of this week, it was 75 percent felony in the jail. So the remaining 25 percent are of a variety of different things. And so I guess I'm just trying to quantify if there's approximately 3,000 people that are incarcerated, you know, there's -- there's not -- it's going to be hard to take this number all the way down, because that would assume that the rest of the people can be either on an ankle monitor or out on low bond or what have you, and I don't think that's the case. So I'm trying to get to that answer. But for the ankle monitor, if you wouldn't mind. Yeah."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "Sure. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for having me here. I am here at the request of the Chief Judge, who was contacted by Chairman's office and the County Manager's office when some of these ideas started percolating. And he asked if I could fill in for him. I'm happy to be here to answer questions, both from the court's perspective as well as Justice Policy Board. I may speak of some of the justice partners, I don't speak for them, but we cooperate together, and I actually have had conversations with both these gentlemen about some of these ideas. To Commissioner Arrington's point, none of this is new, except maybe the text messaging would be new for Superior Court, not on the State Court side. But maybe we've lost focus, or we haven't quite tried to slice it the way we are now. I'm going to answer your question about ankle monitors, and I want to come back to this last chance diversion, because it isn't something we've done before, and it's a little different from

what you were asking about, which I think is what Commissioner Ivory's resolution is all about, which is post-arrest diversion, that's where you need prosecutors. But I'll come back to that. With ankle monitors, we did hit a high watermark during the pandemic. There was a concerted effort the District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office to other key justice partners to identify who our bond eligible people who, maybe with the addition of ankle monitor, we'd be more comfortable to release them. We got a little easy with the ankle monitors, and more importantly, we didn't put a time limit on them, and so we did hit a high watermark. We had a vendor where monitoring didn't work so well. We have a different vendor now, monitoring works well. We are notified the same day there is a violation. Now, whether the courts act on it, is on the courts, it's not on the vendor. But we're now at a steady run rate of around 500. That's a lower number in part, because some Judges still thought, oh, we had a cap, we shouldn't be -- we reached a point, as we were trying to shrink it, that basically, you couldn't come up with a new bond with an ankle monitor until you knew someone else's ankle monitor had come off; get this one to put it on that person. We're not in that space now, and that word has been spread. We also have a jail population that has changed over time. We have over 800 people in the jail who would never be candidates for ankle monitors, rape, aggravated child molestation, murder, gang-related offenses, where Judges and Prosecutors aren't going to be thinking, this is a good ankle monitor case. You may have an advocate on the defense side. But I want to manage our expectations about the universe of folks who would reasonably be eligible. The District Attorney's memo to her staff was powerful, but it actually ended that -- you didn't include the other sentence, consistent with public safety. I do not expect her team, her decision, and her team's decision to say, what about ankle monitor for this guy charged with armed robbery? That's not going to happen. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't look at the population again to say, are there situations where this makes sense, especially now that we've got that six-month expiration, where we know the ankle monitor will come off, because it's a burden, even if you're not paying for it, there is resistance on the defense side to the ankle monitor, because you're walking around with the box on your ankle, and it's hard to get a job, and do the things you want to do. So I think it is a potential avenue to decrease the jail population, size TBD, the most it could be would be another 400-plus, because then we would hit the top of our budget. Did that answer your question?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah. I think the question really is, are -- do those people exist that are in the jail that could be -- do those 400 people exist? Is that -- is that a legitimate number of people who could be on an ankle monitor based on the crimes that they're being accused of? And I'm not quite sure if we know that, and again, like I'm -- I'm looking at numbers that were presented in the Sheriff's Office meeting yesterday, and I'm trying to do quick math on my phone here to add things up. But one of the charts that's presented is the list of how many in custody for heinous crimes. And I don't know, Sheriff, maybe you can answer this. I don't know if they're duplicated if they have more than one crime, or if that's the total number of people. Because the total number on the chart that is shown to us by Mr. Shoates, if I add that up, the people in there for heinous crimes, and we're talking aggravated assault, aggravated child molestation, aggravated sexual battery, aggravated sodomy, armed robbery, kidnapping, murder, and rape totals, 1,673, so not 800. So I don't know if they're duplicated charges, and that may --"

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "No. No, no, and let me draw an important distinction."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "The Sheriff's Office determines their definition of heinous crimes. The single largest category in there is aggravated assault. Aggravated assault from typically a court perspective, could be heinous, but aggravated assault is also -- that could be, what I just did, could it be an aggravated assault against the Sheriff -- don't press charges."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Somebody saw it."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "It was on camera. And so we often get cases where the charge is aggravated assault, and we ultimately end up sending it to the Solicitor, because it's reduced to a misdemeanor. That's 945 with the figure you just said."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Of -- are the 945 all that? Because I would assume there's --"

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "There's a mix."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "A mix."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "If you're shooting at someone, if you don't hit them, is an aggravated assault, not an ankle monitor case."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Right."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "But using harsh language and maybe making a lunge at someone also can be charged as an aggravated assault. We have plenty of people who get on ankle monitor as aggravated assault. So I think that the 945 is an accurate number, but that population has potential for ankle monitors. I think the answer to your question is, right now, I don't think you find 400 people, but you might find 50 today. And then over the next two weeks, 50 more people are arrested. And within that universe, we ought to be looking for who is ankle monitor eligible. If you take a static snapshot, maybe not 400, but over the next three months, you will see numbers like that, if we stay focused on, well, remember, we have ankle monitors as an option. So I think it's a lever to pull, one we should pull, and one we had moved back from a little bit because there was the financial pushback."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay. I appreciate that. And I will say, I think this is all very good and helpful conversation. And I think having this as a discussion item is great. But I think we're really at the early stages of any decision making here, because we don't know -- we can't quantify how much we can impact the jail population, not exactly. Well, we're never going to be exact, but we can't even 100 percent ballpark,

because we don't know the cost of these things. We don't know if we have -- we can say we're going to have a trailer, for example, but if we don't give the right departments money to staff the trailer, then how successful will it be? So I have -- I have a lot of concerns about details here. Sheriff, can you talk briefly about the inmates on other holds conditions and what that number looks like in terms of impact and how that could be reduced?"

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "And that's a really great point. So we call them foreign holes. So to Chairman's point, if it's Cobb County, Gwinnett, wherever it is, couple things happen. They have to clear or adjudicate their case here first. So right now, we have 37 people that have foreign holes. And once they do that, one or two things will happen. If they -- if they -- their case has been cleared or adjudicated, we will actually take them, right, every -- or we will go get them. Now, worst-case scenario, we've taken three to the Clayton County, and they've sent us five back, right, that have cases here. So we closely monitor that. And the other piece becomes, we will put people out on loan depending on the seriousness of their case in another county. So again, I'll use Clayton County, and my friend, Sheriff Allen out there. He -- we took someone that was out there charged with murder. Their case ended up getting dismissed. Unfortunately, they let them walk out the door. We went and found them, but they were wanted back here. So the foreign holds right now, specifically, the total is 37, and it ever evolves from that perspective."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So really, yeah, I'm sure that number can go up and down, but there's 37, and they -- you do try to move them as quickly as possible."

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah, so they're not -- it's not like we can immediately just take them to where they go, and that's that."

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "No, their case has to be satisfied here."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah."

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "For instance, late last night, we got a call at Bartow County, had someone that we have -- we have 4,000 warrants out now that have to be either we have to go get or satisfy. So when any, any person has stopped on that -- in that count, Bartow County is a good example. Last night, we went and got that person this morning, so that they could stand trial there. I will give you an eighth opportunity here, Mr. Chairman. And that is quite simply, and I know Judge McBurney -- and some of this, again, is not old, right? They used to have an FTA calendar, right, failure to appear calendar, as well as a probation calendar, I'm not sure if you recall. But to give the Judges the resources to have a Judge who sees nothing but those cases."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "What's that fail? What is it?"

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "A probation calendar, right? I know Judges like their calendars, right? And they say, okay, this person came to me, but if you have an FTA calendar, you can combine it right now, we got 600 people that would be able to move to a specific Judge and have that -- again, I'm not -- I stay out the Judge's lane, just -- just, you know, I let him opine on that. But to have a calendar, to support a calendar that would give them the resources to do that could affect over 500 people."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So it seems like there's some --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "That's number 8."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Oh, we're adding to the plan now, got it. So look, I think there's some great ideas here, and I think it would be great for everyone to work together. And I think the Justice Policy Board is doing some really good work. And I certainly appreciate you, Madam Vice Chair, for your efforts and passions about this, this issue. I would say, yesterday, by coincidence, all of the Commissioners were invited to go and speak to the elected officials meeting of the justice partners. And I'm not sure if everyone did, but I did go and speak to the group. And when I asked about the five-point plan, pretty much, nobody in the -- I think nobody the room had actually even heard of the five-point plan. So I think that's not the kind of coordination I would like to see us have with our justice partners. Dare I say that over a year ago, I worked for quite some time to pull together a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for Fulton County, which would have been a perfect place to have some of these conversation, a subcommittee of that organization would have been the perfect place to have a lot of these conversations. That idea of working together was summarily thrown out by this Body, and that's unfortunate, because I think it would have been a really good place for this. I think that idea is still out there. I would love for one of my colleagues to pick that idea back up and run with it. I think it would be great way to bring some of these ideas together for this five, six, eight-point plan. I don't necessarily have any further questions. But because you're all standing there, I would like to give each of you, any of you, the opportunity to say anything else you want to say about this, because I think we're all just looking -- I guess I can only speak for myself. I'm just looking for as much information as I can get to say, these are all the right five points or eight points, or there should be others, or one of them's already tried and failed. I mean, I'll point out before you speak, Judge McBurney, that in that meeting yesterday, our former CEO or COO, rather, Alton Adams was there in a consultant capacity, and mentioned that some of the Diversion Centers are not working well in other cities, and that -- and so there -- so I think there's a lot of discussion about what the best things are. So I'd just love to give you guys an opportunity for any additional thoughts."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "I'm going to go first this time."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Please."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "Good news. Friday, the 13th of February, high watermark, 21 people went through the Diversion Center."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Great."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "Not two, not three, not eight, 21, that was the high watermark, but the trend is in the right direction. What I want to address is, is the idea that is being floated. It's pushed by Justice Policy Board. Some of you have talked about this before, about this last chance diversion. And it may have existed before. I'm not suggesting this is a brand-new idea, but it doesn't exist now. It's not pretrial diversion, which is what happens after you're indicted, and the state gives you an opportunity to do some X, Y and Z, and then they'll drop your case. That happens now, but that, you're out on bond, and it's a way to have your case go away without having to plead to the charges. The concept that is floated with this idea is having a last chance, and we learn about this in Tucson, where the officer who elected not to divert shows up at the jail, and before the person is handed over to the Sheriff's custody, this person is still divertible, not once he crosses the line, is in the jail. You don't divert from that point onward, there'd have to be a dismissal of charges, a prosecutor or a bond set judge. This concept is pre prosecution, pre judge. You would have a supervisor from, it would have to be Atlanta Police Department, not Fulton County Police Department --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Just telling you what the rumors were."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "-- from the same agency. And you know, 90-plus percent of our arrests are Atlanta. And so there would be an Atlanta Police Supervisor there who would say, hey, this is a criminal trespass, why didn't you divert? I didn't know we could divert. Or the victim said, I want to press charges, okay, that guy is going to jail, because APD policy, it's not a law, it's APD policy is, if the victim wants to press charges, we don't divert. But maybe it's a new officer, or it's one of those zones where, for whatever reason, they're not diverting, and we have several zones where they don't. There is an officer, a senior officer there to say, you should divert this person, okay, you're the Sergeant, I'm the beat officer, I take this person to the Diversion Center. The other scenario, not uncommon, is I would have loved to divert, but he has a warrant. What's the warrant? It's a probation warrant. What's that warrant for? It's for failure to report. It's a minor issue. It's not new charges. Georgia Justice Project, and it's Warrant Resolution Clinic, one of the hallmarks of the Justice Policy Board, they would be there to say, great, we know how this works. They've developed a protocol with State Court, where what we do is we hand you a next date to come to court, because you hadn't been doing the probation things you were supposed to do, that's a divertible situation. Doesn't involve prosecutors, doesn't involve judges. So we were calling it the last chance diversion, but it really is a let's double check this and scrub it. If you're being brought in because you shot someone in the head, you don't go through this trailer. It's the criminal trespass, it's poverty based crime, the crisis-based crimes, where, for whatever reason, the officer chose not to, and she's got that discretion, but maybe it's because the guy lipped off at the officer, I'm not going to divert you, or because it's voluntary, the individual who was under arrest, may say, I don't know what this Diversion Center is, take me to jail, I know I'll get three meals there. And then he gets there, it's like, ah, I remember this jail, could I do this diversion? You have a final chance to say, yes, I want to go there. And law enforcement, not the Sheriff, law enforcement would then take this person to the Diversion Center. We have hundreds of

arrests every month that are divertible -- we have dozens of arrests every month that are divertible, where the officers are literally driving by the Diversion Center, because it happens in East Fulton, and they have to get to West Fulton to go to the jail. And to just to make --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So technically --"

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "-- the last point on the funding part, a lot of this division is because we're not running full run right at the Diversion Center, we actually are not spending the full \$5 million, it's budgeted. But we don't spend it, because we staff up to demand, and demand has been lower so there is excess in there. And so the vision would be, to Mr. Nawrocki's point, we could shift some that, with Board approval, to fund this, because it would have to be staffed, it's not AI operated. Now, we don't pay APD's budget, but that might come out of the unspent two and a half million on that side. I just wanted to flesh that out. Because that is something different than what is happening now, and it was -- it's one of the things that the Justice Policy Board has pivoted towards now the Diversion Center is up, and we're all feeling that same frustration that numbers aren't as high. Well, what are we missing? Is there a chance where we could redirect some, because we know they're missed diversions."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I mean, to be fair, so -- so basically, what you're describing is like post-arrest pre-booking diversion?"

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "Yes, ma'am."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "But it's a -- that's a real important distinction, because when you cross the threshold into that initial holding tank with the Sheriff, those officers are gone, they have no authority over it anymore, and it becomes Sheriff could deflect, I'm not going to take criminal trespass. Prosecutor could say, we decline to pursue those charges, or Judge could say, I'm going to give you a bond, but we can't do signature bonds anymore, thank you, SB63. So that's, that's the distinction I wanted to draw."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Oh, good. I'm going to push back a little bit on the funding discussion, only because if the goal is to do this work in this trailer that's going to ultimately increase the population at the Diversion Center, there won't be all that extra money, because we'll need the full 5 million."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "Yes, ma'am."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So -- so that, that is a temporary solution, if that, you know, that trailer becomes, you know, is paid for with those funds that, I don't know how long, how many months that gets us through or a year or whatever, but that's not a long-term funding solution."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "It's not a permanent funding solution. But as you all like to point out, the numbers are eight, nine, ten a day, so it's --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "For now."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "-- a while --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Well, 21 apparently."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Point of order. Point of order."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "What's your point of order, Vice Chair?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "My point of order is, I -- with all due respect, Commissioner Barrett, there is evidently some information that you need to get. But we have a lot of stakeholders here. You're hashing out stuff over and over again, different stuff that you may or may not know. And I think we do a disservice to all of the stakeholders here, as well as the taxpaying citizens of Fulton County, for you to carry this, as long as you're carrying it. I understand you are as just as passionate as I am. But we have some other individuals that need to speak, and we also are looking at an issue that we are trying to find a solution for today. And so having this panel of individuals who are experts, every last one of them are a expert."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay, Vice Chair."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Every last one of them have an agenda, Chairman, and somebody got to say something."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I was basically about wrap anyway."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "So wrap up."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "But I would like to say, it's a discussion item. The purpose of a discussion item is to discuss. So I'm sorry that I like to discuss things and actually want facts when nothing was given to me on paper. Sorry. My apologies for wasting everyone's time. Thank you all for your answers. I appreciate it."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Can I get PAD to come up? Thank you, gentlemen, there's not anything I --"

**KEITH GAMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "Can I make one point, though?"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Please stay."

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "Would you all --"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Give me one second."

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "Certainly."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Give me one second, let the Solicitor speak, and then you can come up, PAD. Go ahead, Solicitor."

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "Thank you so very much. I would encourage for discussion, placing both an Assistant Public Defender and Prosecutors at the early stages, even beyond law enforcement, because ultimately, the Prosecutors got even broader authority to make that early charging decision. And presently, and I think going forward, the Prosecutor and the Public Defender's Office are always going to be empowered with additional resources beyond in addition to law enforcement and working closely, this is another important point, and it dovetails into all of the discussion, I believe. Public safety with Second Chance Prosecutors in my office, we want to reduce the jail population. We've got to be cautious and make sure that when people are issued a citation, which I face -- which I'm in support of, a citation in lieu of arrest, that we actually capture their name, their identification, a photo or a fingerprint. And when that did not happen a number of years ago in another local jurisdiction, they had an immediate increase in failures to appear in court. And so I would ask that you fold that into the way you examine this issue. And thank you."

**MOKI MACIAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAD:** "I'm glad to be here to represent for the short women in this conversation. I'm happy to, if I could, I could start my discussion with just to what Solicitor Gammage just raised, and speak a bit to our support for the idea of this second look opportunity. Is that okay?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "That's fine."

**MOKI MACIAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAD:** "Awesome, thank you. So again, Moki Macias, Executive Director of PAD. As I think you all are all aware, we have been the steward of pre-arrest diversion in Fulton County as the result of a long community process with both County Commissioners, City Council Members and many community members for over the past decade. So we're obviously deeply invested in the success of pre-arrest diversion. We're very happy we have the infrastructure that we do now with a 24/7 facility. And we have been discussing this idea of sort of the safety net for those individuals who are not immediately diverted pre-arrest for many, many years. So I personally am thrilled that this discussion is -- is being had and that there's some momentum around it. I do want to say that, you know, for us what has been a key facet of pre-arrest diversion, the golden rule, if you will, is that people are diverted pre-arrest because we all agree that they -- the concerns that led to that arrest are better served completely outside of the criminal legal system and instead by the social services system, right? That is the premise of pre-arrest diversion. That is why it is pre-arrest diversion, and it is not pretrial diversion, right? That is why we are expecting that the arresting officers are using their authority and their discretion to make that decision to

say, you know what, this is a charge that is simply not to be handled within the criminal legal system. And what that does is two things, it one, allows that person to get connected immediately to the kind of resources that are going to actually address the concerns in the first place, right? It is better for public safety because we're addressing root causes, but it does another thing, which I assume would be of deep interest to all of you. It also removes these situations from an already overburdened criminal legal system, right? It means that the Public Defenders don't have to represent them. It means that Solicitor Gammage's team, who's clearly already stretched, as he spoke to, does not have to prosecute them, right? And of course, it means that our jail, which is already a place that nobody wants to be is not further taxed, right? And so when we are looking at a second chance to identify those individuals that, again, can be entirely deflected from this system, right, we want to make sure that it is consistent with that golden goal, right? That, in fact, if we want to -- you know, I think there's a slippery slope here, and Commissioner Ivory and I had this conversation yesterday, and I appreciate you know, the conversation that we had, because there's a slippery slope if what we do in order to facilitate the utilization of pre-arrest diversion is to actually bring that system into pre-arrest diversion, right? I have to respectfully differ with Solicitor Gammage that I don't believe that is it is the role of Prosecutors nor the Public Defender's Office to be the conversation about whether an arresting agency should use their discretion and authority to arrest, or whether they should divert, right? That is a question that needs to be resolved outside of our traditional criminal legal system. Otherwise, I mean, basically, are -- what, are we basically just going to be having court inside of the trailer, outside of the jail? We don't want to set that up, right? It becomes a very, very sticky situation. I'm not an attorney. I hope that Judge McBurney will correct me if I'm saying anything that's not legally factual. But I will say for doing this work over the last ten years, what I have seen is that systems want a system, right? We're comfortable with the actors that we have in place to do what they do, and what we are trying to do here is to do something entirely different, right, to say that we know that there are individuals who are coming into that jail every single day that could be entirely deflected from the system and do not need to put any of our criminal justice resources into play. And so I believe with the trailer, what we really need to lean on is two things. One, I think we need to lean on our relationships with law enforcement agencies in Fulton County to say, listen, this is a big culture shift for your officers. Can you support your officers by making sure that you have the right people in place to do that second look, right? I think we also need to continue working with our Sheriff, our Prosecutors, to say, can you backup pre-arrest diversion by saying, don't bring us these charges? Don't do it, don't let them in the -- in the jailhouse door, right? And if you do, I'm going to dismiss that charge first appearing -- appearance, period, right? So I think there's a -- there's a role for everybody here. I think it's really important that everybody plays in their lane."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Thank you for that. This is what leads to my frustration, and we talk about it in the Justice Policy review. We do a whole bunch of talking about nothing. Everybody down here has a valid point, everybody from the Solicitor, the Sheriff, Judge and everything. But when are we going to do the verb, word, action? We continue to talk, talk, people say, and which is clear -- completely disingenuous to me. Well, I something -- some -- someone, so and so said this

yesterday, and I don't understand this and this, and I don't -- listen, I'm not an attorney either, but I know the DOJ has said we have to reduce the population, Chairman. And running around in circles talking about what, well, I don't -- I didn't do this, and you didn't do that, and I need this, and you need that, get's us nowhere."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "May I say something? That's the whole purpose in this. It's too much talk. It's time for action."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "It's too much talk. We had a person come here this morning during public comment section. She was a victim of identity theft and ended up in the jail, and still going to a whole bunch of stuff for something she didn't cause. When are we going to stop running around in circles trying to say, well, if I don't -- if I -- I don't agree with this person, then I'm against it. If I agree with this person, I'm for it. What -- what are we going to do with the next person that dies in the jail we go? We're going to give them this conversation? What are we going to do when the next person that needs behavioral, mental health treatment and fell through the cracks? Well, we tried to do something, but everybody had an opinion, everybody said this, and then they -- and we didn't do anything, because I've watched this for six years. And I'm sorry, Chairman, I'm not going to be quiet. I spent too many days in your office. I spent too many times in those Justice Policy Review Board meetings. And one thing is, we have to do something. The time for talking this over. We need to direct our County Manager to look at this. I know you want it nice and printed out and everything. Two things I want to happen, and I will go on record saying this in front of everybody. One, I want the most minimal impact to the Fulton County taxpaying citizens. Two, I want us to work in house with the departments. What do I mean by that? Madam DA, the county has a program that will pay for ankle monitors. They have the capacity to pay for 900 ankle monitors. Currently, they have approximately 500 persons on ankle monitors. I am asking all lawyers to evaluate your current caseload, and see if there are defendants in custody that are appropriate for an ankle monitor. To my first appearance and preliminary hearing lawyers, you all would be the greatest driver of placing people on ankle monitors. Please do so where it is appropriate. Please know, nothing in this email should be interpreted as the DA saying, place dangerous felons or repeat offenders with violent new offenses on an ankle monitor. Can we move past that conversation? All of us are on the same page. We are not going to put John P. Q. Public at risk on an ankle monitor, when we know he has a violent history. We know what he's charged with. Can we shut that down? Because what we do is go in a circle over and over again, while the DJ -- the Department of Justice is saying Fulton County, all of us, will take the black eye, Chairman, and please allow me to say this Chairman. If we do not do something, we will all take the black eye for doing nothing. All of the conversation, all of the, I didn't see this, all of the, well, we had something in the past out, how many people got to die? How many people got to go to jail because they're poor? How many people got to be familiar faces because they have behavioral health, mental issues? They have no address. Each one of us could go and use our own personal funds and bond out ten people daily, and we still would not have the problem solved. Those who are listening to me now, I'm sorry, I apologize if I upset you with something I've said. I'm asking right now, I am begging. This is a plan that will help decrease the jail population. And is that what we want, or we want to pontificate and

say, well, I didn't see this, and I didn't see that? You saw the DOJ report. You saw it. You talked about it. The Sheriff can't make people come and work for Fulton County if he don't have the tools he needs, he can't make them. So we have to give him less people to maintain. What are we going to do? Let's stop playing with people lives. Let's stop politicizing. Let's stop -- well, I want my agenda in. I want my agenda in. I want my agenda in. We must do something. This is a directive to let the County Manager know on these points, what can we do in house, what money can we move that we're not using already to make this happen, and stop playing with people lives. Thank you, Chairman."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Commissioner Abdur-Rahman, you -- you may be on inside and you may have gotten that piece of paper, but none of the rest of us got that piece of paper --"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "I understand."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- unfortunately --"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "I understand your concern."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- so you know, my question -- and I think, and I want to be sure about this, because well, a couple of the things, number one, I think Commissioner Barrett, Judge McBurney was asking you, was this post-arrest? I think this is still pre-arrest. I think this is last what -- what we're talking about is the last chance, pre-arrest diversion, safety net before they go into the jail."

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Okay. And then I want to ask the Sheriff, did you say that you were not contacted about this plan at all?"

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "No, I was not. I was not, nor --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "You were not contacting about this plan?"

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "I was not, nor was anybody on my team."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Mr. Solicitor, were you contacted about this plan?"

**KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC:** "No, sir."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I wasn't contacted, Commissioner Barrett wasn't contacted, Commissioner Ivory wasn't contacted, Commissioner Thorne wasn't contacted. There's no agenda item, there's no document, there's no plan, there's no

nothing. This is ridiculous. It's a political stunt. It's a political stunt. It's absolutely ridiculous. Now, if we want to have a serious conversation about reducing the population at the jail. Mr. Nawrocki is up, and I've asked him two times at the last two meetings to give us information and data to tell us why the numbers have gone back up to 3,000. And so I'm waiting for that operational report, and I'm waiting for those numbers and that data, and I'm going to have a conversation with the Sheriff and the Solicitor. And then we can talk about taking some action. How in the world are we going to take any action when nobody got not one scintilla of information? The Sheriff wasn't even contacted about this alleged plan. How you going to plan to do something in the jail and not talk to the person that runs the jail? How is that possible? What planet, is this? How we -- how is that possible? And to Moki's point, because it is pre-arrest diversion, you got to go to the city of Atlanta and have them involved, because it is an officer -- it doesn't even get to Fulton County, unless and until they get arrested. If they're not making it to the jail, it never even comes in our realm. It's a city of Atlanta decision because it is pre-arrest, pre-arrest, the officers have the discretion to decide whether they're going to put them in there. And thank you for pointing out, I think -- I can't remember who said it was either Moki or Judge McBurney that -- I think it was maybe Judge McBurney that that is a city of Atlanta policy that if the victim wants them arrested, right? That's no law. So we've also got to pick up the phone, have a conversation and relationship with the people in the city of Atlanta, the Council Members, the Mayor, right? So all of this is just a political stunt to try to push something out before an election, because he didn't even pick up the phone and call the Sheriff, good God Almighty, what in the world is going on? Look at -- that's leadership?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ellis, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Thank you, Mr. Chair. It says, where focus goes, energy flows. And you know, I do appreciate the Chairman raising, you know, and bringing this forward. It's a messy discussion because it involves a whole lot of people, right? But my focus, and I think probably our near-term focus should be on the first two items which were mentioned, which would be the last chance diversion and increasing the ankle monitoring, because these are two board initiatives. And in many respects, they don't necessarily involve certain -- some of them involve all, but many, but one of them, you know, involves really sort of less of our overall justice partners, you know, being the last chance diversion. And I want Justice -- I mean, Judge McBurney, you know, as Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, you know, who spent a whole lot of time on this Justice Policy Board. I mean, I've had my staff has attended most of these, I haven't, and because it's a whole lot of time, a lot of effort energy has gone into that, and a lot of discussion. And I'd like to point out, you can -- you can reaffirm this, Judge, since you, you know, Chaired, or Co-chaired this thing. We have city of Atlanta representatives on the Justice Policy Board. So -- so this concept of the last chance diversion is something that's not foreign to, you know, to both -- to both governments, is that correct and fair?"

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "That's correct and fair."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Yeah, okay. So you know, I would encourage us -- and I'm - you know, I want to give District Attorney Willis credit for, you know, getting the word

out on the ankle monitoring piece. I mean, you know, none of these, things individually, or going to, you know, be the one panacea. It's all about a lot of different things. And I think we've got a real opportunity with two things, which have been Board-led initiatives where we've had -- we've plowed in a lot of work into it. There are a lot of good thoughts around it, and we're very close, I think, to sort of tipping, tipping the iceberg in getting those to the utilization that they need, as Judge McBurney notated with some of the utilization numbers that we most recently saw. So it would be -- it would my thought that, I think these other ideas are worth exploring. But perhaps they aren't, number one, necessarily going to be potentially as meaningful, but also number two, they have some other things that maybe have been quite as fleshed out as these top two. And I think focus some time and attention near term on those two things could have a very meaningful impact. And I would encourage us to do so."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ivory, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And I saw that the Public Defender had walked out, and I would hope that he would come and join this group, because I do also believe that he is a part of the conversation. And thank you, Commissioner Arrington, for saying hard things that need to be said about how this happens to bring itself to the floor now, and about how these problems have persisted. So whether someone has been here for six years or 20 or one, the -- we have seen that this problem in the jail has been going on for a long time, and nothing has been done. And these ideas are not new. I've had an opportunity to speak in depth with each one of you about this. And I believe that what this reveals in this rushed approach to an initiative is a culture of lack of communication and collaboration that we have in Fulton County amongst this Board. It almost shines it so brightly that nobody would be able to miss it. It would be so important for everybody on this Board to be able to understand this plan. I want to support anything that is going to -- I mean, we've had so many conversations about that, wanting support anything that will bring the population down, that will prevent the more than 40 deaths in the jail that have happened since 2020, which is six years ago. So to pay close attention to this right at this moment is so crucial, and actually has been crucial for so many years. But the thing that is even more crucial is that we get it right this time, so that it does not continue to be an issue that we have to keep revisiting over and over. So I support all -- I support all of these actions. And even, Chairman, as you are adding, as you are hearing things, I think is wonderful item. Because what you're doing is listening to the people that are in this day to day and saying, oh, okay, let's put that on there as well, which just goes to show that this needs to be reviewed some more, and that every person standing right there needs to be a part of including their input into is process. So I want to make a friendly amendment to this motion that we hold this item until the time is such that you have an opportunity to speak with each of the people that are so crucially a part of each of these items that you've mentioned in this initiative. Obviously, PAD, and thank you, thank you taking the more than hour-plus time from your dinner yesterday for us to have that conversation. And Judge McBurney, we talk all the time, and I thank you for that openness, and also for teaching me about things that I don't know about it. And for the rest of the gentlemen standing right there, we are in constant partnership, trying to just figure out what the solutions are, and I thank you for that. So PAD should be involved in

that, first thing. The maximum use of ankle monitors, I've talked to the County Manager just yesterday, and he assured me that the county would pay for that. That has been one of the issues that the person that was being put on the ankle monitor actually had to pay for that themselves. And that is something that we should make available in our funding. And I hope that that -- and it sounds like the District Attorney is saying that that money is available as -- as well. The text notification, I spoke to the Sheriff about this, and he said one of the problems is that a lot of people don't have phones, right? So how are we going to work around the issue? Find -- if we can find, if we can find the mechanism to text people, but we also have to think deeply about the people that get out and do not have phones. So there are gaps in a lot of this analysis, which I think is a wonderful starting point, but needs to involve everybody, Chairman, that has a role in voting for something like this, not just the Big Four, but the great seven. Change the culture of the way that we deal with each other in Fulton County and collaborate, so that everybody can understand what it is that you want to do, that's leadership. Bringing people down here and asking them to speak that have never even seen the plan is not a good use of our time, taxpayer time, or the poor people that are in jail because they have \$85 bonds. I don't care about anybody saying that I'm trying to politicize something, or use social media. I went in 2025 to get three people out. I went in 2026 to get three people out, and I'll go in 2027, 2028, 2029, elected or not, because it is the right thing to do. So I want to say that I want to collaborate with each and every one of you so you can teach me what I don't know and help me to improve on the things that I already know. And I'm committed to changing the culture of Fulton County so that there's not a Big Four mentality, but a Great Seven who serve the constituents and the residents of Fulton County and the employees and the people who come under our system. That's what I would like to see. So that's what I'm committed to. Thank you for taking your time today. So I want to offer a friendly amendment to hold this item until the time at which the great seven can collaborate with the wonderful stakeholders to get everything that we need into this plan so that this can be the final time that we try to resolve the issues at the jail."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on the floor is to approve. Motion by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, seconded by Commissioner Thorne. Now, you are offering a friendly amendment, where's --"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "It's a motion to hold."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute. No, you -- just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "It's a motion to hold."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute, I'm using your words. You said a friendly amendment."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Okay. I'm -- no, I'm sorry, I would like to correct that."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "May I preside, please?"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Sure."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Thank you. You said a friendly amendment. What you really mean is a motion to hold?"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Correct."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, there's a substitute motion to hold. Is there a second?"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Yeah, I already seconded it."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. There's a motion to hold by Commissioner Arrington. Any discussion on the substitute motion to hold?"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Yes. Will we get a copy of the plan before the middle of the meeting? That's for you, Mr. Chair."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "You have a -- you have the plan, it is a plan. The motion on the floor --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I -- wow."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "-- substitute motion is to hold."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Wow, that's leadership."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Substitute, substitute motion is to hold. Let's vote, please. All right, just a minute. Just a minute. Let -- you want to speak on the motion to hold? All right, Commissioner Barrett wants to speak on the motion to hold."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With all due respect, this is not a plan. It is a list of five initiatives with some vague actions and some potential reductions and a note that there might be some costs. So I'm not quite sure what we would be voting on on the underlying motion. So to me, there -- there is nothing to vote on. So I absolutely would support a motion to hold, because there is literally nothing to vote on other than some ideas that were handed to us mid meeting, which many of -- many of which have merit. We heard from our colleagues here, many of which have merit. But yes, there is literally nothing for us to vote on. We've been -- we've talked many times, not by my lead, that the public needs time to review things. The public, we received this five minutes ago, an hour, whatever, the public has not seen this at all. So this is not -- the public cannot come and comment on a plan if they have never seen the plan."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Not even the Sheriff has seen it."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute, just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Well, so I think --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Not even the Sheriff has seen it."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington, you're out of order."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "-- I think it's irresponsible --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I know. You're out of order too, you're out of order too, for bringing that here --"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Point of order."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- and putting it on the agenda."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington, you're out of order."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "You're out of order too."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Point of order."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** You shouldn't have ever brought it without bring -  
- giving it to anyone here, or -- nor speaking to --

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington, you're out of order."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- the Sheriff. I know. I know."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Barrett has the floor."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "And you are too. I know, and you're out of order too."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you. So I think it's irresponsible, irresponsible of us to even bring this to a vote right now. And I appreciate, I very much appreciate the passion, the action. I'm in support of pre-arrest diversion. I'm supportive post-arrest pre-booking. I'm in support of all the diversion, and I think -- look, I would love to ask a question. I know this is not on the motion to hold exactly. So if you would just bear with me for a moment. When was the first time -- I don't know who can answer this, County Manager, Mr. Nawrocki, Sheriff, somebody, when was the first time that the Fulton County Jail was so overcrowded that people had to sleep on the floor? What year was that? Anyone? More than five years ago? More than ten years ago?"

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "Yes, yes --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "When was the first time? Do we know?"

**PAT LABAT, FC SHERIFF:** "So I will defer to comment that the Chairman made prior to me taking office. So it's about ten, ten year ago."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So ten years ago, we had people sleeping on the jail, and that's, were guessing here, but something like that. So I think it's fair to say that this new urgency today, while appreciated, is late. We've had people sleeping on the floor in this jail for --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion on the floor is to hold --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I'm asking for your --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "-- for a point -- I understand. I've asked for a point --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on the floor is to hold."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "-- of personal privilege to say what -- I understand that, sir."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on the floor is to hold."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So you're denying my right to speak?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on the floor -- you have the floor --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I understand."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "-- is to hold. Speak to the motion."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "It is irresponsible for us to take any vote today on a plan that we don't have. This is not plan. There is no urgency. There is no reason to vote today. If there wasn't urgency ten years ago or 2022 when LaShawn Thompson died, or in 2023 when the complaint was brought by the DOJ, or 2024 when the DOJ report came out, or last year or this year, or any time during budget season, what is the urgency today for us to take any vote? Absolutely, we should hold on any vote today, because it is irresponsible to the Fulton County taxpayers, to the people in this room who do this work every day, and to the Body sitting here who never got this information to vote on anything today. We are voting on smoke, and it's ridiculous."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, Commissioner Ellis. All right, go ahead, Commissioner Thorne, then Commissioner Ellis."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I think it's a bit hypocritical --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Motion on the floor is to hold."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "-- that we need a detailed plan. This is a discussion. We used to have discussions all the time. And then from the discussion, the county gets a directive to start working on things, then they come back with a more detailed plan. That's when all the justice partners come into play is the development of the fine details of that plan. This is just a directive that we're taking some action to start moving forward, to start move forward with those discussions. All the time, we're getting actual resolutions up here that are out of the blue, dealing with a County Health Department and hadn't even talked to the County Health Department. That's happening all the time, day in and day out, from the same people that are criticizing that they don't have a detailed plan here. We need to start action, and this is one step in taking that action and moving forward. I imagine if there's some spending or some money real -- that we have to reallocate, that that money will come back to us, and then we'll approve or disapprove, particularly for that item. If the trailer is going to cost X amount of dollars, staffing the trailer is going to cost, and we can't find money in the budget somewhere to cover it, then it will come back to us and we'll have to approve the individual actions of the plan. But to have a detailed plan right now would take probably a month or so, and this is just starting the ball rolling, starting those discussions. And I hope you all are included in those discussions moving forward. I hope, Sheriff, that you are integral in that plan, that you are the first to be contacted if we're putting a trailer outside your jail. But I think this is just a good start to start doing something, because, like Commissioner Abdur-Rahman said, doing nothing also has consequences, or delaying also has consequences. I don't think in two weeks, if we hold this and come back, we're going to have a detailed plan. I think it's going to be a plan that's going to morph, spending is going to come about, we're going to stumble on some things that we can't enact on. But we'll have to take prior step -- future steps that we will have to approve and have a more detailed plan coming forward. For that reason, I am not going to vote to hold."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion on the floor is to hold. Commissioner Arrington, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Yes. Again, this was brought as a discussion item. When it was sounded on the agenda, it was, by the Clerk, it was said that it was going to be an action item. There's no documents, no resolution, no action plan, no nothing that was provided to us in advance of this meeting. Halfway through the discussion, we got some notes about what the five-point plan was, which apparently had been shared with some people on this Commission but not with others. So I want y'all to pay attention to what's going on. Pay attention to what's going on. I'm not part of the gang of four. But pay very close attention to what's going on. Now, for me, I would rather measure and cut once. I don't want to cut ten times, and then come back and measure and try to see if it fits. I'd rather sit down with our Sheriff and have a conversation. I'd rather sit down with a Commissioner that's been practicing law for 30 years and that knows and understands the intricacies of the justice system the jail, and all of that, right? But they don't want to do that. They want to cut me out. They just want cut me out of this discussion. They want to cut the Sheriff out of discussion, cut the Solicitor out of the discussion, cut the Public Defender out of the discussion. And we just going to move forward with something that we thought about, that we dreamed

about last night and had somebody type up. Are you kidding me? If you think that is leadership, than good Lord, have mercy. This is preposterous. Do it proper and then tell somebody they're out of order. You're out of order for not submitting the information along with the agenda by Friday at 10:00 a.m. You're out of order by not contacting the Sheriff. You're out of order by not contacting the Solicitor General. You're out of order by not contacting the Public Defender. You're out of order by not contacting PAD. You're out of order by not contacting Mike -- what's your name, sir?"

**STEVE NAWROCKI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER:** "Steve Nawrocki."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Steve Nawrocki. Steve Nawrocki, because I asked him at the last two meetings to come back for two meetings in a row, I asked for information to under -- so that we can understand the data, so that we can understand the data to know why the -- the jail population has increased back up to 3,000. So you are out of order, sir."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, you have the floor."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Call the question."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Question has been called. Let's vote on the call of the question. I'll second it."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open on call the question."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "This is to call the question --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "-- on the motion to hold?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "What?"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "This is to call the question on the motion to hold, correct?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "All right, thank you."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Point of order. Okay, this is the --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- call the question."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "On the calling the question. The motion -- we're not to discuss this. There's no more discussion. The motion on the floor is hold, that's calling the question. Let's vote --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "This is a vote on the call, not on the motion."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "On the hold."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Not on the hold. This is not on the motion. This on the call of the question."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "My question was we're going to vote on the call the question --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "-- and then we --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "-- there's no discussion when the question has been called, that's properly before us. The question has been called. It's properly moved and seconded. Let's vote on the call -- no more discussion."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open on call the question. And the motion passes; six yeas, one nay."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, now, back to the motion."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Motion to hold. And the vote is open on the motion to hold. And the motion fails; three yeas, four nays."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, back to the main motion, which is to approve."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Point of order, approve what? Approve what?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "No, there's no more discussion. The motion is to --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "No, no, no, this is not a call of --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- the question, no, sir."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "This is not a call of the question."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Approve what?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Approve what?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I want to be heard."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Approve what?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "If you'll allow me, I'll explain."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Go right ahead. We're waiting. We're all waiting on you to explain."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The original motion on the floor was to approve the five-point plan. It was before us for discussion, and approval, that's --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "What -- no, sir, no, sir. There was no five-point plan before us when this agenda item was called. No, sir, absolutely not."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on the floor is to approve. Properly moved and seconded. You want to be heard, you want to be heard? I allowed you to be heard. Commissioner Ivory, no, go ahead, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "I would like to --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on the floor is to approve. You have the floor and followed -- the following Commissioner --"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Yeah, I would urge, I said previously about the idea that this should be something that we unanimously agree on as a Body, because this is a problem that is -- is urgent in our county. It is, in fact, our biggest crisis right now. In fact, I consider it to be a state of emergency. I would hope that the members of the Big Four would have enough respect for the three other Commissioners here to allow more discussion and more input from the partners who have said that they were not at the table when this was drafted. If any of the three had presented a one-page document after the agenda was set during the meeting, I can't even tell you how fast a Commissioner would have made a motion to deny. So I would hope that you could have the same respect so that this could be, like I said, a collaboration of the Great Seven, instead of force by the Big Four to do something that has not been thought out well, that has not been consulted with the partners that are, in fact, the ones that will have to execute upon this plan. And certainly, if there are two lawyers that sit on the Commission that they at least could have seen and a third advocate for justice who is greatly educated on this topic could have been included to see the materials that are supposed to accompany an agenda item before the deadline on the Friday before the meeting. That would just at a minimum, be the courteous thing to do for your

colleagues. At a maximum, it would be the absolute right things to do by the citizens of Fulton County who have a right to see the plans, come for public comment, like all have utilized at different moments in time and be in either support or opposition to something that will so greatly affect so many citizens in Fulton County moving forward. Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Barrett, followed by Commissioner Ellis."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I need to --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Motion on the floor is to approve."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah, somebody needs to turn their mic off. A lot of feedback. I would like to know specifically what we are voting on. We have a motion to approve a five-point plan. What are the five points, specifically, word for word? What is the action that will be taken by the County Manager's Office following this meeting to act on the plan? Whose job is it to act on the plan? I don't know what we're voting on, other than a five-point plan. That is -- that has not been able to be considered by the public at all. We know we have a public that loves to comment on and come back and give us feedback via email, via public comment, via Zoom public comment when there are things on the agenda. A preliminary discussion item for this, fantastic, happy to be a part of it. Great ideas here, absolutely. What are we voting on? Normally, when we vote on something, there's a piece of legislation, a resolution, a specific, single action. This is none of that. It's a vagary that does a complete disservice to everyone who works in justice and to every citizen in this county who has a right to have more. So I appreciate the passion. I -- you know, but this is -- this is a very disturbing way to legislate. We do have committees here. That's something that, you know, is going to be brought up later. We don't have working groups here. We don't do -- we are supposed to, according to our laws and rules, have a working group once a month. We don't have it. We -- and I agree with whoever said earlier, I think it might have been you, Commissioner Thorne, that people bring a resolution with no anything, and we vote on it. I don't think that's a great way to legislate. I think we should be having more conversations and discussions and committees and groups or whatever it might be to have more thoughtful legislation. It's bad enough that we do it the way we do it, with one piece of legislation being brought by the agenda deadline or after that we vote on, I agree. It's not great. This is worse than that. This is voting on hearsay, like I -- thoughts, ideas. We don't even know what we're voting on. I want to understand from you, Mr. County Manager, what do you do with this now? What is the -- what's the next step in the plan?"

**DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER:** "Well, let me answer it like this. If I was thinking about this as a planning exercise, first of all, I think that there'd need to be some recognition as to who's responsible for developing a plan that manages the jail population. And to me, that has been over ten years, whoever asked the question about when the boats were deployed, that we have attempted to work with the justice partners on such a plan. It has never come to fruition. It's never been presented as a

systemwide initiative. So that would be first and foremost, I would like to think that the justice partners, and by the way, ten years ago, these -- none of these were the same people. So it's not casting any aspersions on anyone that's here today. But that has been a very much a failed exercise several times. So two, I think, and somebody mentioned this a minute ago, maybe I think it was Commissioner Arrington, we've got to start with a common truth based on data. Because a lot of what was said today, is a lot of anecdotal. I'm not sure that it isn't true, but it's not all knitted together in one common data set that we would know then what we are, what's the potential, what investments could be made, and what would be the -- be the outcome. So I think that needs to be pulled together, and that's an effort as part of this. I do think that it requires some management support, management meaning, from Steve Nawrocki, from Finance. Alton Adams, I think you mentioned a minute ago, being employed as a fee-based employee, I think is positive. Because I do think those are some skills that are outside the normal realm of perhaps, you know, just like I'm not a lawyer, I am a Manager, and I think that applies in the reverse as well. So I think that part of the equation, meaning assigning management responsibilities to this effort, in the end, I do think it has to come back for approval, because it's going to need either resource reallocation, endorsement, if there are policy changes that have to be made. So I think, when that is all formed up, the BOC has a role. And then lastly, somehow, there has to be some accountability built in. Now that could be just simply that as you make investments and as you make decisions that the justice partners ultimately are accountable for these results. So somehow, building in an accountability, and again, that's a ten-year journey of a Justice Reinvestment Initiative that had that, you mentioned a minute ago, you know, a Criminal Justice Policy Committee, or criminal justice -- I've forgotten what the name of."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Coordinating Council."

**DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER:** "Coordinating Council, thank you. But some kind of mechanism that keeps folks accountable for proposals made, investments delivered against, and projections, because that gets lost in this process many times over. So to me, it would -- we can put on paper, those four or five elements. But it starts with, justice has to assume responsibility for creating and presenting a plan with support that has, again, common data, set of commitments, any investments required, and then a level of accountability on the back end."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay. So then thank you for that, Mr. County Manager, I appreciate it. You know, I think given -- given that, and given that the justice partners, almost entirely, not entirely, have really not been consulted on this at this juncture that I would like to make a friendly amendment, Mr. Chairman, to the motion to have the motion be to ask the county management to work with the justice partners to develop a plan and buy in an accountability, rather than to approve a plan."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So that -- so I would like to make a friendly amendment that we vote on asking the County Manager, with whomever, whatever team member

he'd like, Mr. Nawrocki, or whomever, to work with the justice partners to develop a plan to include ideas --"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Second."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute. Just a minute."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "It's a friendly amendment. I'm asking."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman made the motion to approve."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay, then I'm asking you, Madam Vice Chair. Apologies for not understanding."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Well, let me finish. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman made the motion to approve, it was seconded by Commissioner Thorne, and that motion was made to approve this -- these five points as presented."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Great. I'm asking for a friendly amendment, though."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "With all due respect, Commissioner Barrett, it doesn't need a friendly amendment because that's what the County Manager does in his role."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "And with all due respect, I hear what you're saying, but I'm not going to disrespect the County Manager and get in his lane and tell him, by the way, County Manager, I need you to talk to everybody, all the stakeholders, everybody, and get all the information, because that's what he's going to do anyway. So unfortunately I am not going to be able to accept that friendly amendment because it is redundant."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay, so --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, the motion on the floor is to approve. Your friendly amendment was not --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So I -- we did just hear from the County Manager who said, this is -- he can't execute on a plan. So I you -- I appreciate that you do not want accept my change. I will stick by my statement that there is nothing to approve, because there is no plan."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ellis."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "When do we make the decision to move forward with developing a Diversion Center, what year was that?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "It before I got here."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "2020, or 2021, maybe? My point being is, we made that decision some time ago. This is not new, and the initiative that's before us today is about, we want to wholeheartedly say we're going to bring intense focus to maximizing use of that tool to have an impact on driving down the jail population. When did we start paying for county-paid ankle monitoring? 2021. This is not new. The statement today is, by an affirmative vote, we are saying we want a full-force effort into maximizing effective utilization of this ankle monitoring program. We have three other items, one of which I know I've spoken about with different justice partners about the use of text messaging and so forth. We have other two items on here, which I think require an exploration, just like any other initiatives do, and we'll see what viability they have or they don't. This is an acknowledgement that these are potentially viable things that should be explored to see what kind of impact that they can have. I see no reason why we should wait on moving forward with that as a statement of policy and direction to our management team and to the justice partners that we're going to work with. And I'm all for that. I'm about seeing results. We talked about these first two things, ad nauseam, and then some. I mean, I've been through a case of a Pepto, I mean, in terms of how much we've talked about this stuff with these first two. So we're bringing focus to it. It's not new. And I just -- I just hope we can move forward with something where we're focused on it, we're getting results. We pivot, we adjust, because there's trying to come up with -- spend the time to come up with this actionable plan, this, you're only going to cut once and all that sort of stuff, that's -- that's, that's not practical, and it's not going to happen. I look back when we had discussions about that, you know, tackling things like the opioid crisis, we didn't wait around and sit to develop like a multiple, multifaceted plan. We started doing things piece by piece. And I view that as what this is today. In addition to these things, there are other things that we have been talking about and building upon and focused on, that they probably need some intense focus too, but they're not things that are new. This Board has been talking -- and has specific concrete things in there to do with facilities, to do with overcrowding, was the first two things we talked about, and these other items, new items that have been brought forward today to deal with outsourcing, to deal with expanding court capacity. We lobby to get two new State Court Judges. We're lobbying to get a new Superior Court Judge. We're hopefully going to get that over the goal line as well as staffing of detention officers. So don't tell me that nobody's sitting up here, nobody's trying to act. We've been talking about this stuff ad nauseam, on multiple fronts. This is one component of, and you know, I ain't worried about who gives credit, gets credit for this, that or the other. I'm where I'm worried about getting action and focus on thing that we've already, number one, already approved, a handful of these things in terms of funding for them, so getting maximum utilization for the taxpayer resources that have already been committed. So I'm in support of moving forward today, and this is, you know, there's going to be a lot more to come on some of these other things. And some other things, as noted, are going to come back to us if there are funding needs to consider whether or not we want to commit that one way or the other. So I'm a yes as to moving forward

with driving forward with these, exploring these initiatives, and getting -- and getting some focus on them and getting some results."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, Commissioner Arrington, you have the floor. The motion on the floor is to approve."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Thank you, gentlemen. I don't think anybody else is going to be questioning y'all. Y'all can go, yeah, can be released. I think everybody's has kind of made --"

**CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT MCBURNEY:** "Thank you for time. Let's keep people out of the jail."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Thank you, Judge. You know, approve what is a simple question. But there was no answer. The five-plan turned into a eight-point plan because people were adding things to it, but they only want to approve the five-point plan. They don't want to include the other items that were added. This talks about text notification for court dates. What about email notifications for court days? But see, you have to actually use email or text and social media to understand that. If you don't actually use text messages, if you don't actually use email or social media, then you have no idea what you're talking about, do you? This is ridiculous. It's preposterous. And the thing that makes sense to do is to ask the County Manager to bring us back a plan at -- so that we can adopt it at the next meeting. It doesn't have to be a detailed plan to lay out every single thing that someone's going to do. But it needs to have, first of all, the people that are participating need to be consulted. How do you come up with a plan without even talking to the Sheriff, the man that can tell you how many people are there? Oh, we're going to get 500, 600 people out. Well, it's only 93 -- it's only 91 misdemeanors in the jail. How you going to get 500, 600 people out, and there's only 91 misdemeanors? And you haven't even talked the Sheriff, because you don't know how to use text messages and you don't use email. Give me a break. Good Lord, have mercy. This is ridiculous. Commissioner Abdur-Rahman, I'm going to ask you again for a substitute motion to ask the County Manager to bring us back a plan based on everything that we heard today, including the other three items, the eight or nine items that were added, three or four items that were added to the five. I believe our County Manager and his team can bring that back to us at the next meeting and we can vote on, and we can have something that makes sense and not be presented with something halfway through the discussion that nobody has ever seen and that no one has even been talked to about. That -- I mean, that's, that's a reasonable request. And I don't know any other way to say it. So I'm asking you, Commissioner Abdur-Rahman, if you will reconsider a friendly amendment to allow the County Manager and his team to bring the information back along with, based on the data, because we haven't even gotten the operational report. I haven't even gotten the update from Mr. Nawrocki on what he's going -- what the data says, of what the numbers say, I heard Solicitor Gammage say that when he had ORCA people, he had people -- or ORCA money, he had people over there at the jail. And so did the DA and the Solicitor. So I want to know how that impacts this, and I don't think we have to have a 1,000-page dissertation on what's

going to be done. But it needs -- it does needs some more careful thought and consideration."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "With all due respect, Commissioner Arrington, I hear the passion in your voice, and hear your concerns; however, for me, I feel at this point, with all these stakeholders here, and we've been talking about this well over two hours, I have enough, and this is my personal opinion. This last time I'm going to say this, I have enough respect and faith in our county management and staff and what they need to do for the directive for this five-point plan, and they will come back with what will need to be done. If it needs to be done with money, if it needs to be done with reallocation, if it's something that they see that they can't do, but I think we have belabored this point a little bit too long. And because of that, unfortunately, I'm going to have to say, no."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Thorne, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Call to question."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Question's been called. I'll second. Madam Clerk."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open on call the question."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Just change mine to yes on call the question. I thought it was the motion. I'm sorry."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Call the question motion passes unanimously."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. On the motion on the floor to approve."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Point of order. Approve what?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Out of order."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Excuse me?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "You're out of order. There's no -- no more discussion. Question's been called."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I didn't make a -- I did not have discussion. I said point of order."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Continue, Madam Clerk."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "There's a difference between point of order and discussion."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the motion to approve passes; four yeas, three nays."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, it's 1:12, you want to continue? You want lunch? All right. What? All right, take two more, Madam Clerk."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "On page 6, **26-0118**, Real Estate and Asset Management request approval to utilize cooperative purchasing in the amount not to exceed \$536,868.20 to provide consulting services related to planning logistical support for the Fulton County Jail, DOJ consent decree response."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Motion to approve by Commissioner Thorne, seconded by Commissioner Barrett."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0119**, Public Works request approval of a contract item agreement between Fulton County and the Georgia Department of Transportation for water main relocations at an estimated amount of \$2,426,610."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Motion to approve by Commissioner Thorne, seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Chairman, I just wanted to ask you a favor, and actually, I'd like to ask it of all of the Commissioners. There is an item, 26-0126, having to do with Zoo Atlanta, and I see that the representatives from Zoo Atlanta have been sitting here and waiting. And it was my fault for not asking for this to be moved up in the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. But I was wondering if, just before we break for lunch, we could just take this item up so that they don't have to wait any longer. They've been here since 10:00 a.m. Does anybody have any problem with that?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Any objections?"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Okay, thank you so much."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, sound that, Madam Clerk."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "On page 8, **26-0126**, Request approval of a resolution authorizing Fulton County to appropriate funds received by the county to the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority for capital purposes at Zoo Atlanta; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Ivory."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion on the floor is to approve by Commissioner Ivory, seconded by Commissioner Barrett. Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "I just wanted to explain to everybody what this is. This is just a return of restricted funds for capital improvement at the zoo. It authorizes Fulton County to appropriate approximately \$145,000 that we receive prior to the Zoo related bond and renewal funds back to the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority. These funds stem from attendance-based contributions and renewal and extension payments tied to the now-retired 2007 Zoo bonds. The bonds have been fully paid off, and the remaining funds were distributed to the city and to the county under the governing agreements. This action just returns the county portion to be used for eligible capital improvements at Zoo Atlanta. So it doesn't cost the county anything. It's the Atlanta-Fulton County Recreation Authority asking for these funds to be given back to the Zoo for capital improvements. And Bob -- Commissioner Ellis and I -- and Chairman Pitts sit on the AFCRA Board, and we have been discussing this for months. So I know that Commissioner Ellis might want to add something."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ellis, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Yeah, we -- well, to say we've discussed it for months is a yes and no. This was sort of brought forward. We did have some -- I had some conversation with our Finance team last year on that. And so it -- I reiterate that I had some follow up discussion this morning. I -- look, at the end of the day, this may ultimately and likely will make some sense to do. But I would request that -- and I'm happy to kind of work with you in terms of just continuing to work this thing through. But this resolution was drafting, it was not drafted by our legal team. It was drafted by somebody else. I'm sure it was reviewed by our legal team or not."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "It was."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Was this really fully reviewed by our legal team?"

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "So I inquired about it yesterday --"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Correct."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "-- and it's my understanding that was not prepared by our team, but reviewed rather last minute."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Okay."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "And that some of the citations were unable to be vetted in the time allotted."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Okay. And I -- and then part of this is to do is like, just mechanisms where the trustee holds funds, they're looking at the bond documents, and they make the determination about where the residual funds are supposed to go. And that's what occurred, and that's why both the city and the county were remanded this -- these funds. And I want to say this was back in either 2023 or 2024. So you know, to say it wouldn't be a cost to the county is not correct. It would be, we would have to -- it was -- it, you know, it came in in a year, you know, all those books are closed. So it would have to be, you know, some sort of sounding to fund -- that fund, to fund -- figure out where those funds were and what they -- whatever it was going to come out of. So I would just request that we hold this and have the Finance team and be in communication -- in our legal team, be in communication with the Rec Authority and with the Zoo and see what can bring this thing to some clear resolution, you know, kind of once and for all. I think that's the proper way to handle this, and do this -- do this particular item, as opposed to just going ahead and moving forward with it today. Because I don't think we're necessarily on the same page in terms of the way that the bond agreement worked and what the trustee said and what this says in this particular resolution."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Substitute motion to hold. Is there a second?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Second."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Properly moved and seconded. Discussion on the motion to hold? Commissioner Ivory, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you. Mr. Chairman, you could be the fourth vote to make this move forward to prevent the Zoo from spending additional time, additional resources in trying to governance a follow-through item and ensure that restricted funds are used for intended capital purchases. I don't know why Commissioner Ellis is asking for more review of it. It's been of use and reviewed and reviewed and reviewed, and this was the last recommendation, was for a resolution to be put forward to actually move that money. So I wanted to ask the County CFO, is there any problem -- is there anything more that you need in order to return this money to the Zoo for capital improvements at the Zoo?"

**SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER:** "Commissioner Ivory, when this issue first came up and we reviewed all of the underlying documents, our feedback was that, because the trustees had released the money to us, and it appeared to us that the payment comported to the underlying documents, we would need the trustee to basically inform us that they had made a mistake in releasing the funds to us, along with Board approval to return the funds. And as Commissioner Ellis indicated, we did receive these funds in December of 2023. They went in as revenue during that year. So we would also have to then, out of this year's budget, appropriate the expenditure to

be able to pay the funds back to the Recreation Authority if that's who the payment is to be made to."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "And what would -- what exactly do you need to -- in order to that that you don't have right now?"

**SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER:** "We never received any communication from the trustee advising on whether or not they, in fact, made a mistake or Board approval to repay the funds."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Okay. So there was conversation, and the trustee was not either no longer there or unable to provide that documentation, which is why we moved to next step, which was to have the Board approve moving that, which is what this is right now. So absent the letter from the trustee, which we have not been able to get and moving to the Board approval so that we can move this forward and return those funds to Zoo, what other options do we have if the Big Four will not approve this?"

**SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER:** "Well, if the Board doesn't approve it, we can't release funds."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Okay. So then the Zoo will not get their money back for capital improvement?"

**SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER:** "Correct."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Okay. I'd like to ask -- I see the representatives from the Zoo are here. I would love if you would come down for a second so that you can make any comment about this, because I know you have worked on this so diligently, and maybe answer the concern that Commissioner Ellis has relating to wanting to continue to hold this until he receives what it is that would be satisfactory For him to be able to move this forward."

**AARON WATSON, ATTORNEY, ZOO ATL:** "Good afternoon. Good afternoon, everybody. Commissioners, Chairman."

**CARY BURGESS, VP, ZOO ATL:** "Good afternoon, Commissioners, Cary Burgess, Senior Vice President of Government and Community Affairs with Zoo Atlanta. And I'd like to thank you for allowing us to come and have some comments about this particular matter. The funds that we're talking about, were for an R&E, for R&E for the Zoo and a special fund for R&E for the Cyclorama. And the R&E for the Cyclorama funds had nothing to do with the county. They were on a separate, during a separate piece of legislation from the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority to specifically pay for repairs and maintenance to the Cyclorama, and that's \$136,000 per year, and we have - - we've paid three times into that particular fund. The other funds that came from the Zoo were \$140,000 that we're looking at the county for. A percentage of that, 50 percent went to the sinking fund, 50 percent went to the R&E fund. And all we were asking for is the return of those funds. Those funds were co-mingled with the funds that

went to the city and the county for the bond, but the R&E funds should be separated, should have been separated by the Atlanta-Fulton County Recreation Authority, which they did not. So the funds all went into the one fund. So the money was taken all, and given appropriately based on the documents, from the -- from the bank, they were all distributed, 75 percent to the city, 25 percent to the county, but there should -- the money for the R&E fund should never have been in those accounts. So we're only asking for the money to come back to us, because it is money for work that we have already done at the Zoo and money that we still need to use at the Zoo for repairs and maintenance."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Commissioner Ellis, does that help?"

**AARON WATSON, ATTORNEY, ZOO ATL:** "In addition, Commissioner Ellis, I would like add -- I'm Aaron Watson. Those aren't taxpayer dollars we're talking about. That's money that comes out of the revenue that the Zoo gets from -- from attendance and was put into, appropriately put into R&E funds. So it's not -- it accidentally and inadvertently got put into the county's bucket and the city, which has agreed to return it to us. But it's not taxpayer dollars we're talking about. It is Zoo revenue that got misdirected in a way to you all's pockets."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yes. Commissioner Ivory, who drew up the resolution if our County team didn't draw it up?"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "The resolution was draw up by Atlanta-Fulton Recreation Authority. They were the original holder of the bonds and in -- and that was sent to our County Attorney's Office that reviewed it."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Okay. And Soo, like, for you to further review, what would that take? I don't know the steps in thoroughly vetting a contract."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "I'm waiting for additional details. But it's my understanding that the background facts in terms of, you know, how the money changed hands and what the history of it was, was what they could not vouch for, so my office reviewed for format only and not for the substance of the history being conveyed."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Okay. So I'm all supportive. It seems like it's just a technical error of getting your money back, but I'd like it to be done properly, and make sure that our County Attorney has fully vetted the contract, since we didn't draw up the contract just to make sure that it's good. And I -- would two -- is two weeks going to affect you massively to wait?"

**CARY BURGESS, VP, ZOO ATL:** We've waited three years for the money to come back. We would love to have the money today. But if need be, we would have to accept if this Board would take action in two weeks. We have all the documentation.

We have all the bank statements. We have, I believe, everything that the County Attorney would need, we have that now. So we would --

**AARON WATSON, ATTORNEY, ZOO ATL:** And we've provided it before.

**CARY BURGESS, VP, ZOO ATL:** "Yeah, and we've provided it before. So we have -- we have all the information. So I don't know if there's any way that we could provide that for you today."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Commissioner Thorne, do you mind if I ask your question? Okay. I mean, with all due respect to the County Attorney, I understand that the Office of the County Attorney is very busy, but it has been a three-year delay, and we did submit everything that we needed to submit by the deadline for this item to appear on the agenda, and also made ourselves available for any questions that needed to be answered. And these folks at the Zoo have been waiting on our sort of inner-county, you know, bureaucracy for three years. So I would hope that we could work to pass this. They have -- can pass the info -- any questions that the County Attorney may have, they can give her -- give her that information right now. I just would hope that we could please not delay this anymore for the Zoo's sake."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Well, I hope you can submit all that documentation. And if this does get held, I'm sure it'll be brought back. It will be vetted, and you do not have to come back down here again, because you'll be guaranteed that it's going to pass if the county -- because for me, the only hold up is that the County Attorney needs to properly vet it, since we were not the initiators of the contract."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Arrington. Motion on the floor is to hold."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Cary, if you think you can get some money out of Sharon today, you must have a magic wand with you. Even if it were to get approved today, it -- the funds wouldn't come today. I am, you know, supportive of this. But certainly would like to see, I guess, the supporting documents. And then the other question is, did the city of Atlanta already return their portion?"

**AARON WATSON, ATTORNEY, ZOO ATL:** "No. They made it a condition the county would agree to do it as well. They agreed to do it, but they --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "They agreed to do it, if we -- if we return our portion?"

**AARON WATSON, ATTORNEY, ZOO ATL:** "Correct."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "So that, I mean, that makes perfect sense. I can't imagine that there will be trouble getting this done. But you know, it may not get done today, but it sounds like I would imagine that if the city of Atlanta is going to return

their portion, and it's contingent upon us returning our portion, it makes perfect sense, and I imagine that we could get that passed."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Chairman, I would -- this is a procedure item that I'd like to get your advice on. I do want to -- I have this feeling that I always get that it won't pass, but that if it holds, this is my last meeting, so I would like to ask you if the folks that are here that believe in returning this money to the Zoo, if, Commissioner Thorne, thank you. Commissioner Barrett, Commissioner Arrington, I hope Commissioner Ellis would agree to cosponsor it so that it can then appear on the next meeting, and in fact, the Zoo can get their money back. Okay? Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion on the floor is to hold. Let's vote, please."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open on a motion to hold. And the motion passes; five yeas, two nays."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Thank you very much. I'll entertain a motion to recess for lunch, Executive Session, where we may take up items of real estate, litigation, and personnel. All right."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; five yeas, zero nays."

**Recessed for Executive Session at 1:31 p.m.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Resume Regular Session at 2:18 p.m.**

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, without objection, we will resume the regular order of business. Continue -- items from Executive Session, Madam County Attorney."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a motion to approve the request for representation presented in item 2 of the Executive Session agenda?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Have a motion to approve by Commissioner Thorne, seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman. Please vote."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; six yeas, zero nays."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "Is there a motion to approve the settlement in the matter of 72 Marietta Street, tax parcel ID 14-0078-0011-064-1 to resolve the claims of lien transferee, Investa Services by paying \$286,136.62 in interest in conjunction with the Tax Commissioner's refund of \$1,102,528.56 for the purchase of invalid tax liens?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman has moved approval, it's seconded by Commissioner Thorne."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; five yeas, one nay."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "No further action items from Executive Session."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, continue, Madam Clerk."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "Back on page 6, Commissioners' Action Items under Commissioners District Board Appointments, **26-0074**, Fulton County Reparations Task Force, Commissioner Ivory has nominated Karcheik Sims-Alvarado for a District reappointment to a term ending December 31st, 2026."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "I think we discussed this prior, and I know that there's probably not the support for me to get it moved forward. So I know, Chairman, that you said you had a spot and that you would go ahead and appoint her --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "I will."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "-- I just really want the work of the task force to continue."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. We can do that. So this will -- what? We can file, then we'll bring it back. Yeah, I move that we file. You get a second on the file. All right, let's vote on the motion to file and I'll bring it back. Although, she continues to serve though until she's reappointed or until --"

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "Yes, there is a holdover provision."

**CLERK GRIER:** "Vice Chair. And the vote is open on the motion to file. And the motion passes; four yeas, one nay."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "On page 7, **26-0079**, Commission on Disability Affairs, Commissioner Ivory has nominated Michael Hopkins for District reappointment to a term ending December 31st, 2027."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Chairman, this is another one of those items, I'm sure that the Big Four is going to say no to. But Michael Hopkins really, really wants to serve, and has -- and has done an amazing job, and called me and said to please allow him to

continue on the Disability Affairs Board. And I don't know if you have a space available, or if any of the other Commissioners do. But I would not want to see him not be reappointed, because he's, you know, as invested as the last conversation that we had, the last four that we just talked about."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay, I'll check and see what I have, but he'll continue to serve. I'll check and see what I have."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Okay. And I would ask if any of the other Commissioners can -- yeah, this is one that if you could -- okay, great thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. So it'll be a motion to file. File, file."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Wait. I'm sorry, what do you need to do? Okay, I took it out."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open on the motion to file. And the motion fails; three yeas, one nay."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Well, he'll continue to serve until we do it at the next meeting."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Sorry, I'm not in the queue. Can I --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Go ahead."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I was just, if I have a spot right now, we could just amend it and make it my appointment. But I was just ask, and I was trying mount the words to --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just do it."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "She didn't know."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "He'll continue to serve until you can do it at the next meeting. What?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah, it's fine."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0063**, Request approval of a resolution affirming the protection of constitutional rights at Fulton County facilities and limiting ICE enforcement activities sponsored by Commissioner Arrington."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "What is this? Repeat."

**CLERK GRIER:** "26-0063, Request approval of a resolution affirming the protection of constitutional rights at the Fulton County facilities and limiting ICE enforcement activities sponsored by Commissioner Arrington."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. You have a motion to approve by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, seconded by Commissioner Ivory. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Thank you, Chairman. Commissioner Arrington, in theory, like I told you two weeks ago, I do support this. I do think some of the things we're doing already. My only question to you, did you have a chance to teach to speak with Chief Wade -- Chief Yates?"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "No, I did not. I mean, you know, this is really just, you know, making sure that our people, that people that work for Fulton County will make sure that no one's constitutional rights are violated. And so I can't imagine it that Chief Yates would want to violate or would just sit by and let someone's --"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Oh, no, I wasn't asking in reference to that. I just wanted him to weigh in. You know, we had a lot of discussion today about allowing other people to weigh in on stuff. And so that was my concern two weeks ago. I'm going to support, as you see, I put in the motion move to approve. I was just curious, as if you had a conversation with him, just to kind of get his thoughts on it, that's all. I don't -- I don't think he has anything --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Yeah, no, I would not -- didn't mean to infer that you --"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Okay, all right."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I was really just saying, I think he would be supportive, right? Yeah."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Exactly."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "So, okay. Commissioner Thorne, let's here from you, then I have a question, couple of questions."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yeah, I was going to ask if you spoke with Chief Yates, because, you know, we were told you're out of order for not contacting somebody when a resolution contains them. And this is a resolution that's binding. I think -- I don't know, I guess Chief Yates isn't here, it -- when I did talk to him, there was no department policy change, except for the part, we're currently building a Customs Facility at our airport. And with this, with this resolution, it would -- our Custom and Border officials wouldn't be able to use the building that we're building for them at our airport."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I don't believe that that is correct. This -- that facility, I believe, is for items, and this is for protecting the constitutional rights of

persons, right? This is making sure that people are not being shot in the back of the head in the middle the street, or certainly not on County facilities and County property. That -- my understanding of the Custom and Borders facility at the Charlie Brown Airport is that that is part of the customs that will people will be flying in, and they will be checking the items that are on those planes, kind of the inventory, if you will. I guess, I don't know, maybe they would also have the individuals, I guess, would likely have to go through customs as well. But you know, I wouldn't want anyone's constitutional rights --

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Line --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- to be violated --"

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "-- Line 21 says, shall not permit law enforcement personnel engaged in enforcement activities or investigations, including but not limited to CBP and ICE access to any facilities or portions of facilities that are nonpublic, locations, including but not limited to areas with restricted access and employee work areas without having a constitutionally sufficient warrant signed by a Judge. So it doesn't say people -- it doesn't -- it's not distinguishing. They could be investigating drug trafficking coming in, and maybe it's coming a foreign person that's coming into our airport, and they wouldn't be allowed in their own facility to --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Well, if they have a warrant they would. I mean, it's not -- if they have a warrant, then they can, you know, I think what I heard you just say was, if they don't have a warrant, if the -- if -- but if they have a warrant, then that's -  
-"

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Well, I'm just saying that we're not allowing them in access to the facilities or portions, and it might be a customs person who is in there, and say, hey, such and such, just flew in, and has X amount of -- we believe they have X amount of drugs on them, and you know --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "That's why they need a warrant."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "But you're saying that you're not even allowing the personnel to be in there."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "So I mean, I have no problem changing the language. I think we just approved that Custom and Border Protection thing at the airport, I believe, at the last meeting or meeting before last. But I have no problem making minor adjustments to allow for that facility to operate as normal operations, right? But if they think someone has committed a crime, they need a warrant. They -- I mean, that's what the law and the Constitution requires in the United States."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yeah, I'm not -- I mean, I'm not familiar with ICE, if they have warrants when they're going around -- but I assume they warrants."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "They should have warrants, but no, they haven't. They've been breaking in people's homes all around the country, terrorizing people. And that's -- that's the whole purpose of this to make sure that they do not violate people's constitutional rights in Fulton County."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "And another thing I was wondering if, if our -- if someone is already arrested, because I learned at NACo, speaking with the DA that was spoke at NACo, that our jail is the best place and the safest place to get people. So would they not be permitted in our jail?"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "As long as they have a warrant, as long as they have a warrant and they are following the Constitution, they're allowed to do anything they want to. I'm not -- I don't want to interfere with their duties. I just want them to comply with the law, right? That's all I want, and for people not to be shot dead in the street."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Well, I think protesters are getting shot. So hopefully there'll be no protesters at our jail or at our airport, I would think, so."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Yeah, well, protesters, they don't have the right to shoot protesters dead in the street."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I think that's it, that I had -- I just have concerns over the Customs Borders facility --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Yeah. Speak up."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I just have concern over there -- our Customs Borders facility, restricting them there and then, as well as the jail restricting that, those areas."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I have no problem if you want to do a friendly amendment to change the language to allow for the normal operations of the Custom and Borders facility at the Charlie Brown Airport and for the normal operations at the jail, right? I have no problem doing friendly amendment to allow for normal operations at either of those facilities or normal operations at any of our facilities, right? They can do normal operations at any of our facilities, but they need a warrant and they need to -- and what I'm asking is that Fulton County Employees protect the constitutional rights of citizens, right? That's all I'm asking. I'm not trying to do anything to the ICE people. I just want rights of our Fulton County citizens be protected. And unfortunately, ICE hasn't been doing that. But I would accept that as a friendly amendment, if that's what you want."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Is that a yes?"

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yes."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay. Madam County Attorney, have you reviewed this?"

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "I am familiar with it. I know that --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "I didn't ask now, if you were familiar --"

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "I did not personally work on it, someone in my office has been working with Commissioner Arrington on it --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "The County Attorney's Office --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Just a minute. It's been reviewed?"

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "What I want to clarify, just to make sure I understand properly, is that the amendment is to allow an exception to not being able to come into nonpublic areas. If you're Customs or ICE, if that is within your normal business operations, like the building that we're setting up for them to actually have a business operation there, they shouldn't need a warrant to just come to work if their office -- is that -- is that the amendment? So that when we change the language after --"

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "As well as the jail."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "As well as in the jail?"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Any county facility."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yeah."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Any county facility. Should require a warrant, and should require them not violating people's constitutional rights."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "Yes. But in the instance of the -- and perhaps I misunderstand what we're building at the airport. But in the instance of the -- the Customs and Border Enforcement facility that we're building at the airport, they wouldn't get a warrant to just come to the office that we built for them, so that's what I understand the exception to be."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "They -- yes, they -- yes, wouldn't need a warrant, right? Again, this is only to protect the constitutional rights of people, right?"

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "Okay."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "And so they, you know, if -- if they're operating in their normal course of operations, they -- if they're operating in their normal course of operations, they would not need a warrant, right? Again, we're -- all I'm -- the intent of this is to protect the constitutional rights of people at our facilities and buildings, whether it's at the airport, the jail, or right here at 141 Pryor. We should be making sure that people's constitutional rights are protected."

**Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY:** "Okay, I think understand."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay. We just add that the seven -- well, six County Commission Chairs and the CEO of DeKalb County, we are -- have drafted a joint resolution that we will be sending to our respective delegations, congressional delegations, so that we'll have uniform -- a uniform message going to our congressional delegations regarding this, and some of what's in that resolution, I believe, is included in your resolution, Commissioner Arrington. I just hope that we're not going to be at cross purposes here, but that will be signed by the -- in our -- in our individual capacities as the six Chairs of Fulton, DeKalb, Clayton, Cobb -- that's how many -- Henry, Douglas, and I'm missing one. There's seven of us."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Well, I would hope that you would bring it to the Board so that the Board could authorize you to speak on our behalf, and I would hope that the other Chairs would do the same. I cannot imagine that any of you all would want anyone's constitutional rights violated. But you know, certainly, you can do anything you want as an individual. But if you're speaking on behalf of Fulton County, then you need the affirmative votes of four Commissioners in order to do that."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Any other questions or comments?"

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yeah."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I was just wondering, because Chief Yates isn't here to speak, is it possible to hold this until the next meeting so he could chime in? Since it -- he wasn't contacted."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Unfortunately, I agree to hold it twice. The first time I held it because it wasn't -- the paperwork wasn't there. The second time Commissioner Abdur-Rahman asked for it to be held. And so I think that there has been more than enough time for people with questions or anyone to have it. I'd like the vote to go forward."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion on the floor is to approve."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; five yeas; one abstention."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Next item."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "26-0101, Request approval of resolution to support affordable housing in partnership with Cosmopolitan AME Church, Good Place and Collaborative Housing Solutions sponsored by Commissioner Barrett and Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Have a motion to approve by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, seconded by Commissioner Barrett. Commissioner Barrett."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I just wanted to reiterate that this is for the building of Cosmopolitan Village on the grounds of Cosmopolitan AME Church. It is for the release of \$625,000 of our increment sitting in the West Side TAD so that they can complete their funding stack and move forward to get all of their state slash federal money. It's a great project. I apologize for not having all the documentation two weeks ago when we met. But I appreciate everyone's patience, and I appreciate the conversations you and I had, Madam Vice Chair, and your support on this, as well with Commissioner Thorne, thank you. This is a really good project, and so I'm just glad to have the support."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yes. I just want to thank you for giving us all the documentation as we asked for. It's \$625,000, I feel like that's just a small amount for us to pay for such a big project that's going to affect so many lives for generations. And so I just wanted to thank you for providing it. It is a \$625,000 expenditure. Even though, you know, it's already sitting there in the TAD, but I thank you for that and following up with that."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start by thanking Commissioner Barrett for bringing this resolution forward to establish 70 affordable housing units in my district, District 4. I was proud to originally cosponsor this item, and I am fully supportive of its passage. I remain supportive, and I'm glad to see broader support from my colleagues as well. Commissioner Barrett, may I just ask for clarification? My understanding was that in order for this resolution to move forward, it was important that my name come off as a cosponsor, and that others be added, is that your understanding of the situation?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "My take is that want this great project to pass, and I was willing to do what I needed to do to bring votes on board, and I --"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "And taking my name off was one of those things, correct?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you. I appreciate that clarification. It's just important for context. And regardless of that, I'm pleased we're able to move forward with this project in my district. It's so important, and they need to be able to build these 70 units. So thank you for initiating it in the beginning, and I continue to be supportive of it."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Yeah, so I am generally happy to support this. My only question is in regards to the affordability units and maintaining that, right, because I hate to see it, I sell it to Ellis, and then Ellis sells it to Ivory, and then Ivory no longer has to do affordable housing. And so that's, that's my only concern."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "It's -- the affordability is built into the land ownership documents, so that it can't, if it's transferred, the affordability goes with the deed."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Okay. So there is --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "That's why it's 30 years deeply affordable."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- restrictions --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "-- and easements?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Okay, thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Thank you, Chairman. Commissioner Barrett, first of all, thank you for having a conversation with me. And thank you for having respect for your colleague. Because even though we don't always agree, we can be respectful to each other, as this shows that we can be respectful. And on a side note, I want it to be known that you have asked me to put your name on something, and you have asked me to take it off, right? Which is -- which we -- which is a common practice. And so let it be known, when a Mo petty, when they Mo money, Mo taxes, Mo millage rate, Mo disrespectful, this shows that two people can be the bigger person, have a conversation with respect and come to an agreement that we both understood and agreed to. I did not hold a gun to your head, did I? We had a very long conversation about my concerns that I would not support something because of the disrespectful behavior by Mo money, Mo taxes, Mo millage rate, Mo, and so on that note, let the record show that we can get something done, and not be personal. I could have just as well stood to my guns, and said no. I'm not going to do it. But you know who would have suffered? Cosmopolitan. So when people allow their egos to be smaller than their head, they'll understand the process down here. And the process is we don't necessarily have to get along, we don't necessarily have to like each other, but you don't have to be disrespectful, because you choose to be disrespectful. And I said, what I said."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "I have nothing more to say. Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ellis."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "I just actually had this, the simple question, hopefully. On, Commissioner Barrett, do you know, I know there's been -- where there's some of these projects in the Westside TAD where parties have come in and they bought out the affordability requirement. Is that -- this part of that protection mechanism, there's no way to buy it out either?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah, so I think what -- that, the most famous one of those was in the Gulch, I think --"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Where the most of the money is going in the Westside TAD, right?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "And to be fair, I think Invest Atlanta really learned their lesson on that --"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Okay."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "-- and put a lot of these protection of these protections in place where the deep affordability is tied to the deed."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Okay."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So there are some cases where you see city of Atlanta owning a property, and that order, it's in the land trust and that kind of thing. And so this is a land trust church deal. It's tied to the deed. And they really have learned their lesson, because that was a black eye for Invest Atlanta when that happened."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Yeah."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Okay, thank you."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion of the floor is to approve. Cast your vote."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0120**, Request approval of a resolution to promote public education regarding how to obtain voter identification; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Thorne."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "I thought that was removed. Commissioner Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yeah. I'm going to -- I've been working with our Elections Department, Lashandra at Voter Education and Outreach, and Nadine on this. And just with all the talk about the Save America Act and the voter suppression, I was just trying to do something to combat that, and try to see what we could on our website, how we could help people so they don't have that fear in them of getting a voter ID, because there's multiple voter IDs. But I would like to have some more time to work on that with our Elections Department and hold it for now if that's okay."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, no objections. I'm sorry, Vice Chair, you want to be heard?"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "No. I was going to ask her if she didn't mind holding it to make sure all the stakeholders, I know she was working on it. So since you decided to hold it, I'll support the hold."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Madam Clerk."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0121**, Request approval of a resolution of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners to establish standing committees; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Ivory."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Is there a motion?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "And I'll second for discussion."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Have motion to approve by Commissioner Ivory, seconded for discussion by Commissioner Barrett. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, Commissioner Ivory, Commissioner Barrett."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Request of approval of a resolution of Fulton County Board of Commissioners to establish standing committees and for other purposes. In my opinion, and it's my opinion, I think this is redundant. I don't think we need it, and therefore I'm going to make a motion to file."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Substitute motion to file. Is --"

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Discussion."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Let's put our motion on the floor, substitute motion to file. Is there a second? Is there a second on the substitute motion file? Seconded by Commissioner Ellis. Now, Commissioner Abdur -- Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, Commissioner Ivory, Commissioner Barrett, on the substitute motion to file."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Chairman, I already spoke. I think it's redundant, and I think --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "I don't think we need it."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you so much --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "On the motion to file."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you so much. On the motion to file, I completely disagree with that, and the purpose of it is to strengthen governance, oversight and collaboration. This resolution we -- it's not redundant in any way. We don't have committees, so we couldn't be doing anything redundant on something that we don't already have. This resolution establishes seven standing committees of the Board, Justice and Safety, Registrations and Elections, County Budget, Health and Human Services, Animal Services, Rules, and Arts and Library. Fulton County manages complex policy areas. The only requirement we have as Commissioners is to meet twice a month as a full board, which is not sufficient for meaningful oversight. What ends up happening is the very thing that we saw happen today, there's no discussion between the Board. There are no recommendations that come from a smaller group up the higher board. And it is not a feasible way of working. Committees allow Commissioners to engage more deeply in subject matter areas and work collaboratively before items reach the full Board. The Chair will recommend the annual committee assignments at the first meeting of the year, including committee Chairs, subject to approval by a five-member super majority of the Board. Appointments would be for one calendar year, and each committee would select its own Vice Chair. All committee meetings would be open to the public, allowing people to understand our process, held at the Government Center -- held at the Government Center, and occur at least once per month. Public comment would be permitted at the committee meetings. Each committee will have a defined jurisdiction -- jurisdiction over specific departments to ensure clean lines of oversight and accountability. Most local governments operate with standing committees, including the city of Atlanta. This structure improves preparation, transparency, and policy outcomes. Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Barrett. The motion of the floor is to hold -- file, sorry, to file."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think this is -- I think the motion to file is going to pass. But I do think it's worth asking my colleagues to consider the fact that they're -- sometimes we pass legislation that is a solution looking for a problem. In this case, I think we do have a problem, and I'm not 100 percent convinced this is the solution. I would say Commissioner Arrington and I, years ago, worked together on trying to come up with some kind of discussion first, before you vote

type of -- of procedure. We talked about having one of the -- one of our two Board meetings be -- being a committee of the whole, and changing the rules to some extent. We talked by reinstating the once-a-month work session. At the end of the day, I think there is a need for more thoughtfully considered legislative process. And I very much appreciate what you are trying to accomplish with this, Commissioner Ivory. And I think, I hope at least that my colleagues will look at this as a inspiration to have deeper communication about how we can make our legislative process more thoughtful and more transparent."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ellis."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Thanks, Mr. Chair. I seconded the motion to file, because I don't think this brings any more efficiency and productivity to the government, actually, I think it takes it backward given the structure that we have. We have a County Manager form of government, not as not a strong mayoral type structure. We also have a seven-member board, not a, you know, multi-number board. We're more of a financial-approval body than we are a legislative body. And I've been doing this long enough where, you know, there are moments where it's been hard enough to get -- and we have -- sometimes we had five members, Commissioner Arrington, for a period, right? Sometimes, we had six members for period of time. So it's hard enough just to get a quorum for this Board to meet, much less to fill out, you know, a bunch a standing committees. And then additionally, the -- we all serve on different things, where we represent in, you know, kind of divide duties, if you will. Commissioner Barrett serves on Invest Atlanta. We've got folks that sit on pension boards, Defined Contribution boards, that sort of stuff, where, you know, it does require time. And there are meetings that are come -- that are coming to take formal meetings that take place outside of these meetings, and but a lot of the items that are noted here, in fact, all of them, I believe, they're really -- they're really whole-board items. They're not individual things that you want to delegate to a committee. And I think probably all of us have an interest in all of them, and discussing them and debating them and real time and in that forum. So I just don't think a committee structure is conducive to the form a government that have. And that's a -- I'm supportive of the motion to file."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "So I'm, I guess, somewhat supportive of this in theory. But I'm not going to be able to support it because you just said this is your last meeting, like you're not -- you're trying to impose committees on us, and you're not even going to be here to take advantage of them. This is your last meeting, so like, I guess maybe if this were not your last meeting, maybe I'd be more receptive to it, right? If you're saying, hey, I'm going to serve on these committees with you, that -- that can make more sense to me, right? But to say I'm going to, I want to form these committees, I'm leaving, and y'all go to the committee meetings, that -- that, that's not received well."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Thorne, you have the floor. The motion on the floor is to file."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I do -- I do see the intent. I agree, like we need to have more discussion, but the committee structure, I also agree. I don't feel like it's something that would suit us. I looked up, city of Atlanta has seven standing committees, just different than what you have here, but you also have seven listed here. But city of Atlanta has 16 members that they can divide up better than we can divide up and maybe have specialties in certain areas. And when you have at least four, no more than five, Commissioners, so it's basically almost all of us, except two, will be on a committee. And then you're having to call a meeting, accept public comment. I guess, Tonya's, our Clerk's office would have to record all those minutes, do the public comment. And every meeting would be once a month. I just see as kind of another layer of bureaucracy that's put on -- put on the system. And so for that, I couldn't agree to it. And then also, if you have a committee like, let's say on Registration and Elections, when we have a Registration Elections Board, we're not supposed to be really overseeing Registration and Elections. So I don't know how that would work or if the conversation would cross over where we'd be making decisions that we probably shouldn't be making decisions on. So that -- that was just kind of one area of concern, you know, particularly since I had an ethics complaint on me by a simple discussion on the Elections Board. So I can imagine if I was on a committee with Registration and Elections, if the conversation might cross the line there. So with that being said, I don't think I would approve of it. But I do -- the intent to have more discussion, I think is a good thing."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Well, I just want to thank everybody for understanding what the intent of it was. And Marvin, anything that is good can precede anybody. So it was not an attempt to put something on anybody. I think this is good governance. It wasn't for the attempt to create more bureaucracy, but actually to create more transparency and partnership. And so I hope that, as I know that this is not going to happen, I would hope that the spirit of it will be something that the six of you will try, and whoever comes in my seat, will try to move forward in the -- for the -- for Fulton County residents. Because what they've been telling me is they would like to see their Commissioners, more than twice a month, having conversations with each other and working for the money that they are being -- that we are being paid with their dollars. So that's really where the intent of this came from for more collaboration. So I thank you for that. And I wish you all the best luck in continuing to move forward with the kind of conversations that are so needed to happen on this Commission. Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "The motion on the floor is to file."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; five yeas, two nays."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0122**, Request approval of a resolution of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners directing the County Manager to procure a third-party independent

contractor to complete a comprehensive audit of the Fulton County budget for 2026; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Ivory."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "We have a motion to approve by Commissioner Ivory. Is there a second? Is there a second? Is there a second?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I'll second for discussion purposes."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Seconded for discussion purposes by Commissioner Barrett. Commissioner Ivory, you have the floor."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. We conducted a county audit at the end of 2024, but this resolution tries to take transparency further. It directs a third-party independent audit of the 2026 budget. This audit is specifically focused on covering every line item over \$1 million. The audit would also review all departmental travel expenses. This goes beyond regular reporting to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently and publicly accountable. The County Manager would will post the procurement by September 1st, and keep the Board updated on progress. My goal is clear here, build public confidence by showing we meet the highest standards for financial oversight."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Any other discussion? The motion on the floor is to approve."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion fails; one yea, four nays."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Next item."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0123**, Request approval of a resolution to reallocate at least 2 percent of the fiscal year 2026 budget towards expenditures related to the establishment of a new hospital facilities in Atlanta at South Fulton; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Ivory."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Motion to approve by Commissioner Ivory, seconded by Commissioner Arrington. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, Commissioner Ivory."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Thank you, Chairman. Here again, we came from seeing a hospital close, to seeing how that affected the community, to putting a freestanding emergency room. And Chairman, I know there's other discussions going on for how we can meet the goals of the healthcare desert. I'm not sure exactly why we would need to reallocate at least 2 percent of the fiscal year 2026 budget toward expenditures related to the establishment of a new hospital facility in Atlanta and South Fulton, when we have already put so much time and money into dealing with the healthcare desert. Once again, in my opinion, the County Manager, Dr. Roshell, Commissioner Arrington, spent a lot of time in making sure that the voices of South

Fulton was heard, while not minimizing the voices that were closer to I-20 and the other areas. In my opinion, and it's my opinion, and we know what they say about opinions, but I'm going to say mine. It's a -- it a resolution looking for a problem. We've already dealt with this, and I don't see the need for it. And so I'm going to make a motion to file."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Substitute motion to file. Is there a second? Substitute motion to file. Is a second? Seconded by Commissioner Thorne. Commissioner Ivory on the motion, substitute motion to file."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course, I disagree with that motion on to file. This resolution is about fiscal planning continuity of care. Fulton County has experienced hospital closures in Atlanta and East Point, and we're actively working to restore capacity in South Fulton. Hospital infrastructure requires long-term financial commitments, and particularly debt service, something we talked about just yesterday. This proposal simply establishes a minimum 2 percent budget reserve dedicated to hospital-related expenditures, including debt service and capital obligations. The goal is stability and predictability, not year-to-year uncertainty, which is how this Board been operating. I wanted to ask just a couple of direct questions to our CFO out of our conversation yesterday so that she can walk us through our current and projected hospital debt obligations. Specifically, what's our current annual debt service related to the South Fulton Hospital project, current?"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Point or order. I'm not sure that this conversation is germane for public discussion."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion is to file. Yeah, motion to file."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "So I can't ask any questions?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Yeah, I think that would be out, improper and out of order. Yeah."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Okay. So let it be noted that you're refusing to answer the questions about the hospital project. Hold on. I'm not done yet. Hospital financing is not a discretionary expense once debt is incurred, debt service must be paid regardless of economic conditions, and so it ensures that we do not jeopardize access to care and communities are already impacted by closures. This is a guardrail that I was trying to put forward, and ensures that as we rebuild hospital capacity we do so responsibly. A minimum 2 percent set aside discipline, predictability, and protects both our financial obligations and public health infrastructure. Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Barrett."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I will just say that I certainly appreciate what you're trying to accomplish here, Commissioner Ivory. And I will add only and that I think we still have significant health inequity in Fulton County. We have significant portions of South Fulton County, South Atlanta in particular, where

access to care is limited, to say the least. And so I certainly appreciate anything that tries to address that. On another note, related to the motion to file, I would just say I think that this is -- the motion to file, the practice of getting into a motion to file is not an admirable practice. I just feel like -- I know it's a habit we've gotten into now, but I don't see anything wrong with allowing -- because we have no other opportunity for discussion, I don't see any reason not to allow these items to have their discussion, and then be voted up or down. So I just want to put that on the record."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "So again, I'm generally supported of this effort. There is such healthcare inequity and Fulton County between North Fulton and South Fulton that I would, you know, almost vote for anything to help balance that drastic inequity. There are five or six hospitals in North Fulton and zero in South Fulton. Very thankful to Grady for responding to the loss of the two Wellstar Hospitals and building an emergency room, because the main thing you lose when you lose a hospital is the emergent care, right? And so, you know, I am happy to have the declared or gotten this Board to declare a healthcare state of emergency in Fulton County. And I'm going to -- I'm going to stay here and fight for the residents of South Fulton and Atlanta, stay here and fight to make sure that we have equitable healthcare in South Fulton, stay here and fight to make sure that we have emergent care in South Fulton, stay here and fight for the residents of South Fulton and Atlanta and they're -- they're human or basic humanitarian right to receive medical care. And you know, my -- my term is until the end of December of this year. I'll be here at least that long, fighting for it. Hopefully, I'll be here longer. Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I just want to make a correction, again. Commissioner Arrington, there are two hospitals in North Fulton. There's one in Bob's district, and one in my district."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "That's not true."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "The others are in Atlanta. They're inside the Perimeter, they are not considered North Fulton. And I think we're doing a great job working with Grady, trying -- getting that ER center going, up and going. We should be having a ribbon cutting here soon. I look forward to that day, because I can't imagine having to live without an emergency room, and having to deal with Atlanta traffic trying to get to an emergency room when you live on the south side of town. So with that being said, I think we -- I don't think there's a need for an allocation. I think we're doing the best we can. I think we are prioritizing getting healthcare in South Fulton. I think all seven of us agree on doing whatever we can. But the hospital facility -- it says hospital facilities, I don't know, for funding one in Atlanta and South Fulton, because Atlanta already has enough there. So that's one clarification, I'm just not kind of sure on."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion is to file. Please vote."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; four yeas, three nays."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "**26-0124**, Request approval of an urging resolution, urging the Georgia General Assembly not to enact legislation eliminating property taxes as a source of local government revenue; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Ivory."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Motion to approve by Commissioner Ivory, seconded by Commissioner Arrington. Commissioner Ivory."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is urging the legislature to not eliminate property tax income. I think we all know how that would be such a negative effect on Fulton County, who relies on more than 80 percent of our income to come from property taxes. The Bills currently moving through the General Assembly, would significantly reduce the property tax base for local governments, it includes HR1114 and HB1116, which would substantially shrink the homestead property tax base over time. For Fulton County, this is a major structural issue. As I mentioned, approximately 80 percent of our general fund revenue comes from property taxes. The legislation contemplates allowing local governments to offset LOST revenue through expanded sales tax options. But Fulton County includes 15 municipalities, overlapping jurisdictions and layered tax structures. Replacing a stable property tax base with greater reliance on sales tax is not a one-to-one exchange. Sales taxes are economically sensitive and less predictable. Property taxes provide the stability that funds core services, public safety, courts, health, infrastructure, year after year. It's difficult to see how a reduction of this magnitude could be fully offset without increasing volatility or putting pressure on services. This resolution is not about opposing tax relief. It is about fiscal stability and responsible budgeting. The purpose of this resolution is very straightforward for this Board to take a position and to urge the General Assembly not to pass legislation that would significantly deplete the property tax revenue base for counties. Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Ellis. The motion is to approve."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Now, what I'm going to say is, we didn't need a resolution. We have External Affairs come up here and talk in a minute. That's the forum and where we take positions on legislation one way or the other. So far as I'm concerned, we just wait, and we'll have that discussion in the context of our External Affairs discussion where it's most appropriately -- we have those -- have those discussions just like we would on any other piece of legislation."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I'm supportive of this. You know, this will not only affect the county revenue, but city revenue and school board revenue, right? If property taxes go away, then, you know, I don't know where we get our money from. I

don't know where the 15 cities get their money from, and I don't know where the school boards get their money. So you know, this is -- I mean, you know that -- unless they're just trying to put all the counties and the cities out of business, and the state is going to run the counties and the cities, or supplement that revenue through sales tax, but then that, you know, I don't know that that's fair either. Because then that winds up, you know, taxing really -- I guess it taxes everyone. But the impact of that tax probably has more effect on the poor than it does those that can afford to pay their tax. So I'll be happy to hear what Jessica and those have to say. But you know, I'm fine with supporting this, because if we lose property taxes, then, you know, I don't know what -- how the county, nor city or any of these things, or school boards would operate."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. The motion on the floor is to approve."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion fails; three yeas, one nay, one abstention."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Next item."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "On page 8, Commissioners' Full-Board Appointments, **26-0127**, Region III Emergency Medical Services Council, Commissioner Arrington has nominated Joe Maddox for a Full-Board appointment to an unexpired term ending June 30th, 2027."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Motion to approve by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, seconded by Commissioner Thorne."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLERK GRIER:** "Commissioners -- County Manager's Presentation and Discussion Item, **26-0128**, External Affairs, 2026 Legislative Session Update."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Chairman."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner. Strike that. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, you have the floor."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Can I make a request of our lovely Jessica? If you have any heart in you, can we make this quick --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Make it snappy --"

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "For a fast --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Yes, ma'am."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "-- for a fasting Muslim who's been up since 4:30 this morning?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Message received, ma'am. And I'm just going to ask the team if they could please pull it up. I did send it around earlier. In the meantime, I'll just get started and say Friday is Crossover Day, so Bills are moving pretty quickly, and I do have a couple I'd like to highlight for you today. Thank you, gentlemen. Next slide, please. Next slide. Just one quick update about the amended FY26 budget. We talked previously about the funding for homelessness, 45 million is where they landed, with 5 million additionally to address homeless veterans and their needs. So that, that Bill has been passed, it was signed yesterday. So we'll be on the lookout for announcements about that funding. Next slide, please. And just to note that the FY27 budget has to pass the House by Friday. Next slide. Our Superior Court Judge Bill, House Bill 1365 passed successfully out of committee. It is now in House Rules where we've been in touch with the sponsors about getting this out of Rules and onto a floor vote. It does not currently fund it, but we have also talked with leadership about including this funding in the FY27 budget. So we'll keep you posted. Obviously, a lot of work in the next couple of days to get that across, cross through, Crossover Day. Next slide, NextGen 911, just to say that there is some funding in the amended budget, and this is looking more like some additional action for FY27. Next slide. Family Justice Centers, this is something that was in our package supporting. It did pass out of -- it is scheduled for a vote today actually. So we're looking forward to that, and appreciate, this a bipartisan Bill that would simply pave the way for Family Justice Centers, which support victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse and human trafficking. Next slide, please. I want to call your attention to House Bill 1386, this Bill would, if you recall, last year, there was legislation passed by the Speaker Pro-Tem that allowed cities, specifically in North Fulton, to opt out of allowing the Fulton County Development Authority de facto to operate within those cities. To do so, those cities had to pass a resolution. This Bill now expands that to the city of Atlanta and South Fulton. It has been carried by Representative Dawson in committee. Some of the members have talked about projects within cities that the cities found -- expressed concerns about. The Development Authority has spoken an opposition to this Bill. It did pass out of committee earlier this week and is now in House Rules for a vote. Again, this would allow Atlanta and essentially every city in Fulton County to pass a resolution that would severely limit the activities of the Development Authority of Fulton County within their jurisdiction."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Do you have a recommendation?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "I believe last year this Board did oppose the previous version of this, the North Fulton version of this Bill is my recollection. Again, the members of our delegation and the, I should say, Invest Atlanta, has been -- spoken in support of this at multiple meetings. Some members of our delegation oppose it. It is brought forward by a member of our delegation from South Fulton, Representative Dawson of the 65th as well as Representative Barry. So I -- I

realize that you all have diverse views on this subject. So I don't have a specific recommendation, but we have been asked if this Board has a position."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Yeah. Isn't the Speaker -- is this the one that Speaker Burns, or is this --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "The Speaker Pro-Tem supported last year's, the North Fulton version, and she has also spoken in support of this."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay. Commissioner Arrington."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "So I opposed last year's version for the creation of the North Fulton Development Authority. And I think, I guess the Development Authority probably opposed it then as well. You know, the problem that I have now is I'm a big proponent of equity. And so if North Fulton has one, then South Fulton needs one as well. Now, I don't know that I either North Fulton -- I don't know that I agree that North Fulton nor South Fulton need one. But if North Fulton is going to have one, then South Fulton should have one."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "And Commissioner, if you don't mind, allow me to clarify that it does not create a new Development Authority. It allows, if a city has a Municipal Development Authority, it allows them to essentially not allow the Fulton County Development Authority to also operate within their city."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** Does that mirror the language of the North Fulton --

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Yes. It was revised in -- last year. You're recalling correctly, the first version, but it was amended later. I know it was a little confusing, because they went back and forth quite a bit."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Well, I mean, you know, I guess, you know, it -- given the passage of the North Fulton one, it only makes sense for this one, but I don't know that I agree with either of them. But I guess the biggest problem, you know, I don't know, is -- well, I'll just leave it there. You know, I thought we should have opposed this. I don't think that the North Fulton Bill was done properly. It was not a single subject. It was added to another Bill at the last minute. And we learned at ACCG that that is likely not constitutional. And so, you know, I thought we should have challenged that then, or the Development Authority should have challenged that then. But we are where we are now. And if, you know, what's good for the goose is good for the gander, so all right. Thank you."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Jessica, has the Fulton County Development Authority weighed in on this?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "The Fulton County Development Authority has spoken in opposition to this legislation. Again, it -- it definitely limits their opportunities to operate."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Because I've talked to quite a few members, and they expressed their concern to me as well and how it affects them. And so I would have pause for it, because I would not want to do anything to hamstring Fulton County Development Authority. And so I'm not sure what Representative Dawson, I don't know, maybe Commissioner Arrington can speak with him. But I'm not sure what the intent was, and I'm just -- I do have a concern, considering that quite a few members reached out to me and explained to me what their concern was and that it could potentially -- it could potentially hurt them. So if we're going to have Fulton County Development Authority, I definitely want -- don't want to do anything that's going to hurt them. And so I don't know, maybe, I don't know, maybe we can -- I know Crossover Day is coming up."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Yes, ma'am."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "But I do have a concern, Commissioner Arrington, with this."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "You know, I think that biggest concern is, is Atlanta, right? I mean, because I -- I don't know that North Fulton has done anything with it. I don't know that South Fulton will be able to do anything with it. So the biggest concern is given the city of Atlanta and Atlanta Development Authority, right? Because that's where, I won't say most but Atlanta is the heart of the city, the heart of the county, right? And so that's where probably the majority of development is. But I understand him wanting whatever North Fulton has, right? Like the hospitals. We want them same hospitals. We want North Fulton Annex, we want a South Fulton Annex, right? So I understand that, but yeah."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "So I'm making an assumption that the city of Atlanta is in opposition to this Bill."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta supports this Bill, Mr. Chairman. This Bill would allow Invest Atlanta to be the only Development Authority they -- the city of Atlanta could pass a resolution, and they could be the only Development Authority operating within the city of Atlanta. Dr. Klementich has spoken in of it on more than one --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "In support of it?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Correct."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "And she's speaking for the city, yeah; is that correct?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "She speaking for Invest Atlanta."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** Okay.

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Wow."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "And has -- and again, as with -- as Commissioner Arrington pointed out, with Atlanta being the largest city with the largest commercial areas, it would very much limit, potentially, the opportunity of the Fulton County Development Authority to conduct business."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "And what about the City of South Fulton? I understand -- well, let me let you answer that."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "So Representative Dawson, during testing -- during the committee on Monday, brought forward examples of projects in the City of South Fulton that the city expressed concerns about in terms of the impact on their tax base, and specifically a recent Amazon project, which was a redevelopment of an existing property that Amazon owned. And the Fulton County Development Authority approved the project, and the City of South Fulton expressed concern about the impact of that project on their tax base."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "But did they not take a position in favor of this?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Commissioner, I don't -- I mean, I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I don't -- I can't say that definitively, because I was not at the committee, so I don't want to misspeak, but --"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay. I was told that they did, which that the City of South Fulton, yeah, supports this."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Supports it? I -- that seems consistent with the example that Representative Dawson brought forth."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "So if you have it, Invest Atlanta and the city --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "Well, yeah, Mr. Chair, I think, I mean, you're right, it almost spells destruction for the Development Authority of Fulton County, which is why I think we opposed it last year when it got done. And then the whole impetus behind it was, you know, the Senator from there who got it passed, and then got nominated Treasurer, and so he's no longer there, you know, I wish it would all go away. But yeah, the big -- the biggest problem is right now, is city of Atlanta, right? Because I don't know, again, that North Fulton has done anything, or that South Fulton has done anything, or, you know, but you know, given the city of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta that

opportunity. But I mean, frankly, in equity, if you're going to give it to North Fulton and you're going to give it to South Fulton, why not give it to the city of Atlanta? So I would rather oppose all of them. But you know, part of the problem is, I think that people aren't communicating, right? So if you got a Amazon deal that's in City of South Fulton, and the Development Authority approves that deal in City of South Fulton, without having a conversation with them, and without bringing them to the table, it creates, you know, bad feelings, right? And you know, they don't get anything out of it. They don't know anything about it, warehouse pops up, and you know, so that's why, you know, conversations and collaborations and relationships are so important."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Barrett."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So first of all, I just want to ask, like, where is this in the process, and do we think it's going --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "It has passed out of Committee, it's now in Rules. So it has not passed out of Rules yet."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "But it certainly could in the next day or two."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So you'll keep us posted obviously, because we've got a busy few days when it comes to this session."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "And Jasmine is not here with me today, so it's possible she -- that she -- something happened today. And I just haven't quite caught up, but I think I would know that."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Okay, thank you. And I think just for clarity sake, my understanding of this type of legislation, the North Fulton version, this version, what have you, is just so that you don't have two Development Authorities competing in the same geo -- same geographic region with each other to give somebody the biggest tax abatement, or you have the county approving something that city wouldn't want. To your point about North Fulton, I think they actually are doing a fair amount with the -- you can confirm if I'm right or wrong on that, Commissioner Thorne or Commissioner Ellis. But I do believe that part of the reason that it happened in North Fulton is because they felt like the Fulton County development, and I could be wrong, but my recollection was that they didn't feel like the Fulton County Development Authority was focused on the types of projects they wanted to have in North Fulton. They wanted some control their own destiny, is that, would you say that's right?"

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I think they wanted -- (off-mic comments)."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Well, sure that too. I mean, the fees will go to the Development Authority, sure. And I know that's what this is about in a lot of ways. But I

do think when we -- you know, if you -- if you -- I have mixed feelings about this, I think is where I'm going. Because on the one hand, you know, it'd be great for us to have more control as the Fulton County Development Authority over our economic development destiny. On the other hand, when we talk about the commercial property tax issue, do we want municipalities giving tax abatements all over the place? Do we want to give them all over the place? Do we want our -- do we want to compete so that, like Fulton County is offering Amazon a higher deal than -- you know, I just think there's some issues there. So I feel like I understand why there's people on both sides of this and --"

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "But don't they do deals together?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Sometimes."

**COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.:** "I mean, there are deals where -- where Development -- Invest Atlanta and Development Authority of Fulton County --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I think will back out one or the other if they're both involved. But like, sometimes, I think that was at the QTS data center or whatever that was in Atlanta that city didn't want, but the county did, or I don't remember now, it's been a minute. But in any case, I do feel like trying to understand, maybe what the Representatives that put this forward are trying to accomplish might be helpful."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Certainly, Commissioner. And I can go back and get you some more analysis. Again, it is possible -- It's possible, regardless of what you all do today, that it will pass out of Rules and Crossover, it goes then to the Senate, and we could continue to weigh in at that point --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "We should --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "-- if you don't feel comfortable --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "We should try to get them to throw in a little amendment to say that if they form their own we get a seat on their board, just saying."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Commissioner Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "So not all the cities have Development Authorities --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "That's correct."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "So I don't know if you know which ones do or don't. I know Johns Creek doesn't have one. Milton, I don't believe has one. So those would still fall under our umbrella."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "That is correct, there are -- and I don't, unfortunately, have that in front of me today. But we could certainly provide that information to you and give you more information about the impact if that would be helpful."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "All right, we'll move on to the next one. Thank you. House Bill 1240 which is sponsored by Representative Chuck Martin, this Bill would -- addresses the renewal of tax allocation districts and limitation. It essentially says that the 10 percent cap continues when these Bills -- or excuse me, when TADs are renewed, not only when they are created. So this Bill has also passed out of Committee and is now in House Rules."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Your backup has arrived behind you."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Oh, Jasmine, hurry. But so again, so this Bill has just, I think it's pretty straightforward, though, the intent, someone asked me if this was specific to Atlanta. Atlanta has expressed concerns. The sponsor of the Bill did not choose to make any amendments, and it did pass out of Committee. All right, Jasmine? Okay, good thank you. Welcome back. All right, moving on. Next slide, please. Municipal jails, also by Representative Chuck Martin, this Bill specifically addresses municipal jails that are within a jurisdictional radius of the Capitol Police Division to make such facilities available to the County Sheriff upon request. It does not transfer the facility, it requires that municipality to make that jail available to the County Sheriff upon request. This Bill is currently still in and Governmental Affairs Committee. Representative Martin is on that committee. It is not unlikely that it will pass out of that committee today or tomorrow and then go to -- go back to House Rules. Any other update?"

**JASMINE CAMPBELL, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "No."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Thank you, Jasmine."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "So do you think this has legs?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "I do. All right, hearing no further conversation, next slide, please. So House Resolution 1114, and its sister piece of legislation, House Bill 1116, these are high priorities of the Speaker of the House, and this legislation yesterday, this Bill requires a vote of 120 votes to receive because it is a constitutional amendment. And yesterday, it received 99 to 73, so did not receive -- it would need 21 more votes to pass the House. In talking with some of the sister counties from Metro Atlanta, the -- and ACCG has a neutral position, because primarily, they're still working to negotiate on this Bill. Just to give you a little sense of it, Fulton County's direct revenue impact would be about \$236 million. A one-cent sales tax generates about \$379 million. So it would take a .62 sales tax dedicated to Fulton County to close that gap. Schools, it would take, collectively for Atlanta and Fulton

Schools, because their millage rates are higher, a 1.57 percent sales tax to cover their property tax gap. Those are some of the things that we heard in opposition yesterday was impact on local government, cities, counties and school systems. Some of the recommendations would be, again, the other -- one of the challenges with the legislation is that it has changed multiple times. The version that was voted on yesterday was different than the version that passed out of Committee the day before, it had a Rules amendment. So it's been somewhat challenging to track the changes, and that's what I've heard in talking with sister counties around the metro area, is that everyone is working very hard on analysis. Municipalities, another challenge is that municipalities, the city of Mountain Park, for example, that has no commercial digest at all, has no opportunity to close their revenue gap because they don't have any sales tax. There are cities like that all over Georgia. You know, the city of Pine Lake, for example, in DeKalb County, or other small cities that really are wholly residential, unless they have some rental property or non-homesteaded properties, they have limited opportunities to make up that, that revenue loss. So those are some of the challenges that we've been talking about, looking at there. The sales tax scenarios are very complex. One of the other challenges in Fulton County is that we have multiple cities that have municipal option sales tax, or MOST, which is used primarily for, for example, in Atlanta, we've had one for 30 years, almost, I think, or close to that, for sewer repairs. So those are long-term capital projects that can take decades to really address. And so a city can have a MOST, but it also then loses one of its other sales tax opportunities. So again, it's very, very complex legislation. I'm not doing a very good job of explaining it, except to say that because this is a high priority for House leadership, this is going to continue to come back for a vote over and over and over again. It is going to be, if it doesn't pass the House, for some reason, it will be introduced or attached to Bills coming back from the Senate. It is going to be a continued priority through Sine Die. So the conversation has really been with counties and local governments, how can we negotiate? How can we recommend a study committee to look at this extremely complex issue and how it could affect local governments over the next few days? Jasmine, anything to add to that?"

**JASMINE CAMPBELL, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "There will be a vote this afternoon. This morning, the House voted to reconsider the Bill so the Speaker can call up at any time. The last time I checked they were at lunch, the House was at ease. So I'm not sure if it's been voted on yet, but it will be another vote today."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Barrett."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "I just had a question about the sales tax, because isn't there a cap about how many -- how much sales tax you can have, and aren't we already at the cap?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "There is -- there is a cap, and there's a different cap in the Bill. And so that's one of the things that has changed, I think, a couple of times, is how those caps are calculated. And essentially, there are schools in the last version that I saw, because I want to have a caveat, the last version I saw, for example, today's schools, both Fulton and City of Atlanta Schools have, each

have an E-SPLOST, or for capital projects. In this scenario, they could continue that and also have an additional penny. But as I said, together, Fulton and Atlanta Schools would need 1.57 pennies plus, unless they were to abandon their E-SPLOST projects. So that's -- that's one example, and again, I think everyone is still really negotiating. But there are different penny scenarios. MARTA is not counted toward the penny, which is helpful for us and for DeKalb. DeKalb scenarios are different than Fulton's because they have an E-HOST already. So it's just, it is, I know, keep saying the word complex, but it really is."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So with the MARTA, the current Fulton County MARTA sales taxes, is a penny?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "It is, that's correct."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So we -- we recoup that penny, and could use it to make up the difference here, is what you're saying, for us?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "No. I'm saying that that penny can continue without counting --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "But we get another penny, basically that we can --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Essentially --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "-- in the cap."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "In the cap --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So if it was just us, we could make up the difference with that sales tax?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "If it were only Fulton County, yes. As you are aware, with our current LOST, we share that with our cities, and we get less than 10 percent of that revenue. And so that's really one of the -- one of the concerns is if the LOST revenue is already programmed for something, and even if there is an additional penny, and the cities are relying on that, we as a fully municipalized county are not in the best negotiating position."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Got it."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "I'm sorry, Commissioner."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "You want to call me?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Madam Vice Chair."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "You'll let me go? Okay, I'll just go."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "What's your name? Oh, Commissioner Thorne."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Yeah. So there was some questions I had about what would happen with bonds. A lot of our cities and counties have bonds, and my understanding is that the current system would stay in place."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "So one of the provisions in the legislation allows current pennies to continue. But I think the question is, Commissioner, if those pennies continue, but there's also a loss of revenue, how do you really reconcile those two things? I think that's the -- that's really the question. And at the end of the day, this is really all about math, which is not my best subject, but I know that what everyone is trying to figure out is, okay, we already have committed our current pennies for various projects. What things could be let go and repurposed? What things like, school capital projects, that's a harder thing. Those are probably bonds, but then if they're also losing their property tax revenue, how do they make up with that -- make up for that if they only have one penny to do so? So those are, again, some of the things that I think still need to be negotiated. Your point about bonds is very important, because, for example, in Atlanta, MOST projects, water sewer projects, those certainly have bond commitments as well. Fulton County government today, receives very, very little revenue from sales tax, so we haven't programmed our sales tax revenue, per se, but we certainly rely on property tax revenue."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I wouldn't mind if Sharon would want to chime in on how you do a budget if you're counting on an unpredictable sales tax revenue."

**SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER:** "Very carefully. I mean, we would -- we would have to take in -- take that into consideration. Certainly would not want to reduce our fund balance reserves. Might even want to consider increasing the amount so there would be more there in the event that the projected revenue from sales taxes did not materialize. So there -- there are a lot of -- it is very complex legislation. I've been trying to read through it myself and understand it and all its -- all of its implications. But it is something that we would need to give significant consideration to as well as understand any timing effects that would be in place for when the various parts of the legislation become effective, so and understanding its impact on our planning processes. So it would be -- it would require a lot of -- a lot of additional analysis, I think, and really understanding if, you know, if -- if sales taxes drop by a certain percentage, you know, how much could we absorb the loss of revenue before we would have to consider putting spending controls -- you know, spending control measures in place during the course of a fiscal year, or even consider coming back to the Board to amend the budget downward, if the revenue loss is that significant. So there would be a -- there would be a lot that we would have to take into consideration."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "And then my understanding is we could levy fees and assessments too, so say for police and fire or maybe a jail, that type of thing."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "There are some levies, and again, there's some questions about -- about that process, Commissioner, again, in the

context of the sales tax. So we are continuing to try to work with ACCG on analysis, as it is a 47-page Bill that keeps changing. So that's making it a little bit trickier too to provide that information."

**VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN:** "Commissioner Ellis."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Yeah, I mean, I would just say, obviously, this thing's got a lot of complexity to it."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "But, I mean, the one thing I would just sort of remind all of us is, you know, the folks that are, you know, making these decisions over there, you know, they're attuned to local government. Many of them have served in local government. And as Jessica is -- Ms. Corbitt has noted, you know, money is fungible, and this is, you know, a bit of a big math exercise, and it's not all of our budget, you know, it's a poor -- it's not all our property taxes, it's a portion of it. And you know, if you go back 20-plus years ago, or something like that, you know, sales tax made up about 35 percent of our budget, or much more significant. So we -- there was a period of time when we were operating with sales tax as a, you know, much material -- more material component of our budget. So you can project -- project it. And you know, I mean, candidly, they may be a little bit more predictable than property taxes, they probably are, right, in terms of pegging what's going to happen with home prices and variability related to that or commercial -- commercial property. So you know, I think it's -- it's certainly a subject that gets everybody tight at every level of local government, understandably. But, you know, I -- money is fungible. I think local governments are going to, you know, think people that are voting on this have a high degree of sensitivity towards that in trying to come up with a meaning -- a real, practical solution. This also has a phasing period right now as it's structured of five years, correct?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "That is correct."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "And you know there's also --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "There's ten years for full ramp up --"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Ten years, okay. And so there's a long phasing period. And there's also discussions of might be a little bit more applicable for school systems than us, but there's also discussions about changing formulations in terms of state funding, state grants coming in too, right, is a piece of this?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Yes, that is true, Commissioner, I think one of our concerns with the analysis we have been able to do is just Fulton County as the largest county --"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Right."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "-- those dollars would not necessarily be sufficient for us, but we would --"

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Yeah, yeah, I mean, so it's definitely something I think we all got to keep an eye on it, monitor it. But, you know, I think just, we do need to keep in mind that I don't think whatever is going to get approved is going to be something that's going to just going to starve all local governments. That's not going to be in the best interest of anybody. So but there's a lot of -- lot of sausage making, a lot of confusing sausage making. But I'm confident we're going to wind up with something that is a workable solution, but it may be something that's going to require all of us to kind of fundamentally rethink and redo the way that local governments may be financed, or at least, you know, a significant portion of it."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "And Commissioner Ellis, if I could just add that, I think for Fulton County, one of the most important points for our advocacy is to ensure that a fully municipalized county's needs which are different than a different -- a county that is not fully municipalized or recognized, because a population-based negotiation that does not -- that only considers unincorporated population, will not address Fulton County's needs."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Yeah, absolutely. And I think, you know, this whole piece around how our ability to access and obtain sales tax -- because I think that number you mentioned is 236, I think --"

**JASMINE CAMPBELL, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Right."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "-- collectively, that number for the entirety of non schools is like 430."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "That is correct."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "Or something like that, right?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Yes. I looked at that earlier, and I don't think I wrote that one on my paper, but yes."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "So, you know, there's a delta of 60 million or so, you know --"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "That's right."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "-- the way we're both funded right now. But then you've got, you know, kind of fractional sales taxes that do exist out there, some of which may be, probably not long-term bonded against because of the nature of many of those or, you know, five year renewable things, so they're not that long."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Right."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "But, you know, I think having things, you know, that are in there that are more prescribed the way that it would work if you were to, you know, move to something where, you know, sales tax becomes a replacement thereof, and having it be more formulate driven at that point in time where it's enacted, it matches up with, you know, the -- let's say the city and counties, you know, current allocation of, you know, receipt of property taxes at that point in time might be something to talk about in terms of just, you know, our interest relative to kind of how -- how a penny would be formulated and allocated, you know, as opposed to this, you know, kind of LOST negotiation process, which doesn't really work well in our county, or any other county for that matter."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "That's right."

**COMMISSIONER ELLIS:** "So I do think that's something that we should, you know, have our -- have our folks kind of share some stuff back on that."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Thank you very much, will do. Chairman, I'm going to put my glasses back on, since you have yours on."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "So with that, actually can't read the slides. So with that, again, we're just continuing at this point to negotiate -- I'm sorry, go ahead."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "No, go ahead, continue."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "So I'm, in the interest of the Vice Chair, who asked me to be brief, I'm going to skip ahead. Next slide, please. And these are in your packets that I've given you a copy. Next slide, please. Next slide. We'll come back to this one next session. So I did want to highlight Senate Bill 568, which is an elections-related Bill. This has passed out of Committee. This is the so-called Paper Ballot Bill. And it would -- we're, you know, again, looking at the impact of this Bill, which is, frankly significant for Fulton County, a county of our size, this Bill intends to make changes effective with the November 2026, election we -- we and election -- election officials around the state have expressed concerns. We have concerns in our Elections team, as well as part of that kind of coalition of election officials. This Bill is in Rules now, and so it is, frankly, likely that it will pass, then it will cross out of the Senate and into the House."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Commissioner Barrett."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So we are adamantly speaking out against this? I -- I mean, I -- where are -- what are we doing here?"

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "So again, we have been -- our Elections Department has been collaborating with other election officials and their

lobbying group. Actually, Chairman Pitts spoke against this Bill in Committee on Monday. So it nonetheless passed out of Committee despite concerns that were shared from election officials and others who spoke out against it, and it is, as I said in Rules today, and likely to pass back to the House. I do think that there will be continued negotiations on this Bill, especially costs are a significant concern in terms of one of the -- one of the intricacies of this is that you would have assigned early voting locations. Please keep me honest, Jasmine, as well as -- which is one significant factor for our county, where more than half of our voters choose to vote early. In addition, it is, election officials have shared that procurement of print-on-demand ballot machines is going to be challenging, if not impossible, before the November election. So those are - those are two of the practical concerns. In terms of cost, there are no additional dollars right now in the budget for this. It is essentially, you know, I hate to use the cliché, unfunded mandate, but any costs would be borne by the counties, which is one of the things that is in our legislative agenda, that costs should not be borne by counties that are imposed by state."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "And correct me if I'm wrong, but the -- the assigning of voters to specific voting, early voting locations predominantly affects the larger, urban more heavily Democratic counties, because a lot of counties only have one early voting location to begin with. And so counties like ours and some of the other larger metro Atlanta counties, probably Chatham and some others are the ones that have multiple early voting locations. And I mean, I think, you know, it's -- I think -- I know you did as good a job as you could trying to tell them why this wasn't good for Fulton County, but, you know, I it's not -- it's not good for Georgia, frankly, because I think we should be doing everything we can to make voting easier, not harder. But at the end of the day, this is directly -- feels like a lot of this is directly limiting for larger urban counties like ours."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Commissioner Barrett, I will say that Fulton County, to my knowledge, has the largest number of early voting locations of any metro in a current county, both because of our population, because we have employees who travel long distances, we have a lot of traffic here, there are a number of reasons. And that has just been part of Fulton County's success strategy in terms of managing. We've had challenges in the past when we had high, very, very, very high numbers of Election Day voters, so early voting has been an important part of managing that process. So you know, if the Board wishes to take a position on this, certainly we will communicate that. But I know, as I said, Chairman Pitts spoke against it already. It is currently in Rules and passed out of Committee."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "So do we want to take a position?"

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "We can, but I'm not sure it's going to do any good, even though it's supposed to be statewide, every other word out of those Senators who spoke was Fulton County, Fulton County --"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Yeah."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "-- Fulton County."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Well, I'm happy to be with you and take a position against it personally. I don't know what my colleagues think."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "So, all right. Let's go on record in opposition. Second?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Second."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Let's vote. We take a voice, to those in favor -- what?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "Here."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "What?"

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "There, now we can vote. I put you in."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Okay."

**COMMISSIONER BARRETT:** "They're working on it."

**CLERK GRIER:** "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; four yeas, one abstention."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "I wanted to speak on it, but."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Oh, I'm sorry, Commissioner."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "For me, I understand the required hand-marked paper ballots and how everybody wants them. But actually, like our BMD equipment is basically an on-demand printer of the ballot. So we're basically ditching that technology to go to hand-marked paper ballots."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "That's correct."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "Which I understand the whole QR code. I just wish we would have had legislation that may be brought forward, still keeping those BMD machines, but not using the QR code for tabulation, because that's where all the controversy comes. Those BMD machines are great for handicapped people, people who need larger print. Fulton County has 255 different -- or I think they're about 400 different ballot styles."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Yes."

**COMMISSIONER THORNE:** "So you couldn't preprint ballots and have them at every early voting location or it'll be chaos. 90 percent of people probably getting the wrong

ballot to begin with, or trying to find the ballot. So with that being said, I'm -- I'm kind of not for it, but I've always taken this position before. I think cost-wise, hand-marked paper ballots are cheaper, but we already have the equipment, so it will be a cost. We already print ballots, enough ballots, emergency ballots, and have them in every precinct anyway on Election Day. So with that being said, I was just going to give you my 2 cents, the reason why I like the ballot marking devices. I don't like the QR code. I wish we could just get the ballots marked, then use a machine that can read those already marked ballots with the correct ballot already programmed in the machine, because human error, someone will give you the wrong ballot, and then just get the QR code process for what that's worth."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Thank you, Commissioner."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right. Anything else for Ms. Corbitt? Thank you, Ms. Corbitt."

**JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:** "Thank you."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Any other matters to come before us?"

**CLERK GRIER:** "No further matters."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "All right, before we adjourn, Commissioner Ivory, would like the floor."

**COMMISSIONER IVORY:** "Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. As this is at my last meeting as a Commissioner for District 4, I just wanted to say thank you to all of the constituents of District 4 and all the residents of Fulton County, as it has been my honor to serve as a District 4 Commissioner since January of 2025. And I want to thank my colleagues for our work together. I think that we have worked towards trying to improve things in Fulton County. And I wanted to especially thank the Chairman. I wanted to let you know that I respect you, and I thank you for your mentorship, for your guidance and for your professionalism, always as the Chairman of this Commission. So I just wanted to say thank you, and I love you for that. And so I want to thank the executive staff as well, and everybody here in the well, and especially to my staff, who have been steadfast in serving this county. And I look forward to, whether an elected official or not, remaining a resident of Fulton County and always serving as I have always done in my life. So it's been my honor; and thank you very much."

**CHAIRMAN PITTS:** "Any other matters that come before us? All right, we are adjourned."

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.**