Baker County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting
February 3rd, 2026
07:30 P.M.

Connie C. Hobbs – Chairperson **Vann Irvin – Vice Chairman**
Matt Bryan – Commissioner **Chris Moore – Commissioner**
Tommy Rentz, Commissioner

Minutes

The Baker County Board of Commissioners met on the above date with Commissioners Vann Irvin, Tommy Rentz, Matt Bryan, Chris Moore and Connie Hobbs in attendance.

Chair Hobbs opened the meeting.

Chair Hobbs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Moore delivered the invocation.

Chair Hobbs presented the agenda for consideration. Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Bryan seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Bryan, Rentz, Moore, and Hobbs voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs presented the minutes of January 6th, 2026 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Rentz made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Bryan seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Moore, Bryan, Rentz, and Hobbs voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs presented the minutes of the January 15th, 2026 Called Meeting. Commissioner Rentz made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore, and Hobbs voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Speaker Requests:
Chair Hobbs recognized Ms. Jessica Craft, Baker County Tax Commissioner, to address the Commission. Ms. Craft stated she had contacted all counties in District 18 and was advised all constitutional officers were included in county offered employee health insurance and she requested the Commission include Baker County constitutional officers as eligible participants in the employee health insurance program.

Chair Hobbs recognized Ms. Stephanie Key, Baker County Clerk of Superior Court, to address the Commission. Ms. Key stated previously the county allowed the constitutional officers to participate in the county health insurance program and they were not included in the $500.00 health insurance supplement. She further stated other counties in her district, 25 counties, always include constitutional officers. Ms. Key stated constitutional officers are vital to the county and she feels they should be included.

Chair Hobbs recognized Mr. Ritchie Cox, Newton-Baker Fire Chief, to address the Commission. Mr. Cox stated he had identified a "Fireworks Tax Grant" that would require a $2.500 cash match for a total grant funding of $25,000. He stated 2 BA's had previously been ordered and they were not fire rated. Mr. Cox stated a BA usually costs approximately $4,000 and they were in need of fire rated BA's. He also stated the truck would need to be pump tested in the spring, and their cutting tools are almost obsolete.

Chair Hobbs reported the motion approved on January 15th, 2026 to offer full-time and acting full-time employees up to a $500 monthly supplement to offset their individually purchased health insurance would need to be rescinded as it had been determined this was not in compliance with the Affordable Health Care Act. Commissioner Bryan made a motion to rescind the January 15th, 2026 motion to offer up to a $500 monthly supplement to full-time and acting full-time employees. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rentz. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs provided an overview of 2 options for health insurance coverage for county employees.

- Option 1: The county could set up an Individual Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA) which allow employees to select and purchase their individual policy and the county could offer to help cover the cost with a tax-deductible contribution. This plan would require a certified account administrator. Commissioners were provided handouts from Decisely, a broker that is certified to administer an ICHRA. (See Exhibit A attached.)
- Option 2: Decisely, insurance broker, can offer up to eight (8) different Blue Cross and Blue Shield Core Choice plans guaranteed. No employee minimum participation is required, employee may select from any one of eight (8) plans, or county may select from one or more plans to offer. (See Exhibit B attached for plan choices.)

Commissioner Irvin made a motion to secure brokerage services from Decisely and offer all eight (8) plans for employee selection. Motion seconded by Commissioner Rentz. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs advised Commissioners the Personnel Policies and Procedures for Baker County in Section 1.02, "Establishment, Applicability, and Coverage" exclude constitutional officers as a class of employees not applicable to the policies. The policies also allow for inclusion in group insurance employees as "outlined in the group contract or plan." Commissioner Irvin made a motion to allow constitutional officers to be included in the plan. Motion was

seconded by Commissioner Moore. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore, and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs presented the Single Audit for FY 2025 which was required due to expenditures in federal funds in excess of $750,000. The report stated " Baker County complied, in all material respects, with the specified requirements referenced above during the fiscal year ended April 30, 2025." (See Exhibit C attached.) Commissioner Moore made a motion to accept the audit as presented. Commissioner Rentz seconded the motion. Commissioner Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs stated the Board of Elections would like to move the Newton voting precinct to the Board of Commissioners' Office. After discussion, Commissioner Rentz made a motion to allow the Commission Office to be used as the Newton voting precinct. Commission Moore seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs reviewed the financial status of each department as of December 31st, 2025. Several departments had already expended over 100% of their allocated budget.with four (4) months remaining in the fiscal year. (See Exhibit D attached.)

Commissioners were provided an update on the status of the P25 radio upgrade. Currently bids are being sought to secure a provider to remove unused/outdated equipment from the tower and install the new tower equipment from Mobile Communications America (MCA). Once the cables/fibers, etc. are on the ground, MCA will proceed with the remaining install/activation. MCA advised they would not climb the tower unless all the tower remediations, which were not addressed in the contract, were completed. This action will require a change in contract with Motorola. Chair Hobbs has requested $300,000 from Baker County's legislative delegation to fund the tower remediation expense. Commissioner Bryan made a motion to move forward with the bid process for county to contract for the tower modification work and amend the Motorola contract. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs presented an "Assignment/Bill of Sale" from Diverse Power, Inc. transferring their telecommunications assets located on the ground below the tower to Baker County. (See Exhibit E attached.) Commissioner Bryan made a motion to authorize the Chair to execute the agreement with Diverse Power. Motion seconded by Commissioner Moore. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore, and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

The lease agreement between Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation and Baker County Board of Commissioners was presented. The five (5) year lease agreement is for a new 2026 Caterpillar M318-07 Wheeled Excavator with a monthly lease payment of $5,077.13. Commissioner Rentz made a motion to authorize the Chair to execute the lease agreement with Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Irvin. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs advised the Commission an Intergovernmental Agreement was needed with the City of Newton as the County continues to get requests from the City for assistance with various road projects. Commissioner Rentz made a motion for the Chair to negotiate and execute the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Newton. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Irvin. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Hobbs called for a motion to enter into Executive Session for personnel reasons. Commissioner Moore made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:04 P.M. to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Bryan seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried. (See copy of affidavit attached.)

Chair Hobbs called for a motion to exit the Executive Session with no action taken and return to an open meeting. Commissioner Bryan made a motion to exit Executive Session with no action taken at 9:26 P.M. Commission Irvin seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

A Legislative update regarding the key aspects of HR 1114, Property Tax Relief and Reform, was provided by Chair Hobbs.

Chair Hobbs presented an agreement to hire Ms. Marie N. Howard as Interim County Manager. Commissioner Rentz made a motion to enter into an agreement with Ms. Howard to serve as Interim County Manager. Commissioner Bryan seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore and Hobbs all voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Bryan seconded the motion. Commissioners Irvin, Rentz, Bryan, Moore, and Hobbs all voted in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Baker County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting
February 3rd, 2026
07:30 P.M.

Connie C. Hobbs – Chairperson | **Vann Irvin – Vice Chairman**
Matt Bryan – Commissioner | **Chris Moore – Commissioner**
Tommy Rentz, Commissioner

Attest Marie Howard Clerk

Connie C. Hobbs Chairman

Chris Moore

BAKER COUNTY GA